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QUEEN ANNE'S MEN AND THE COMMERCIAL LIFE OF LONDON'S NEIGHBORHOOD ECONOMIES

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of the Ohio State University

by

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* * * * *

The Ohio State University
2002

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ABSTRACT

Until recently, an accurate historiography of the theater as an institution in early-modern London took second place to research on the dramatic literature of Shakespeare, Marlowe and their lesser known contemporaries. But theater is more than an art form: it is an historically significant form of communal life, a mise-en-scène by which we might broaden our understanding of social and economic practices in the specific localities where plays are staged. Turner's Dish of Lenten Stuff (1612) forcefully suggests a distinction among the plays acted by various theatrical companies, notably the King’s Men performing at the Globe on London’s Bankside and the Queen Anne’s Men at the Red Bull in the northwest suburb of Clerkenwell: “The players of the Bank side/ The round Globe and the Swan / Will teach you idle tricks of love, / But the Bull will play the man.”

In my dissertation, I provide a detailed study of the playhouse operations and dramatic offerings of Queen Anne’s Men during the reign of King James I, from 1603 to 1623. My argument, broadly speaking, is that the commercial pressures placed on the company to maintain profitability were tempered by the actions and demands of their loyal audience base at the Red Bull. I envision this research as a contribution to an accurate identification and analysis of the popular theater’s engagement with different social,
topographical, political, and, most importantly economic pressures. The dissertation inverts traditional author and play centric approaches to the drama of this period by focusing on the acting company as a central, and generally neglected, unit of analysis. My investigation concentrates on the ways in which this troupe generated a broadly popular market for Jacobean productions tailor-made to urban locales which, in turn, provides insight into larger patterns of communal life. Its history, moreover, offers an alternate and more cogent conception of the relation between the theatrical company and its community than that afforded by routine discussions of Shakespeare’s company, the King’s Men, who operated across the Thames in Southwark, at a greater social and geographical remove from the rest of the city.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project was made possible through conversation, and, more importantly, through disagreement with many people, all of whom have something to add to a discussion of the institutional conditions of the theater in early-modern London, the plays presented there, and the ways in which that dramatic economy has been understood since. First and foremost, I'd like to thank my thesis supervisor, Professor John N. King. Professor King's immense knowledge and experience has proven an invaluable resource throughout my research. I consider it a great privilege and pleasure to have worked with such a talented researcher and warm and giving person. I appreciate the freedom he allowed me to pursue my own work with the reassurance that he was always willing to help. Also, thanks to the other members of my committee: Chris Highley, Luke Wilson, and Jim Bracken, each of whom was eager with comments on the manuscript and suggestions on tracking down yet another useful source somewhere in the United Kingdom. The members of Susan Cerasano's Folger Institute seminar "Rewriting The Elizabethan Stage," especially Leeds Barroll, Lucas Ern, David McKay, and Kirk Melinkoff, were beneficial in strengthening and complicating my understanding of the nuances of theater history. My gratitude also extends to Janet Badia, James Chambley, Dan Kline, Wendy Matlock, Ben McCorkle, Jim Phelan, and many others, my compeers during my tenure at Ohio State, for their valuable feedback on various aspects of the argument. They are
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Patient audiences have listened to and commented on road-tested versions of these arguments at meetings of the Pacific Northwest Renaissance Society in Tacoma, Washington and the Shakespeare Association of America in Miami. An abbreviated version of chapter five has been published in *Early Theater* 4 (December 2001).

I've gotten by with a little help from my friends!

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Spenser North and South. Spenser Newsletter 28.3. Fall 1997.

MAJOR FIELD OF STUDY

Early-Modern English Dramatic Literature
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<td>Corporation of the City of London Record Office.</td>
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CHAPTER 1

ENTERTAINMENT FOR PROFIT

Follywit: We met a company with hampers after 'em.
Sir Bounteous: Oh, those were they, those were they, a pox hamper 'em!
Follywit: How, sir?
Sir Bounteous: How, sir? I lent the rascals properties to furnish out their play, a chain, a jewel, and a watch, and they watched their time and rid quite away with 'em.
Follywit: Are they such creatures?
-Thomas Middleton, A Mad World, My Masters (c.1605)

"Theater" consists in this: in making live representations of reported or invented happenings between human beings and doing so with a view to entertainment.
-Bertolt Brecht, "A Short Organum for the Theater" (1949)

The imputed quarrel between the entrepreneurial Follywit and the more materialist-oriented Brecht over the social function of the public theater is a reflection of the widely divergent interests of the theatrical company's proprietary motivations, on the one hand, and the audience's desire for satisfactory and edifying entertainment, on the other. The poles of this debate might readily and instructively be reformulated as a micro-economy: the disgruntled Sir Bounteous Progress, with Brecht as his advocate, is a portrait of the discriminating cultural consumer seeking theatrical value for his money, while Follywit—who extorts Sir Bounteous' money and possessions under the guise of theatrical performance—furtively enacts the interests of the supply side of culture which seeks to provide such entertainment, but only in exchange for proper remuneration. Like
most situations involving a gap between supply and demand, the early modern theater was at the mercy of market forces to determine the equilibrium level that would satisfy both the theatrical company and its consumers. The determinant equilibrium level, however, was not determined under unfettered laissez-faire conditions, but was imbricated in a complex series of often opaque negotiations between the actors, their financiers, their audience, and the community which they served. It is only when this diverse ensemble of factors is considered that we can properly begin to estimate what “theatrical value” might have meant to those engaged in any aspect of theatrical activity.

This project considers the Queen Anne’s Men. This acting company was an important unit in the Jacobean theatrical establishment and its story bears telling, not just because of this troupe’s relative importance to theater historians and students of the drama of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, but because its operations begin to shed light on the broader social and political issues delimited above. The last few years have witnessed a call for a “new approach to Renaissance drama...centering on the acting companies instead of the playwrights...[in which] each company of note needs to be studied in detail and with an eye for its own special characteristics” (McMillan and MacLean xi-xii). Many scholars have responded to this summons, producing an important, if still insufficient, body of work concentrating on a variety of theatrical companies. Aside from focusing primarily on the Elizabethan period, these studies of early modern acting troupes have yet to concentrate on the economic and social dimensions of company activity, taking instead touring patterns, censorship, royal politics, or company structure as their primary evidentiary context. In this project, I intend to focus on the dynamic commercial relations

1Bly 2000; Gurr 1996; Dutton 2001; Barroll 1993; Ingram; P. White; Forse; Knutson 2001

2

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and economic forces that conditioned company operations, arguing that the acting company was the central mediating agent between dramatic art and the community to which it speaks. Acting companies, I argue, provide the most consistent and coherent identifiable economic unit from which to theorize the supply side of this burgeoning form of commercial enterprise. Because of the centrality of the acting company, I wish to situate my discussion of Queen Anne’s Men, especially during its tenure at the Red Bull in Clerkenwell, within the context of an emergent culture industry, just beginning to test the limits of the market it was instrumental in fostering.

i - Making a Virtue of Necessity

Of course, the cultural positioning of the purveyors of entertainment in early-modern London was perhaps more auspicious than the conditions described so eloquently by Theodor Adorno of a pervasive and economically entrenched culture industry complicit with the authoritative and oppressive regimes that controlled state power, conditioning and disseminating its dominant ideology. For Adorno, popular culture had devolved into an alienating ensemble of continually reproduced and repackaged goods and services that served neither the interests of innovative artistic production, nor the mass-market constituency for whom they were ostensibly designed:

The culture industry perpetually cheats its customers out of what it perpetually promises. The promissory note which, with its plots and staging, it draws on pleasure is endlessly prolonged; the promise, which is actually all the spectacle consists of, is illusory: all it actually confirms is that the real point will never be reached, that the diner must be satisfied with the menu (139).

The early modern consumer was indeed stuck with the menu of available dramatic
productions, but during this period the menu was constantly expanding, luring its consumers with a note that, I argue, still held some promise, not yet wholly imbricated within the closed network of economic exchange that Adorno observed in his lifetime.

Nevertheless, the London playgoing industry, emerging as it was within the early stages of capital development, began to display some of these same characteristics. With the building of The Theater in 1576 by James Burbage, players for the first time were involved in a specifically economic type of exchange in which the audience represented not just aristocratic patrons of the arts and their guests, but anonymous consumers willing to pay a modest fee for an afternoon’s entertainment. Previous dramatic production took place in great houses or in public places such as inn-yards, outdoor markets, and town squares) under the auspices of patrons who were often politically influential and used their players to advance their own ends (McMillan and MacLean 17; see chapter four). This didn’t mean that dramatic performance was inaccessible to the general public, but that these presentations were neither predictable or regularly-held occurrences nor was admission structured around the proprietary motives of later drama. These new public playhouses, therefore, dislodged playgoing from the familiar seasonal cycles of both religious and secular festivity to which they were previously attached, offering plays nearly every day and vastly increased choice for its new class of consumers (Bristol 1996: 37). This new commercial situation, however, would not have been possible without concomitant developments in the sphere of finance and the availability of secured credit to investors who were able to parlay these funds into lucrative business ventures. The building of these first purpose-built venues was made possible by the open availability of credit secured at a universal 10% rate of interest in an Act of Parliament in 1571 (Ingram
The land for the original Theater was leased and construction financed through a mortgage held jointly by Burbage and John Brayne. But Burbage did not have adequate financial backing, and it is Brayne who was instrumental in obtaining credit, convinced by Burbage that "great wealth should rise unto him by the same" (Ingram 1992: 192). For Brayne, the reality of theater speculation was not as rosy as Burbage had predicted, but nevertheless illustrates the ultimate reliance of playing ventures on the expanded liquidity in credit markets. Many Elizabethans, especially urbanites, despite the protestations of greed and immorality from their less well-to-do detractors, adopted a proto-capitalist ethos in which free trade and judicious investment were the underlying conditions of prosperity (Shell 180-81). Many players and impresarios used the proceeds from playing to fund their own credit enterprises, eventually leading to accusations of usury and extortion, as those involved in playgoing sought to augment their income (Ingram 1992: 62).

The city of London had never been an ally of stage players, and city authorities were certainly not delighted with the construction of purpose-built structures to expand the practice even further. However, like investors, they were lured by the prospects of revenue from playing. The fact that new public theaters were nominally within the city’s jurisdiction raised the possibility of licensing, and municipal authorities were keen not to miss an opportunity to regulate this growth industry (Ingram 1992: 137-39). A proclamation of 2 March 1574 intimates the projected use of these monies: revenues from playing “shall be employed to the relief of the poor in the hospitals of this city” (CLRO Rep. xvii, fo. 169v). Enforcing this order would prove far less troublesome when fees could be levied directly against the owners of theaters, rather than the innkeepers who
rented out their yards for occasional dramatic performances. For the city, playing had always been considered a necessary evil, but, as Ingram points out, the contribution to public finances recast the activity as more “necessary” than “evil” (1992: 147).

The emergence of permanent playhouses also presented unique challenges to the theatrical companies who occupied them. The increase in demand that was essentially made possible by the erection of buildings like The Theater and The Curtain was met by an increase in supply. If the writing of plays previously had been considered a solely literary pursuit (a dubious, and probably indefensible proposition in itself), it had now depreciated into a common trade (Yachnin 1996: 9). Most playwrights, if they ever aspired to the status of literary artist, were forced to digest new economic realities which mandated that plays be written cheaply and quickly, often under collaborative conditions that were, in some sense, dictated by the growing needs of theatrical companies. Impresarios like Philip Henslowe and, later, Christopher Beeston, organized the writing of plays into syndicates that ensured the timely production of playscripts for the consumption of acting companies (Carson 14-19).² Those playwrights, like Shakespeare and Heywood, who were also sharers in their respective companies might have been able to exercise greater artistic freedom than their unaffiliated counterparts, yet the exigencies of demand necessitated that they could not stray too far from approved and profitable dramatic modes (Knutson 1991: 21-25).

It was therefore the acting company, and not individual dramatists, who regulated

² The singular exception that proves this rule is Ben Jonson. Jonson’s prefatory materials, especially that preceding his Works (1616), forcefully attempts to fashion the playwright as poet. It’s unlikely, however, that Jonson would need to make such a strong assertion for authorship if playwrighting conditions were not so debased in the first place.
the supply of new plays that premiered in the public theaters. For those who were also sharers in their respective companies, this made possible opportunities for a compounded investment in the enterprise, what economists call vertical integration. These playwrights would not only receive their allotted revenues from performance, but also a portion of the proceeds when plays were sold to stationers for publication. But the majority of playwrights were left to their own resources and forced to author, or at least assist in, the writing of often dozens of plays a year that became the immediate property of acting troupes who had little regard for the financial security of those from whom they procured new dramatic material. Forced to operate under such imperious economic conditions, it is difficult to imagine playwrights as significant agents in constructing the basic armature of the Jacobean theater, much less ones concerned with their own artistic freedom and integrity (Bristol 1996: 39).

The audiences who witnessed these plays, and later, readers who purchased them in relatively cheap quarto editions, were certainly less concerned about the authorship of the play than their public availability as entertainment. For these audiences, commercial playing represented an ambiguous place in their social lives. On the one hand, playgoing no longer was tied to either the liturgical calendar or seasonal cycles of secular festivity which, one could argue, evacuated their role as significant and purposeful expressions of shared social meaning (Bristol 1985: 46). But commercial playing also provided conditions that fostered regular conviviality as well as the opportunity, or at least the illusory perception of, alternate social affiliations that were previously unavailable to a mass audience. In this view, audiences were essentially paying for “populuxe” goods, or popular and inexpensive versions of deluxe goods that would otherwise be beyond their
reach. Plays of this era often offer an image of courtly life and international affairs that illuminate the opaque practices of courtiers and other social betters which provided the sense of "a limited mastery of the system of social rank itself" (Dawson and Yachnin 40-41). Yachnin’s implicit claim here that companies marketed their fare as glamorized reproductions of courtly entertainment becomes especially cogent when applied to the growing appeal of private theaters in the 1610’s, but, I think, does not fully describe the conditions prevalent at certain public ampitheaters like the Red Bull. In a literal sense, some of these plays were, in fact, produced at court; audiences, therefore, were witnessing courtly entertainment to a certain extent. However, not all audiences were interested or could conceivably recast their lives in terms of images of social mobility that had little relevance to the material conditions of their existence. This is especially true of audiences of tradesmen and apprentices that frequented local theaters, having neither the time nor money to travel across the river to witness a performance at the Globe, Hope, or Rose.

The role of the company in controlling the supply of new plays that were performed, which had become especially streamlined by the Jacobean era, also has important implications in promoting and maintaining what I call cultural stratification among the companies and their playhouses. Playhouses, and especially those located in the northern suburbs, like The Curtain and The Theater, and later, The Fortune and The Red Bull, were topographically located within specific communities and uniquely positioned to cater to the demographic composition of local neighborhoods. By doing this, acting companies were seeking to identify and occupy specific niches in the market for cultural goods in order to ensure their own economic survival. But they were also capitalizing on localized social dynamics and patterns of communal life that allowed them...
to situate their dramatic offerings within the previous cultural traditions and the socioeconomic demographics of particular communities. They were not, as Stephen Mullaney has argued, attracted to specific liberties because they provided anonymous sites for license, subversive political statement, or the dissemination of any particular ideology (49-50). They were not, in other words, actively pursuing any kind of overt political agenda that somehow trumped market conditions.

Conditions in Clerkenwell and at the Red Bull seemed to mandate a slightly different marketing strategy which integrated the pleasures of populuxe entertainment with previous dramatic forms associated with carnivalesque traditions which contributed to the social cohesion of this galvanized community. This is to say the company realized that the potentially lucrative commercial theater could profitably redefine itself as a contribution to the social health of the community and incorporate elements of traditional festivity in the drama it produced for money. The goals of commercial entertainment, however, do not always merge well with the conviviality and communal social meanings embedded in the carnivalesque tradition. Commercial entertainment can be theorized as a mode of social production, but this form of production entails a form of cultural inertia which, like other organized forms of capitalist enterprise, tends towards conservatism and a reification of the social order that produced it (Bristol 1985: 21). It is precisely this perceived lack of edifying social engagement which, according to John Stow, differentiates the offerings of the public playhouses from an earlier type of drama not contingent upon the proprietary interests of theatrical companies. Whereas the earlier drama is described as a “pastime” associated with “holiday” and “festival,”
in late time, in place of those stage plays, have been used comedies, tragedies, interludes and histories, both true and feigned; for the acting whereof certain public places as the Theater, the Curtain, &c, have been erected (119).

The advent of mercantile interests had transformed the "stage play" into a litany of more specific genres designed for purpose built playhouses, diminishing playgoing’s status as a pastime and bringing it into an ethos congruent with the diversity of the city’s commerce rather than its recreation. The play, when reduced to its generic components and descriptors becomes more of commodity than a pastime.

On some level, however, these competing perspectives must inevitably be reconciled. The competitive marketplace which allowed for the immense proliferation of dramatic works of all kinds also produced a situation in which carnivalesque elements could be integrated into commercial productions. Both the emergent commercial pressures and residual elements of communal festivity provided the necessary formative conditions of Elizabethan and Jacobean drama (Cartelli 4). Certain dramatists realized that carnival could make money; indeed, they came to realize that, especially before certain audience segments, the importation of traditional elements of festivity was necessary for the cultivation of a stable audience base and a concomitant increase in long-term revenues from public playing. Maintaining a reliable income from playing, especially with four performances taking place on any given weekday, was not automatically a profitable venture by what was, by modern standards, still a small but growing city. Although impresarios like Burbage and Henslowe invariably had the business acumen and financial capital from previous and unrelated ventures to ensure profitability (Henslowe was a merchant and land speculator; Burbage a carpenter), the financial situation of the actors
was much more ambiguous. While certain actor-sharers, like Alleyn, Heminge, Condell, and *many* others stood to gain immensely from their new trade, some—probably the majority—remained threadbare and often died in poverty or in debtor’s prison (E.S. 1: 350-51). Unlike those involved in trades officially codified within the guild structure, with a clearly demarcated apprenticeship process, actors were afforded no such protection from the vagaries of their trade. Sharers were at least assured of a pension, but only after they had previously invested significantly in the company and its daily expenses; hired men, on the other hand, were reliant on the relative success of each week’s gatherings to maintain their livelihood (E.S. 1: 371; see chapter five, below). It is this inherent structural instability, I think, which has prompted scholars from a variety of critical perspectives to characterize audiences at the public playhouses as a mixture of various social elements that nevertheless submerged the latent tensions between these often antagonistic groups (Weimann 169). The purportedly heterogeneous playgoing audience, however, was not merely a social phenomenon nor did it preclude cultural stratification among the theaters (Gurr 1996: 326).

The theater’s imbrication within commercial markets was certainly compatible with the more edifying and mirthful goals of popular entertainment. Not only, therefore, did theatrical enterprise share the characteristics of the market as an abstracted concept, but of the physical marketplace as well. The marketplace, unlike the impersonal mechanisms of exchange that came to characterize commercial interaction in successor cultures,

3. Richard Jones is a useful example. Jones, originally a member of various Henslowe companies was forced to sell his personal stock of costuming to Alleyn to alleviate his financial burden. Jones then became a journeyman player, listed on the lists of several English and continental companies until he drifted into obscurity (Limon 101).
comprised a meaningful site of social interaction and even communal festivity. Aside from being a place of business, the marketplace was a forum for popular—even potentially transgressive—speech that provided unmediated access to the collective voice of the community (Bakhtin 153). Another characteristic of the marketplace was its frequent inclusion of spectacle and primitive theatrical production. Thomas Dekker, certainly familiar with both theater and market square, links them in terms of their frenzied potpourri of persons of disparate social groups: “The theater is your poet's Royal Exchange...your gallant, your courtier, and your captain, had wont to be the soundest playmasters...your gallant and gallery commoner buys his sport by the penny...sithence the place is so free in entertainment” (1609: sig B2r). Like the marketplace, the theater for Dekker is a place of social freedom and mobility that allows for cross-fertilization among classes. While Dekker's views on the proliferation of this practice is ambivalent, Jonson, in Bartholemew Fair (1614), takes a more admonishing tone that nevertheless reveals the similarities between the two. The culmination of Jonson's satire in this play centers around the puppet show which, of itself, is the centerpiece of the fair. It's as if both institutions are mutually reinforcing and share a similar social function and, for Jonson, the same debased ideological agenda. Apparently, both the crown and civic authorities agreed with the general populace on this issue. The theater and the market were under similar regulatory controls; fair and theater closings during times of pestilence were governed by the same benchmark standard of 20 deaths in the weekly bills of mortality (Barroll 1991: 218).

The varied social demographic at the theater, as well as its reliance on popular tradition of various forms, might instructively be reformulated in explicitly economic
terms. As a simple matter of conducting business, theatrical companies needed the common people, at least until such time as indoor hall playhouses like the Blackfriars and the Cockpit became legally and financially viable alternatives to playing the amphitheaters. Getting this group into the theaters meant both a concerted effort at marketing as well as a conscious design to provide cultural products that resonated with previous forms of entertainment. Although playing companies did utilize primitive marketing techniques, such as publicly posted playbills, the flags flown above the theaters to announce that they were open for business, and even the printed quartos of the plays themselves, to promote their products, advertising remained largely a matter of word of mouth (Blayney 385-87). 4

The physical location of the first public theaters, in the liberty of Halliwell to the north of the city wall and near Finsbury fields, effectively and immediately allied public playing with the traditional meeting places for numerous pastimes and festivals (Weimann 170). Whether this meant, as Mullaney suggests, that the location of the theaters marked them as a place of license and political subversion, is secondary to the fact that the theater drew its audience from neighborhoods densely populated by tradesmen, apprentices, and those used to converging on these areas for recreation of diverse forms.

With the opening of the Rose (1587), Swan (1595), and Globe (1599), London’s playgoers could now choose between theatrical venues in Middlesex and those on the

4. Companies were able to use printed versions of their older plays to advertise revivals. Although they did not control production, it’s likely that both the company and individual stationers were interested in pooling their resources to promote mutual profitability. The tired argument that companies refrained from selling their playbooks except in times of dire necessity no longer holds in light of careful consideration of the available evidence. Although it is true that a disproportionate number of plays were printed during times of theater closure due to plague, the surge in publication occurs after the pestilence had subsided and theaters were reopened. With printed plays, acting companies and stationers alike seem to be reminding the general public of their old favorites now again on stage. Furthermore, stationers were wary of printing plays since they by no means guaranteed a profit. See Blayney 1990 and 1982; Kastan 2001.
Bankside. It is also at this time that we begin to notice both a generic and aesthetic divergence in company repertories based on their physical location within the city. It is these alleged qualitative differences that allow Hamlet to distinguish between more sophisticated drama that ""Twas caviare to the general," and instead required a significant intellectual engagement with the historical material being represented (2.2.418). The prince's query concerning the players' "estimation" in the city, usually taken to initiate his commentary on the "War of the Theaters," suggests that there are also potentially marked distinctions between adult companies; if not, Hamlet's would be an empty—and rather profligate—question, implying that all theatrical companies presented roughly similar dramatic offerings. Hamlet's commentary also points towards the social cleavages upon which these disjunctions are based. His praise of these players who, he proclaims, continue in the grand tradition of "Roscius" are clearly differentiated from the "low" culture audience for whom these players are "caviary." If Hamlet's words speak at all to playgoing in London, he seems to be addressing some sort of developing situation in which different audiences sought out markedly different forms of dramatic entertainment.

Hamlet's speech to the side, the question of whether cultural stratification existed among audiences at different public playhouses during the reign of James I is not yet settled. Some theater historians insist, for instance, that the demographic of playgoers was relatively homogeneous among the several public playhouses in early-modern London. In a detailed article on the location of the Fortune playhouse, one commentator notes that its neighborhood consisted primarily of tradesmen, apprentices, and the poor, but fails to posit any direct correspondence between the dramatic offerings of that theater and its urban locale. Instead, she concentrates on the roadways leading to and from the Fortune,
believing that because the local community "was only marginally steady," the theater must have drawn its clientele from nearby environs in central London (Cerasano 1982: 85). In this view, it is this stable group of consumers from within the city wall that provided steady audiences at all of London's theaters, not discriminating between distinctive house styles or the particular plays offered at each venue.

But this claim is not only one about audiences. This assumption is used to advance stronger theses concerning the operations of theatrical companies and their marketing strategies. Because companies were playing before audiences of roughly equal social and economic distribution, they pursued similar marketing strategies and offered comparable repertories to an undifferentiated audience ranging from "lowly apprentices to the rich and powerful members of the business and titled classes" (Knutson 1982: 146). In this view, competition among companies was motivated by the desire to capture this large and yet diverse demographic of playgoers with plays that sought to emulate one another in attracting this "average" playgoer. Knutson suggests that a company's frequent practice of duplicating the generic, thematic, and topical subjects of plays in another company's repertory is a sign of this strategy. For her, plays treating similar subject matter, like King Leir and King Lear, Famous Victories and Henry V, and Coriolanus and The Iron Age, signify the company's desire to supply dramatic material at some equilibrium level apparently determined by the consumption habits of the audience (1892: 154).

Phenomena like this also indicate what she calls "cluster marketing," or the tendency of companies to improve each other's commercial prospect by bolstering the industry as a whole (2001: 24). But although plays on similar subjects often appear close to one another, they are often remarkably different in their dramaturgical emphases, character
representation, and thematic concerns (see chapter three, below).

A wealth of evidence, both internal and external, refutes these claims. As early as
1952, scholars have posited the existence of “rival traditions” among the repertories, types
of staging, and audiences at different theaters in early-modern London (Harbage 1952).
More recent scholarship has isolated the years immediately before the accession of James I
(precisely when Hamlet was first staged) as a significant period in dramatic history in
which companies began to branch away from standard playgoing types (if any such thing
ever existed) and attempted to lure specific audience segments by differentiating their
activities from their rivals (Gurr 1987: 73). What essentially started as a marked
difference between the boy companies and their adult counterparts became readily
applicable to divergences among adult troupes and their respective clienteles. The growing
divergence between, say, the King’s Men and Anne’s Men might be apprehended in terms
of their approach to comedic acting. With the exodus of Will Kemp and arrival of Robert
Armin, Shakespeare’s company began to complicate the role of the traditional clown.
While Armin’s “sweet and bitter fool” speaks a number of deep philosophical truths to
Lear, Anne’s Men hired Kemp, who, along with Thomas Greene, continued in a previous
and conventional tradition of clowning that emphasized farce and improvisation (F:
1.4.139; Q: C4v). This rearrangement did not, as some believe, signal a consolidation of
the best and most urbane actors within the most financially and artistically successful
troupe, the King’s Men. Rather, this reorganization seems to augment and expand the
traditional strengths of individual companies by contributing to their specific house styles.
While Kemp’s jigs and improvisational style may have seemed stale at the Globe, a Red
Bull audience were not yet disabused with this fashion and likely saw it as a logical
corollary to the drama staged in that theater.

Inheriting the tradition of “railing” from the children, Ben Jonson probably did more than any other single individual to highlight the growing disjunctions among London’s theaters. Although, in the prologue to *Volpone* (1607), Jonson notes his own penchant for Juvenalian satire, he nevertheless endeavors to elevate the literary status of public plays at the expense of the common playgoer (ll.10). What sets apart this audience segment from their “more learned and sufficient” upscale counterparts is their seemingly insatiable desire to witness “the concupiscence of dances and antics . . .[which] tickles the spectators” (*The Alchemist*, “To the Reader”, ll.4-6). Obviously, Jonson’s tendentious criticism of the “monstrous and forced action” prevalent on the public stage met its counterpart in the masses of plebeian playgoers who thronged to the Fortune or Red Bull for precisely this kind of bombast. From the perspective of the supply side of cultural products, therefore, Jonson’s satire misses the point. His low estimation of theatrical trends operates on an axis of literary and dramatic value that would hardly enter the consideration of dramatic companies, their management, or their investors. For this group, the value of a play would consist solely in its potential for generating revenue over the short-term.

By controlling supply, both through the plays themselves and the venues where they were staged, theatrical companies were able to exert sizeable influence over the tastes of their constituent markets. Unlike other forms of production, cultural producers often occupy an unique position within their economic and social communities. In addition to the economically dominant role of these firms within their sphere of operations, they also enjoy a symbolically privileged role due to the intensely communicative and socially visible
nature of their products (Bourdieu 1993: 44). Therefore, the "power" of dramatic companies—or anyone involved in the playgoing business, for that matter—was not that of a quasi-official organ of an authoritative, state-sponsored, apparatus as a chorus of recent commentators would have us believe (Goldberg; Manley). Rather, the relationship between the company and its market might be theorized in reciprocal terms in which both participating parties enjoy relative leverage over the other in discrete aspects of the company's activity. Queen Anne's Men dictated the admission price and the nature of their dramatic offerings, for example, including the ability to mold the audience's taste through these productions. Nevertheless, the audience would eventually determine whether or not the company would be profitable, and worse, they had the power, when galvanized, to damage severely the company's operations (see chapter five, above).

Although this industry was conditioned by concrete and self-apparent parameters and transactions, the underlying fiscal state of affairs must have been largely opaque to the individual agents involved and, indeed, cannot be witnessed with any sort of inductive certainty by later investigators. Instead, this interrelated network of social and economic relationships (the "habitus," in Bourdieu's words) might be inferred as an operant theoretical principle with minimal empirical support.

For Bourdieu, habitus determines the set of only partially conscious actions and responses produced by individuals in an ensemble of defined situations given by their socio-economic conditions, class, occupation, and education, among other factors. It is, according to Bourdieu,

the work of inculcation and appropriation necessary in order for those products of collective history...to succeed in reproducing themselves more or less completely.
in the form of durable dispositions, in the organisms [i.e. individuals] lastingly subjected to the same conditionings, and thus placed in the same material conditions of existence (1977: 85).

The habitus, however, is not just a more nuanced and less monolithic theory of class relations. Habitus exists in a homologous correspondence with various Marxist variants of class; more specifically, habitus is an historical product rather than an objective and perpetually replicated set of economic outcomes. It is the structure of the habitus that, like ideology, mediates between various elements of society by obscuring the realities of economic exchange for all parties involved.

The notion of the habitus has obvious relevance for periods of emergent capitalism as well as for the business of commercial playing. By presenting dramatic works that resonate in a specific sociological backdrop, Anne’s Men strove to transform what is fundamentally an economic relationship into “elective relations of reciprocity” (Bourdieu 1977: 177). In order to do this, however, the company was forced to expend the cultural labor necessary to mystify the objective financial realities and goals of their theatrical practice. Their task, in other words, was to transform the inherently oppositional and self-interested relationship between producer and consumer into the fiction of disinterested exchange and mutual conviviality. Once achieved, Queen Anne’s Men were able to mold the tastes of their audience to suit their dramatic repertory. In order to understand better the ways in which Anne’s Men were able to manipulate the habitus, it will due to identify and examine their constituent demographic in Clerkenwell and the surrounding environs in greater London.
Social and Economic Life in Clerkenwell

The radical population growth of London throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the attendant problems precipitated by this rapid expansion, has become a commonplace assertion among civic historians. Less well documented, however, are the manifold effects London's growth had upon its suburbs and outlying areas like Clerkenwell. The growth of the City of London was most exaggerated in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, when the population increased from 70,000 to 100,000 (Rappaport 64). The attendant poverty that accompanied this growth had the expected effect on living conditions throughout the city and especially in the poorer parishes to the north, east, and west of the city. The influx of un- and underemployed persons severely hampered the ability of the municipal government, individual parishes, and the livery companies to deal with the situation and provide adequate alms for those who were impoverished (Archer 151-52). During this period, historians, although admitting a limited degree of accuracy, estimate that two-thirds of Londoners were either hovering around the subsistence level or utterly destitute; they were either poor or very poor (Rappaport 166-69; Boulton 122). Living conditions in many neighborhoods throughout the city were appalling; in a study of Aldgate in the 1590s, statistics note a high incidence of plague throughout the decade (in 1593, 1500 burials outpaced 125 baptisms) an intolerable 58% infant mortality rate, and an alarming number of deaths recorded as due to "accident or violence" (Forbes 1971). Such studies raise the specter of prolific crime throughout city streets. Criminal activity ranged from petty theft and damage to property perpetrated by youth to the growing presence of a well-organized criminal underworld of vagrants and "masterless men" engaged in activities as varied as
the dispersion of stolen goods, extortion, and the management of prostitution and bawdy houses (Archer 206-13).

Civic authorities became so strained in dealing with the multiple problems of poverty, crime, and charity evinced by poverty that the crown, noting "how such great multitudes of people...being heaped up and in a sort smothered with many families of children and servants in one house or small tenement," urged Londoners to disperse themselves throughout the city and the realm, hoping to alleviate contagious disease (Larkin and Hughes 1: 246). Surely, a nostalgia for the past, rather than pride in the present or hope for the future, animates John Stow as he walks London’s streets in the 1590s:

Near adjoining to this abbey, on the south side thereof, was sometime a farm belonging to the said nunnery; at the which farm I myself in my youth have fetched many a halfpenny worth of milk, and never had less than three ale pints for a halfpenny in the summer...Goodman’s son, being heir to his father’s purchase, let out the ground first for the grazing of horses, and then for garden-plots, and lived like a gentleman thereby (149-50).

Stow gives the impression that his beloved city has changed fundamentally since his childhood and the times remembered in the chronicles he has read; for him, a climate of charity, obligation, and mutual respect has given way to self-interest, calculation, and inequality.

Overcrowding and the establishment of more stringent building codes within the

5. Whorehouses were especially conspicuous in and around Clerkenwell and up and down St. John Street. Bawds like “Balck Luce of Clerkenwell” and Elizabeth Kirkham became especially notorious for plying their trade in the neighborhood (Archer 213).
city walls throughout this period meant that the suburbs were left to absorb a significant part of the growth. Many of the suburbs failed to assimilate new residents and witnessed the deterioration of living standards at a rate higher than the city proper. This was especially true in Southwark and the suburbs to the east of Aldgate and the Tower, where population growth was especially rapid and overcrowding and hunger more acute. Stepney, especially, was populated by large numbers of poor expelled from the city to alleviate overcrowding in the metropolis as well as mariners of various sorts. Therefore this parish was doubly prone to the economic vagaries of the shipping trade as well as the importation of shipboard plague and disease from around the world (Brett-James 195). Like Southwark, the northern suburbs were gaining a reputation for squalor and licentiousness. Stow complains that the lands without Cripplegate were “place to a number of bowling-alleys and dicing houses, which in all places are increased, and too much frequented.” Presumably the steady increase in gamblers was made possible by the four thousand communicants who had migrated to the parish of St. Giles, Cripplegate and the tenements along “Rotten Row,” lining the high street from Haliwell to Shoreditch (385-90).

Clerkenwell was not immune to the ravages of poverty, and St. James’ was certainly not one of London’s wealthier parishes. Nevertheless, modest new businesses and trades flourished in Clerkenwell, demanding a force of both skilled and unskilled labor earning low wages (Pinks 12). The neighborhood seems to have been spared the worst of the penury, perhaps owing to the unique circumstances attending the growth of this suburb. Before the increases in population and construction, property outside the city walls yet still within the bars (the official boundary of the city) and beyond in
neighborhoods like Clerkenwell was readily and cheaply available. Clerkenwell had, until the mid sixteenth century, previously been relatively unpopulated, containing the priory of St. Johns and other monastic lands which, with the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII in 1539, were procurable from the crown at fairly attractive prices. Many prominent London families established estates there, including James Byatt in 1585 and Lord Cobham sometime in the early 1590s, according to a 1598 manuscript by one of Cobham’s descendants, Thomas Thyne (BL: Stowe Mss.1047, fo. 208r; Add. Mss. 37666). By the beginning of the seventeenth century, Clerkenwell boasted three teeming residential neighborhoods, around the Charterhouse, St. John’s Priory, and Clerkenwell Priory (Brett-James 214). Despite the worsening crime that prompted the establishment of a prison known as Hick’s Hall in the east end of Clerkenwell by Middlesex authorities in 1610, Clerkenwell did not suffer the same degree of overcrowding and ghettoization as nearby Aldersgate, Newgate, and other suburbs immediately without the city wall. Clerkenwell seems to have been spared the absolute worst of the destitution because of the small, but noticeably affluent, population that had previously taken advantage of the dissolution of the priory lands (Brett-James 217-18). The influx of prominent new residents would precipitate a concomitant demand for greater provision of goods and services in the community, attracting tradesmen, apprentices, and journeymen laborers who relocated to the neighborhood in search of employment. This movement, in turn, stimulated new jobs for even lower-order workers and those engaged in the service industry, further contributing to population growth and leading to a neighborhood with an eclectic blend of lower- and middle-class residents. These people did, in large part, have

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6Peter Heywood, brother of the playwright, was employed as a justice of the peace in this facility.

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some disposable income to spend on the theater and other forms of entertainment, making Clerkenwell an auspicious location for the establishment of a new theatrical venture.

I argue that it is this unique political economy that characterized the growth of Clerkenwell, contributing to the social cohesion of its residents and the loyal theatrical market engendered there. The generosity of the neighborhood’s freeholders seems to indicate that Clerkenwell, despite moderate class division and rapid growth, was a remarkably cohesive community, especially for the suburbs. Stow recounts how William Herne, a clothworker and yeoman of the guard, in 1580, “gave lands and tenements” in trust to his company in order to “pay yearly for ever fourteen pounds to the churchwardens of Clerkenwell” (395). This act of charity was echoed by Thomas Holford in 1606, who, despite being a parishioner of “Christchurch, near Newgate,” dispensed all his freeholdings in the northern suburbs to “the parish of St. James’, Clerkenwell” (GdH: Mss. 10597). The voluntary relief provided by these donors corresponded to the City of London’s mandated solution to local poverty, which stipulated that richer parishes subsidize poorer ones (Rappaport 171-73) The fact that much of the land in Clerkenwell was acquired cheaply during the monastic breakup might account for the generosity of its landowners. The type of charity exhibited by Clerkenwell freeholders was potentially impossible in other inner city parishes where lingering debt fomented by the perennially high price of property prevented the vigorous exercise of philanthropy.

In addition to being a relatively harmonious and tightly-knit neighborhood, the history of Clerkenwell prior to the Reformation marked it as a longstanding site for public entertainment and other leisure pastimes for its residents and visitors from its more populous southern neighbor. This community predisposition seems to be a product of its
long and close association with several venerable institutions of the Roman Catholic Church. Both the Nunnery of St. Mary, the Priory of St. John of Jerusalem, and the Charterhouse monastery were established in Clerkenwell, the former two around 1100 and the latter during the reign of Edward III (Pinks 2; Stow 391). The parish of St. James’ was established in 1175 and soon gained regional notoriety when it was selected by the parish clerks of London as the location for the annual exhibition of sacred drama (Pinks 3; Stow 119). Because of its rolling hills and grassy fields, Clerkenwell proved a felicitous site for these mystery and miracle plays and for other leisure pursuits. Given the availability of open land, the community was also home to bear and bull baiting, sledding and ice-skating in winter, May Day festivities, “leaping, dancing, shooting, wrestling, casting of the stone and ball...and [other] merry disports” (Stow 118-23). Wrestling was popular in the neighborhood throughout the year, especially annually during Bartholemew Fair when the Lord Mayor and his aldermen traveled in state to Clerkenwell to watch the bouts.

Another contributing factor that made Clerkenwell a natural haven for playgoing was the large number of apprentices residing in the immediate vicinity. Apprentices in early-modern London represented a significant and highly visible social grouping. Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, apprentices accounted for 10% of the city’s population (Ben-Amos 84). In an effort to revise certain commonplace assertions regarding the sociological niche occupied by apprentices, recent historians concentrate on the social bonds among apprentices. Previous studies have emphasized the familiar nature of the bond established between master and apprentice, one going so far as to suggest that London’s apprentices “were indeed adolescents” and therefore exhibit the behaviour
typical of twentieth century youth (S. Smith 219). In London, as opposed to the
countryside and provincial villages, apprentices developed a greater sense of autonomy,
one affectively generated by increased social bonds between apprentices, by decreased
superintendence from their masters, and, not least, by the many and varied attractions of
the frenzied urban environment. These factors were made possible by London’s
population explosion which spurred the growth of small craftsmen of various small-scale
manufactured goods operating in the northern suburbs and a concomitant influx of
apprentices to labor in these newly established shops (Ben-Amos 89). Many of these new
businesses and shops were located outside the city wall. In Clerkenwell, the construction
of low-cost housing, built predominantly as homes for tradesmen and apprentices,
increased nearly 300% during the reigns of James and Charles (Pinks 9). Records also
indicate a disproportionate number of Clerkenwell apprentices charged with criminal
activity of various sorts, suggesting that the neighborhood was home to a disproportionate
number of apprentices (MSR). Another indication that Clerkenwell was a haven for
apprentices, is suggested by the “lewd persons . . . rogues and vagabonds” that frequently
descended on the community seeking employment (CLRO Remembrancia II, fo. 70). If it
weren’t for the possibility of employment, or at least its high likelihood, it’s probable that
these vagrants would have bypassed the neighborhood altogether (Beier 43).

The importance of apprentices in fueling the physical expansion and notoriety of
the entertainment industry in early modern London has been duly noted. Despite
controversy over the real ability of apprentices to fill the coffers of various public
entertainment concerns, both contemporary scholarly accounts and documentary evidence
confirms that this group attended these performances, often in large numbers. Andrew
Gurr suggests that both playgoing and bear baiting were viable and frequent entertainment options for the working-classes, even if the high mortality rate among dogs and bears limited the frequency of the latter (1992: 215-16). Attending a performance at the Red Bull cost two pence for a seat in the galleries or only a penny if the playgoer didn’t mind standing in the yard (Gurr 1987: 246). By the seventeenth century, when playing in private theaters became popular, the visibility of artisans and apprentices at the public houses would be even more pronounced as those who could afford them, and had inclinations towards fashionability, chose the halls. Early modern Londoners, to degrees ranging from moderate disdain to outright disgust, frequently commented on the prevalence of tradesmen and their apprentices in theater audiences. Middleton complains of “a dull audience of stinkards sitting in the penny gallery of a theater, yawning at the players” (1604: C1v); Dekker adds that term-time, especially, is “when the two-penny clients, and penny stinkards swarm together to hear the stagerites” (1609: sig). Apprentices flocked to plays during term-time because they would not have to contend with the law students, their common adversaries.

Clerkenwell, through its demographic and the charity of certain residents, seemed to exhibit greater cohesion than other neighborhoods in and around the city. The parish and the community that it served maintained this cohesion through alternative forms of social censure that emphasized the shame of individual transgressors in the eyes of the populace. With its roots in charivari, skimmington and other traditional practices, the

7. For the economics of apprentices and their importance to the theatrical market in Clerkenwell, see chapter five, below. Suffice it to remark, for now, that dramatic performance was certainly within reach of the majority of Londoners. The exception to this general rule were those who had no income at all and therefore were reliant on the charity of others to subsist.
people of Clerkenwell and the parishioners of St. James' sought to deal with communal morality without recourse to the ecclesiastical courts or other de jure forms of authority.⁸

A letter of 1587 from John Sedell to Humphrey Masterson records one such incident in a case of adultery. Sedell claims that Masterson and Elizabeth, the wife of one Mr. Swayne, had lived in adultery for nine years. He claims that this is

a matter very dangerous and not to be suffered unpunished for examples' sake. If therefore the said Humphrey Masterson, and his new wife, and any of them shall stand to abuse, spurn, and admonish the said...or shall be appealed from...shall not be punished in that behalf by the judge or judges...[and they] shall depart Clerkenwell (E135/9/20).

The stipulation that the couple leave Clerkenwell would likely have been welcomed by the defendants given the exact form of the punishment:

I think it appropriate for examples' sake, that on the second Sunday in Lent, in the parish church of Clerkenwell at morning prayer, he [i.e. Masterson] stand in a white wedding dress with her red veil in her hand during the said prayer and sermon which I wish she would be made longing for these offenses, and that after the end of the sermon, humbly on her knees, humbly make penance for her offence to you and the congregation, desiring mercy of God and the congregation (PRO: E135/9/20).

Apparently, the Clerkenwell community and its spokesmen were concerned not only with the overall moral health of the community and its members, but sought to regulate such

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⁸ Such practices were not unique to Clerkenwell; they were practiced, occasionally, within tightly-knit city parishes and provincial towns (see Bristol 1985 and 2000).
offenses collectively in order to engender a communally held sense of ethical value.

Festive pastimes and pre-commercial dramatic productions incorporated a similar set of communally shared principles and ideologies. In exchange for their patronage, the audience of the Red Bull would insist on a mutually beneficial return from the company. The Red Bull was to become an important and influential neighbourhood institution. It was not, as commentators on the public theater have often claimed, an anonymous site of license for a deracinated and heterogeneous audience, and its theatrical practice drew on just such a sense of community.

iii - If You Build It, They Will Come

The evidence does not support a claim that, directly because of the sociological and economic composition of the neighborhood, the Queen Anne’s Men sought to secure a permanent playhouse and transfer their theatrical operations to Clerkenwell. However, when the troupe arrived, the Queen’s Men and the local residents did forge a number of reciprocal social and economic bonds. In the years preceding their move to the Red Bull, Queen Anne’s Men, known at this time as Worcester’s Men, were part of Henslowe’s consortium of companies and played at The Rose in Southwark when the Admiral’s Men vacated this venue to what must have been considered to be a more lucrative theatrical environment north of the city at the Fortune in 1600 (E.S. 2: 225). The aspirations of Worcester’s Men at this time were, presumably, twofold. The troupe, and especially Heywood the resident playwright, sought to excise themselves from the financial control of Henslowe which severely curtailed the revenues forthcoming to the future sharers and

reduced Heywood to a purveyor of plays for a fixed sum. In order to do this, however, the company would have to forgo playing at Henslowe’s Rose.

Finding a new, stable, and suitably attractive playing space was obviously of paramount importance. In the interim period between their stint at the Rose and their premiere at the Red Bull, the finances of the troupe, both corporately and personally, were extremely volatile. The troupe played intermittently at the Boar’s Head, a small converted Inn in Eastcheap (Clark 22). This venue was probably never meant as a permanent theater and would not provide scope for the stage effects that popularized Red Bull productions; nor would the Boar’s Head offer the capacity to play to audiences as large as those at the amplitheaters (E.S. 2: 444). Neither the financing arrangement nor the revenues forthcoming at this venue were, apparently, enough to support the company and their debts.

It was also around this time that Worcester’s Men, like the other adult companies, received new patrons. It is unlikely, however, that this titular change in patron had any bearing on the restructuring of the company or their migration to the Red Bull. In fact, the evidence suggests quite the opposite—that this change was one in name only. The Earl of Worcester had supported a fluctuating group of players since 1555 who enjoyed a reasonably successful career touring the provinces (E.S. 2: 220). By the early years of the seventeenth century, Worcester had risen to prominence at court, holding several important offices including the Mastership of the Horse, a post the Earl of Essex formerly enjoyed. This office, according to both Chambers and Bentley, was taken as a sign that such a well respected aristocrat should be entitled to the patronage of a dramatic troupe. The fact, then, that the company did not receive its official patent as the Queen’s
Majesty’s Servants until February, 1604—a patent that wasn’t officially sealed until 1609—need not suggest that this company was any less important than the King’s or Prince’s Servants. To the contrary, it is quite possible that Anne’s Men did not receive their patent until much later because of their relatively stable positioning in the London theatrical scene owing to the prominence of their patron.\textsuperscript{10} By contrast, The Chamberlain’s Men received their patent as the King’s Servants a mere six weeks following James’ accession. For three years, this troupe had been effectively been under no patronage of note when Hunsdon, the Lord Chamberlain relinquished his seat on the privy council due to illness (Barroll 1991: 33-34). Shakespeare’s company, in this sense, needed the immediate support of an influential patron to protect them from various municipal authorities.

To the extent that they were able, Anne’s Men probably sought to emulate the Admiral’s Men and move north. These neighborhoods offered a strong local constituency of potential playgoers and would render the company less reliant upon cross-river traffic. People did, of course, live in Southwark, but this commonplace benchmark for descriptions of the neighborhoods in which theaters were erected is probably more legendary than accurate, the playgoing environs of Middlesex, on the other hand, were merely poor, not perverse (Eccles; Mullaney 1988). Locating the new playhouse in the northern suburbs and particularly in Clerkenwell provided other advantages to the company. Many of the troupe’s members were already parishioners at St. James’, Clerkenwell and were familiar with the neighborhood and its social demographic. The

\textsuperscript{10} It’s likely that the Earl of Worcester remained interested in the actions of his former company and may have interceded on their behalf on a number of occasions. Heywood, continues to refer to him a “patron,” both personally and corporately, in the dedication to his \textit{Apology For Actors} (1612).
Figure 1.1. A view of Clerkenwell (c. 1560) with a flag indicating the future location of the Red Bull Playhouse. By the early seventeenth century the neighborhood would be much more built up and congested than depicted in this illustration.


Of those mentioned on the patent, Greene, Swinnerton, Heywood, and the two Beeston brothers, were already members of the Clerkenwell community and its adjacent urban environs, for several generations in the case of some. Members of the Swinnerton family are mentioned in several manuscripts as residents of the nearby parish of St. Botolph without Aldersgate (GdH: Ms. 10911a (1592); PRO: Cl/358/57 (1595)), and a family tree lists their presence there since 1539 (BL: Add. Mss. 4102, fo. 40v). The Swinnertons were an established family of the Worshipful Company of Merchant-Tailors, whose progeny not only included the player (Thomas), but John, a Protestant ideologue and author of *A Christian Love Letter* (1606) (see chapter four, below), and a future Lord Mayor (in 1612). The accounts of St. John's, Clerkenwell for 1547, name both a John Heywood and Thomas Greene, both relatives of the future players (PRO: E101/631/34). Heywood, himself a Lincolnshire man, was a parishioner of St. James' soon after his arrival in London in 1594. Heywood, as well as the playwrights Thomas Dekker and William Rowley who frequently wrote for the company, were also established members of the community, both residing at Clerkenwell Close. Attesting to his close and long-lasting connection with Clerkenwell and St. James, even after the company had moved to Drury Lane, John Weever inscribed an epigraph to Heywood on a pillar near the west end of the church (Clark 58).

Convincing local authorities of the efficacy of another playhouse project was another matter. Several neighbourhoods in and around London resisted the encroachment
of players and playhouses, arguing that discretionary spending on plays was ill-advised when the local poor wanted relief. In 1573, when the commercial entertainment industry was still in its infancy, the Corporation of the City of London refused an offer to hand over the licensing of plays to a certain Holmes, maintaining that they were exploring options which would be profitable “to the relief of the poor in the hospitals” (E.S.: 1:281). The regulations on drama of the next year also stipulated that excess profits derived from public staging of dramatic entertainments must be channelled to the indigent. Directives from City authorities had no force in the liberties around London such as Halliwell and Shoreditch where the first commercial theaters were built, but this was not to mean that the companies were in fact at liberty to keep all of their profits. An unsigned letter of 1587 to Francis Walsingham, Secretary of State, petitioned the Privy Council to intervene and force the companies to make regular weekly contributions to the poor (E.S.: 1:294) While we don’t know whether or not the suggestions of Walsingham’s anonymous correspondent were followed, there is considerable evidence that conditions for playing in the Liberties were stipulated on a local and parochial level. The vestry of St. Saviour’s Southwark petitioned the Privy Council in 1598 for the closing of the Swan and the Rose, but by 1600 they were content to allow playing if the community could derive material good from it. It ordered their churchwardens to “talk with the players for tithes for their playhouses and money for the poor” (E.S.: 1:300), clearing the way for an expansion of theatrical activity with the construction of the Globe and the Hope. Other neighbourhoods did not bestow their favour on the players so grudgingly. In April of 1600 what appears to be a loosely organized group, composed not only of parish authorities and signing themselves “Inhabitants of Finsbury,” solicited the Privy Council to
permit the erection of the Fortune. Their reasons were threefold. First, they argued that since the site for the projected theater was so far removed "from any person or place of accompt," no one could legitimately complain that its operations interfered with the normal course of business. Next, the benefits that could be derived for the community by allowing the playhouse were adduced:

Secondly because the erectors of the said house are contented to give a very liberal portion of money weekly, towards the relief of our poor, the number and necessity whereof is so great that the same will redound to the continual comfort of the said poor.

Most surprising, though, is the third reason given as to why the Fortune will be a valuable asset for the neighbourhood. It was complained that, contrary to a recent Act of Parliament, the Justices of Middlesex had not “taken any order, for any supply out of the country” to relieve the parish poor. As the parish could not meet their needs at a local level, and higher government bodies were not fulfilling their obligations, the “Inhabitants of Finsbury” were compelled to seek help from the players (E.S.: 4:327-28).

Clerkenwell also stood to gain from the construction of a local theater, and the neighbourhood would benefit from the Red Bull well after revenues from playing had dried up for other communities following the closing of the theaters in 1642. Just one year before the Restoration would clear the way for renewed legal theatrical performances, Edward Shatterall was bound over for appearance before the Sessions of the Peace for staging illicit “enterludes” at the Red Bull. In his defence, he argued that he had the authority of the local government of Clerkenwell behind him, who hired out the theater for 20s a day to whoever was willing to risk a theatrical venture and who would
furthermore contribute “towards relief of their poor and repairing their highways” (J.C.S.: 2:571). The Red Bull’s conversion from an inn into a full time theater also appears to have been conditional upon contributions from the company that occupied the playhouse to the neighbourhood. Shortly before June of 1605, an attendant of the Duke of Holstein, who had been selected to assemble a company of players to perform under the Duke’s patronage, wrote to James I to ask for the lifting of prohibitions on renovations and new building in Clerkenwell so that construction of a permanent house for the company that would become Queen Anne’s Men could be completed. In support of this application was a petition giving the “consent of the parish” to the players, in exchange for contributions of 20s a month towards poor relief, and an astonishing £500 for highway maintenance (J.C.S.: 6:215-16).

£500 for highway repair would have injected a sizable amount of money into the local economy and provided work for many of Clerkenwell’s un-and underemployed. More likely than not the money was spent locally; road repair is a labor intensive business, and there was certainly a ready population to draw upon for this type of work. With the permission of local authorities granted to the troupe to play in the parish of St. James’, Clerkenwell, the company endeavored to secure a location and financing for the projected playhouse. Because of the financial constraints following their release from Henslowe’s control, the company could ill afford to finance an entirely new structure. Fortunately the troupe eventually obtained favorable terms on the lease of what was apparently a decrepit inn-yard that had fallen into disuse on the upper end of St. John Street adjacent to Clerkenwell Green. The inn was located on property that belonged to the “Seckford

11 Even Burbage used the timbers from the Theater to erect the Globe in 1599.
Estate,” obtained during the Dissolution of the Monasteries during the reign of Henry VIII. The current administrator of this estate was one Henry Seckford, who at this time was Master of the Tents, a post closely related to the Revel’s Office (Griffith 6-11).

It’s not surprising, then, that the troupe showed great interest in this property. Given his association with the Revel’s Office, Seckford would probably be amenable to the construction of a playhouse on his property, especially given the proceeds that would accrue to the neighborhood. Furthermore, one sharer, Martin Slater,12 claimed joint tenure on a lease of this property with one Aaron Holland. Slater’s claim to part of this lease is questionable since Holland is the only one mentioned in subsequent disputes over the property. Nevertheless, it was Slater who petitioned the Privy Council in June 1605 to renovate the inn into a playhouse, claiming that he had “altered some stables and other rooms...to turn them into galleries” (J.C.S. 6: 215). The council had previously denied this request, but apparently relented and overturned its previous decision in response to Slater’s letter (Griffith 8). With the legal impediments temporarily circumvented, Anne’s Men, with the seemingly unlimited capital of Henslowe no longer available (or desired), emulated the joint-stock sharer system employed successfully by the King’s Men to finance the Globe five years earlier. The Red Bull and its future profits were divided among seven sharers: Heywood, Christopher Beeston, Greene, Swinnerton, Perkins, Slater, with Lee and a seemingly independent investor George Pullham investing in one half share apiece. Shares in the playhouse were sold initially at £50 and required the buyer to contribute 50 shillings a year for the rent of the theater structure (Holland was

12. Slater is not mentioned in any of the troupe’s patents but was nevertheless an actor who toured with the company in the provinces.
responsible for the ground rent to Seckford). In a deposition of 1613 in the Court of
Requests, Thomas Woodford (who acquired Swinnerton’s share) claimed that the yearly
profits of one share amounted to £30, suggesting that the company’s net annual profit
amounted to £210 (Wallace 298). This figure was certainly prone to fluctuation,
especially in times of plague, but nevertheless accords with similar estimates of the profits
of the King’s Men and Prince Henry’s Men.

With financing secured, Slater and Holland proceeded with their renovations. As
stated in Slater’s letter to the privy council, the original plan was to simply renovate the
inn along the lines of other theaters like the Boar’s Head. The proposed plan of the
theater, as well as its physical location in relation to St. John Street, made this impossible.
For one, the Red Bull, like the Globe and the Fortune, was one of the largest theaters in
operation during the Jacobean period (Reynolds 88). Further, the inn abutted tenements
on both sides, necessitating that expansion and the construction of the stage and tiring
house must occur to the rear of the property. From the street, therefore, the playhouse
consisted only of an archway atop a walkway which led past the tenements to the theater
behind. Another factor which undoubtedly affected the construction of the theater was a
royal proclamation of March 1605.13 Due to a shortage of timber and the diversion of all
available wood to the shipbuilding industry, the proclamation stipulates that “any new
[structure]... within the same City or Suburbs, or within one mile of the said suburbs...
[shall] be wholly made out of brick, or brick and stone” (Larkin and Hughes 1: 112). The
added expense of using brick in the construction of the Red Bull may have turned out to

13. Although the renovations were probably nearing completion at this point, the company certainly had
yet to begin playing in their new venue owing to plague which delayed their occupation of the theater until
early 1605. (Barroll 1993: 49).
be a blessing in disguise for Queen Anne's Men because the popularity of a significant portion of the troupe's repertory consists in spectacular pyrotechnics, bonfires, and explosions. These elaborate effects would have posed considerable danger to a house built entirely of wood (see chapter three, below).

The first production at the Red Bull probably took place when the theaters reopened after the plague late in 1605. It was not simply the building of the playhouse which translated directly into applause and profits for Queen Anne's Men. The company strategically designed a repertory specifically attuned to the tastes of a Clerkenwell community and its nearby urban environs to the south composed of relatively low-income artisans and apprentices. That the troupe consciously engineered its dramatic lineup in this way is confirmed in the printer's prologue to *The Two Merry Milkmaids* (1620, in repertory at the Red Bull, 1618-1619), which advises that any dramatist "must govern his pen according to the capacity of the stage he writes to, both in actor and in auditor."

Accordingly, the troupe's premiere season at the Red Bull (c. 1605-1606) witnessed productions of Heywood's *The Wise Woman of Hodgson* (presented at court on 20 December 1604), 1 and 2 *If You Know Not Me* (see chapter four), the anonymous *Nobody and Somebody* (see chapter two), Dekker's *Sir Thomas Wyatt*, as well as revived plays from its years as Worcester's Men, perhaps including *A Woman Killed With Kindness*, and the lost plays *Black Dog of Newgate, Marshall Osric, Christmas Comes But Once a Year, Jane Shore*, and *The Blind Man Eats Many a Fly* (c. 1601). The preponderance of down-market plays treating working-class themes and placating the desires of this audience was largely the brainchild of Heywood. As the only playwrighting sharer in the company and one familiar with local audience tastes, it's likely that Heywood acted as artistic director.

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for the company. In order to ensure the profitability that would accrue from constructing a stable audience base, the player, dramatist, and sharer realized that the Queen’s Men must differentiate its repertory from those of its competitors by appealing to local inhabitants.

Even in a dramatic career that spanned multiple genres and variegated subject matter, Heywood, according to one critic, remained adept at distilling the material of everyday life around him and, due to his own social positioning, became a “spokesman of burgher ethics and ideas” (Wright 637). Other playwrights writing for the company, especially Dekker and Cooke, seemed to share Heywood’s commitment to presenting socially responsible—and even transformative—plays to entertain, educate, and galvanize a socially and economically cohesive audience. *The Four Prentices of London* (1615), for example, illustrates the heroic activity of apprentices in religious and political spheres (see figure 1.2). The representation of these four brothers who travel to Italy, Ireland, and Jerusalem as crusaders is designed to engender pride in one’s own craft and, more generally, in the working classes of London. Though the brothers are enormously successful as Christian Knights, they refuse to underestimate the value of labor in one’s chosen vocation, and exhibit “no scorn” for “the city-trades” (B1v). Godfrey wonders who

\[\text{Were that man, noble or ignoble born,}
\]

\[\text{That would not practice some mechanic skill}
\]

\[\text{Which might support his state in penury}
\]

\[\text{. . .[and instead]}
\]

\[\text{suck the honey from the public hive. . .}
\]
I hold it no disparage to my birth,
Though I be born an Earl, to have the skill
And the full knowledge of the Mercer's trade (B2r).

Feats of martial heroism are merely a kind of adjunct to the useful and diligent performance of the brothers' ordinary occupations, the true source of their moral character and an asset to their country. The ensuing argument will isolate the assortment

Figure 1.2: Woodcut illustration of brothers Eustace, Godfrey, Charles, and Guy, the four apprentices who protect the Christian world during time off from their trades.

of strategic devices expropriated through the dramatic productions of the Queen Anne's Men designed to refract the concerns of the local community onto a broader ensemble of social, political, and religious issues. In so doing, the company stabilized its own economic position within a competitive culture industry precisely through recognition of their own reciprocal social obligations within the community.

However, generations of commentators have generally failed to note either the artistic merit or the social potency of Heywood's and others' contributions to the Queen Anne's Men Red Bull repertory, reflexively returning instead to the works of Shakespeare and his more well-known contemporaries. This critical imbalance isn't that surprising given the tendency of readers or audiences' interest to dictate the choice of material under scholarly consideration as well as the meanings derived from these texts (Fish 304). By reexamining these plays, I wish to consider them not according to the prevailing standards of twentieth century criticism, nor from the multiple and instructive readings available through any number of fashionable theoretical perspectives, even though I utilize several such positions in the chapters that follow. Rather, I wish to understand the potential audience responses to the plays given the social and economic demographic in Clerkenwell outlined above. This approach, given the immediacy and localized nature of the drama, essentially amounts to the practice that Alan Sinfield advocates as "dissident reading." According to this design, the role of the commentator is to interpret the play as a cultural intervention within one or more of its material contexts. The texts, in this way, are active vessels used to construct meaning both by and for historically situated auditors: textual study underscores cultural significance (22). In my rendering of this strategy, I seek to foreground characters and events within the plays that speak specifically and forcefully to
the constellation of interests given by the social conditions of the audience.

Doing this is not simply to lodge an alternate or oppositional reading of the play, but to engage in readings that tend in directions suggested by the plays themselves. After all, the theatrical company constitutes an interested producer, consciously staging dramatic works before an equally interested audience. In this way, Sinfield’s precepts seem especially germane to the works of popular culture. It is only through an understanding of the participants in this cultural transaction that we can secure a contextually accurate understanding of the artifacts it produced. The following chapters build upon the dual focus on supply and demand, theatrical company and its audience and local community, initiated here. In the process, I hope to derive meanings of the plays that reflect these dueling institutional constraints, as well as the larger political and social milieux that contain them. In chapter five, I return more explicitly to the role played by the Queen’s Men in Clerkenwell in discussing a surprisingly destructive riot staged by apprentices following the company’s 1616 move from the Red Bull to the Cockpit, a private theater in Drury Lane.
CHAPTER 2
RENEGOTIATING CITY COMEDY

Although scholar-critics have long noticed a generic split within those plays of the first decades of the seventeenth century known broadly as “city comedy,” the difficulty in adequately or accurately determining the general political, economic, and social contours and allegiances of “city” or “citizen” comedies of various forms is latent in the rather confused attempts to define the genre. Most commentators would agree that “city comedy,” broadly understood, takes as its setting, and often its subject, an urban environment—frequently London, but also other Continental and fictionalized cities—and in so doing dramatizes the lives of their residents, shedding light on contemporaneous patterns of life and values in these locales, either directly or metaphorically.

But even this vague definition is dismissed by those who reject the premise that these plays might be taken to reflect the conditions in their urban surroundings. Some argue that reading the dramatic work as fundamentally a reflection of “the mental [or social] climate of the period” is reductive since such readings are either pre- or “postinterpretive,” evacuating the play of its innate ideas and values which are artistic and not historical (Levin 147-48). Even with obstreperous critics like Richard Levin to the side, debate persists over what ought to be included within this genre or group of genres and how, exactly, these plays shed light on social issues. The first major study of city
comedy treated "satire" and a "radical critique of their age" as the hallmarks of the genre; satire here was frequently understood in its Horatian form and abundantly evident in the intensely "observational" plays of Jonson and Middleton. This narrow definition effectively excluded altogether the whole subgenre of what's now often referred to as "citizen" comedy. Noteworthy plays such as Dekker's *Shoemaker's Holiday* (1599) and the comedies of Heywood were dismissed as merely "exploitatation[s] of local color" (Gibbons 4-5). Later critics offer a more nuanced and materially based account of satire in these plays, locating it within "contradictory aspects of the marketplace" which fluctuated during the period between Bakhtinian festivity and its protocapitalist function instituted in such projects as Gresham's Royal Exchange (Wells 37-38). Historical and theoretical approaches like this advance our understanding of the comedy by placing the interests of the plays within the social structure of early-modern London, but nevertheless preserve static binaries which obscure the realities that the plays comment upon. It's unlikely, for instance, that any Londoner, regardless of her class positioning, could have conceived of city life in terms of the techniques and values of an unhindered laissez-faire market that Gresham's exchange seems to symbolize for later commentators. Nor would London, despite the frequency of secular festivals, processions, and entertainments, have been felt as a festive Bakhtinian market for any citizen immersed in the daily exigencies of providing for themselves and their families.

Attempts to define the genre according to formal qualities are obviously exclusionary and betray certain socioeconomic allegiances in their choice of subject matter. Clearly plays beyond the purview of the studies mentioned above are also rich in
satire and are concerned with the economic transformations occurring within the city. Indeed, albeit from a different perspective, “citizens,” apprentices, and other artisans had just as great a stake in the transformation of commerce as the gentry. Other scholars, however, have approached this problematic genre from a different tack, concentrating on a certain type of play labeled citizen comedy. City comedy, according to Alexander Leggatt’s frequently cited *Citizen Comedy in the Age of Shakespeare* (1973), is limited number of comedies “set in a predominantly middle-class social milieu” (1). The focus of Legatt’s study, however, is self-consciously exclusionary. To his credit, he includes “pro-citizen” plays like *Westward Ho!* and *Northward Ho!*, but he also analyzes traditional city comedies like *Every Man In His Humor* according to the same rationale. The result is typical of critics who consider a limited group of plays in order to define the parameters of a specific genre. Like many others, Leggatt, by allowing the boundaries of a specific project to define a genre, perpetuates scholarly neglect of select plays that don’t find their way into any of the available categories.¹

Leggatt’s inclusion of “citizen” plays into scholarship on the genre offers a welcome rejoinder and addition to studies concentrating primarily on the derisive satire of Jonson, Middleton and plays staged by the boys companies. Unfortunately, however, the already muddled genre now often suffers from even more confusion. A rather crude demarcation exists between “citizen” plays, on the one hand, which are taken to endorse the values of

¹ Heywood’s oeuvre and that of many other Red Bull playwrights are typically excluded from such studies even though they merit attention according to the organizational precepts adduced by the critics. Leggatt’s only sustained discussion of Heywood focuses on *If You Know Not Me*, a play with more any common with chronicle history than an possible understanding of city comedy. See Leggatt 1973: 20-44.
workers and city life and "city" plays that satirize those same pursuits, on the other. Even a cursory reading of a sampling of these plays reveals that both types of play incorporate satire as well as their share of uncritical celebration of life in the city. Rather than allowing such longstanding presuppositions to structure critical reaction to these plays, a sociological approach allows for a deeper contextual analysis of the drama unburdened of generic expectations. Rather than understanding the characters in these plays as dramatic types, they might be seen as "social integers that gather to themselves contemporary prejudice." Leinwand suggests that the those who populate these plays fluctuate between more abstract dramatic types and tangible instantiations of contemporary Londoners (1986: 12). Their tactility or fluidity, by turns, would be determined by the social positioning of the audience, predisposed to favor either gentry or citizen over its opposed type, sentiments clearly tied to the demographic propensities of certain playhouses over against others. This kind of approach might be used fruitfully to examine the representation of the City itself, and, more importantly, its citizens. Far from being simply a concrete physical set of locations, the City in this drama functions as an inescapable mediator for the character's actions, political, economic, or personal. Other commentators have broadened our conception of the genre by extending the range of settings to which the category city comedy might be applied. Rather than delimiting a specific London setting, other cities—be they historical or contemporary European—take on the characteristics of early modern London. These other locales, especially prominent in the plays of Shakespeare also present city life in all its complexity and explore the contradictions inherent in the rapidly changing urban environment (Paster 4).
I have termed my "localized local readings"2 of the two Anne’s Men plays discussed here a renegotiation not only to situate myself among the welter of previous scholarship, but also to emphasize how presentations of these works metaphorically illustrate the potential relations between players and their audiences and, especially in the case of Nobody and Somebody (1606), enact potentially emancipatory strategies for the largely disenfranchised spectators at the Red Bull. In both this play, and in Heywood’s Fair Maid of the Exchange (1607), varieties of economic exchange are central to the action represented.

Financial exigencies were undoubtedly central to all playgoers, but the pressures evinced by economic relations were more acutely felt by the working-class audiences that attended the Red Bull. For them, everyday life was often a struggle (see chapter one, above). But in the practice of daily life, through its very “ordinariness,” there exist “ingenious ways in which the weak make use of the strong [that] lend a political dimension to everyday practices” (De Certeau xvii). These coping techniques are rarely articulated, but in practice this “common experience” structures life in ways that are opaque to state-sanctioned authority and the economic capital that governs daily exchange. For De Certeau, this is a phenomenological space and its practical political utility is thereby diminished. The lack of pragmatic strategies for promoting equity and emancipation, however, proves an advantage of these internalized techniques. Since they exist at a

2. Thanks to Linda Chames for this revealing phrase. It implies a temporally localized reading of the given play, but in a context which, in addition, specifically considers the reactions of a local audience.
linguistic level, they are impermeable to the attempts of de jure authority to diminish their importance or eradicate them altogether: “they provide the possible with a site that is impregnable, because it is a nowhere, a utopia” (17). The alternative social structures embedded in everyday life offer a concrete resistance to dominant ideologies that moves beyond the mere desire for utopia as an ideal, but ultimately unattainable dream.

Unfortunately, these embedded strategies and the monolithic tendencies they counter are often opaque, even to those who unconsciously implement them. The value of the two plays under consideration here is that they disclose these practical strategies, rendering coherent and persuasive both the impostures necessitated by economic embeddedness (Fair Maid), and the utopian strategies that might potentially lead to their transformation (Nobody and Somebody). These and other Red Bull comedies have the capacity to move beyond representations or revelations of a fleeting “wish-fulfillment” that ultimately reify the social stratifications and modes of productions they pretend to subvert (Kastan 1991: 158-60). Just as historical manifestations of social dissidence like the Clerkenwell riot offer more than the momentary release of social tensions (see chapter 5.1, above), the dramatic performances that the rioters sought to keep in their community through this action are genuinely subversive and not automatically contained by traditional authority.

1 - Exchanging Places

A cursory reading of Thomas Heywood’s Fair Maid of The Exchange (c.1606) firmly situates it within both the geographical and thematic purview of city comedy. The

3. For De Certeau, “ordinary” linguistic practices reside within the langue (in Saussure’s parlance) or “deep structure” (in Chomsky’s).
play, as its title suggests, takes place predominantly at the bustling Royal Exchange on Threadneedle Street and in the shops adjacent to it. It tells the story of Phillis Flower, desired by numerous courtiers, and universally regarded as the fairest maid in the exchange. Among this maid’s suitors are Ferdinand and Anthony Goulding whose passionate suits prevail upon their younger brother, Frank, who himself falls in love with Phillis. Unlike his elder brothers, who pursue generally accepted courtship practices, Frank cunningly intercepts his brothers’ love-letters, disguising himself as a cripple, and eventually wins Phillis’s hand. This marriage, however, not only cements Frank’s love for Phillis, it makes him a rich man. Unlike the elder brothers, Frank would not be entitled to a significant portion of the family fortune; his status would be greatly improved by an alliance with the Flowers and by the added assurance of Master Flower that he “shalt not want for crowns” (G3r). The parallel subplot features an indebted merchant, Bernard, whose fortunes are improved similarly through marriage to Moll Berry, whose father holds the bond for Bernard’s failed investments and agrees to forgive the debt when the couple are betrothed.

The play offers a useful demonstration of the institutional force of the Queen’s Men within the Clerkenwell community. In this play, all aspects of social life are rendered through mechanisms of exchange, exigencies easily apprehended by a markedly un-leisured audience accustomed to dealing with such pressures on a daily basis. Persons and emotions, in addition to commodities, are invariably reduced to their specific market valuations and utilities. The suits of love of the three Goulding brothers for Phillis are promulgated in terms of economic calculation in which one deed is strictly exchanged for
another in lieu of material transactions. In addition to illustrating the rogue economy that governs the mechanisms of exchange in this play, I propose to read these underlying economic conceits reflexively back upon the theatrical enterprise in Clerkenwell: the dual pressures of profitability and community appeal force the company to adopt an integrated marketing strategy which reflexively considers its instrumental role in the life of their local community as the primary means to increasing financial gain. Representations of economic activity in addition to numerous references to both the artistic and financial aspects of theatrical productions become metaphors not only for life in Clerkenwell but for the business end of playing itself, influencing this company to map its own financial exigencies onto similar interests shared by the local community. Just as the “excellent good poetry” contained in Frank Goulding’s letter to Phillis provides the means of economic advancement through a wealthy marriage (2.3), so the artistry of the theatrical company provides the means to profitability within the larger institutional setting, an issue iterated in the prologue’s insistence on the giving of “alms” as a mark of charity to the company’s actors.

Due partially to its predominant market setting, the play forces the audience to recognize the reducibility of all human actions to their use-value in strictly monetary terms. Not only human characteristics, but fundamental human conditions are described in such terms. Bobbington, a relatively minor character who disappears by the middle of the play, presumably overseas on a pirating expedition, explains to his comrades the principles that structure the city economy. He refers to Phillis as a “gallant prize” but, contrary to expectations, he has no amorous or marital designs on this or any other woman. Instead,
he and his companions “withdraw from [her] way, / where we may rifle them of what they carry, / I mean both their goods and their virginity” (A3v). Virginity becomes a commodity simply because it is something that might be taken from a virgin and augmented to the groups’ resume of illegal pursuits and provides experience in their renegade “employments.” The pirates’ designs on Phillis are actually a second order commodification of her virginity which already has monetary value attributed to it for the lucky suitor who is able to win the hand of Miss Flower and, with it, access to her dowry and the fortunes of her family. The pirates seek only to pilfer anything that might be considered valuable—accumulation for its own sake.

These pirates are hardly disparaged for their wanton pursuit of human and material wealth. Rather, they are portrayed as simply another faction, prominent in the city, attempting to improve their financial standing in any way possible. The city in this play is so preoccupied with money and the varied means by which it is earned that characters dispense with their proper names; rather, their identities are revealed by their occupations. By way of introduction Fiddle remarks “Master Fiddle is my name. Sir Lawrence Lyre was my father” (C4v). Fiddle does the service of informing his interlocutors of his occupation, the only way by which they are able to differentiate him from all the other random citizens struggling to get by. In return, however, Fiddle and his employer (Flower) expect the same courtesy. Bobbington introduces himself with his Christian name, mentioning in passing that he has “a ship of [his] own by the river.” Master Flower reinterprets this apparently unenlightening nomenclature, replying “by your leave, sir; Captain Racket is your name” (C4v). Not only is Flower unimpressed with “a conceit”
that doesn’t indicate his future partner’s status, he can’t possibly conceive of someone who could own a boat and use it for legitimate purposes. The underground economy becomes an ordinary way of life for those immersed in it. It’s soon revealed that he’s correct, of course, but his greeting reinforces the significance of occupation to an audience who are likely known to each other primarily by their livelihood, often a clear indication of their status in the community. Here again, the emphasis is on the ability of playgoers to recognize the economic embeddedness of their daily lives.

The preoccupation with commodification and the extraction of labor even extends to those characters who would seem not to have any use-value at all. The play’s title-page advertises that the drama contains “the pleasant humors of the Cripple of Fenchurch, very delectable and full of mirth.” The cripple is humorous, but his role in the play, at least according to his supporting cast, is conditioned by services he renders to others in their money-making schemes, not to his institution of mirth in the dramatic economy. Because of the encumbrances imposed by his physical condition, the other characters do not consider the cripple a threat in either economic or romantic spheres. Instead, the cripple might be used to advance their ends. In this regard, the cripple’s physical disability might be considered an asset and another way in which the detritus of ordinary life confirms its usefulness. He uses his crutch to beat back Bobbington and his cronies when they attempt to rape Phyllis (B1r-v); his reputation as an amusing fellow and an honest broker renders him serviceable to Bowdler in his courtship of Moll (C1v); and his diligent work in his

4. The Cripple makes his way onto the title-page because, presumably, this character was portrayed by Thomas Greene, the troupe’s leading actor, and, at this time, the leading comedian in the London theater scene.
shop supposedly will provide the capital that will bail Bernard out of debtors prison (D1r). Of course, the cripple supplies these services in return for payment, either immediately or on deferral. The largest benefactor of the cripple's services is Frank Goulding who uses the cripple "to gull my brothers of that beauteous maid" (D4v). The cripple devises the following plan:

. . .list to me, and follow my advice.
You shall deliver neither of them both;
But frame two letters of your own invention,
Letters of flat denial to their suits.
Give them to your brothers, as from Phillis,
And let each line in either letter tend
To dispraise of both their features;
And the conclusion I would have set down,
A flat resolve bound with some zealous oath,
Never to yield of either of their suits (D4v).

The cripple's useful advice, however, does not even fall under the oxymoronic category of "honest scheming" since it is only through a previous connivance that the letters to which he refers are available: "Why," asks the cripple,

thinkest thou that I cannot write a letter,
Ditty or sonnet, with judicial phrase,
As pretty, pleasing, and pathetical. . .?

Frank: I think thou canst not.
Cripple: Yea, I swear I cannot

Yet, sirrah, I could coney-catch the world (E1r).

The cripple can indeed since he has pilfered the letters in question “from rolls, and scrolls, and bundles of cast wit, / Such as durst never visit Paul’s Churchyard.” Frank, therefore, is only able to exploit the cripple based upon the injustice he has done to others. Charity, even for the handicapped, is entirely foreign to this play; the audience at the Red Bull is forced to recognize, contrary to the much espoused moral sentiment of the city fathers, that the London they inhabit revolves around either the accumulation of wealth or the extraction of services at the lowest possible cost. One’s success is dependant upon the ingenuity of one’s schemes, not on integrity or honest labor.

Not only, however, are persons commodified in this manner, their emotions are as well. Like any number of city comedies—or comedies in general—confused romantic circumstances provide the impetus for the action of the main plot. Like everything else in this play though, love is easily quantifiable in quasi-economic terms. Phillis yearns for “a little, little love, a dram of kind affection” (D1r) as if this emotion might be meted out in specified doses in exchange for remuneration. Such an approach to love might be expected of Flower or the Goulding brothers, but not from the only character in the play whose emotions seem genuine. Phillis’ disillusionment about her love life are mirrored by Moll, who fails to draw a relevant distinction between true love and that which is feigned: “For what is he, loving a thing in heart, / Loves not the counterfeit, though made by art” (B2v). In this statement, she does differentiate between the two, feeling that the latter is all that anyone can reasonably hope to achieve given the overarching economic conditions.
For her part, she is content to have “the simile of that I love” (B2v). No one, therefore, seems immune to the economic exigencies that not only penetrate the marketplace, but the domestic and emotional spheres as well.

The extent to which one’s pecuniary calculation determines outcomes in this play is usefully illustrated in Frank’s approach to courtship. Although the wealth of the Flower family provides the initial incentive for Frank’s interest in Phillis, later he does seem genuinely moved by feelings of love for her. But the ways in which he pursues this love are fully divorced from his apparent feelings for the object of his affections. Fully acclimated to the bitter realities that govern city life in the play, Frank realizes that ordinary means of courtship will not work in this situation. Rather, his love is pursued with the premeditation of an entrepreneur; before his feelings for Phillis “win him, [his] business calls [him]” (B3r). The business to which he refers is the deliberative process with which he convinces himself that he is, in fact, in love with Phillis:

not in love, I hope? . . . let me examine myself. Who should I love? . . . Shall I, that have jested at lovers sighs, now raise whirlwinds? Shall I, that have flouted ah! mes once a quarter, now practice ah! mes once a minute? . . . I must; I am now liege-man to Cupid (B4v).

His courtship is no less calculating, and no less deceitful. Unlike his hopelessly smitten brothers, Frank realizes “thoughts cannot win my love: / Love, though divine, cannot divine my thoughts” (C2v). Consequently, he devises a course of action which includes espionage, fraud, plagiarism, and disguise.

Frank Goulding is the quintessential “trickster figure” of Jacobean comedy.
Exemplified by the professional cons Subtle and Face in *The Alchemist*, the trickster displays uncanny wit, unabashed guile, and the ability manipulate other characters, justifying these traits as the price of social mobility. These figures understand and are intensely concerned with "the market value of human relationships" (Dynes 366-67). Because he is adept at this kind of human manipulation, Frank becomes notorious in the play and is labeled everything from "a wit" to a "malcontent" (E4r). Frank, however, is unique among these tricksters. He is not the only character to manipulate or deceive, he is merely the most successful in a play populated by others like him. The play would appear to have no moral center.

The Exchange, however, is not the exclusive setting of this play. The backdrop fluctuates between the Exchange and "the suburbs of London." The suburbs are decidedly safer than the environs inside the city wall. Indeed, the aggressive economic practices of the city seem alien to the moral economy of the suburbs where the "supporters of decrepit youth" are policed by the likes of the cripple who, though willing to participate quite adeptly in city commerce, prefers a more honest living outside London (B1r). Characters might therefore be understood as a product of their immediate environment; city life leads to corruption whereas life in the suburbs preserves, at least to a certain extent, a traditional way of life (Haynes 19). Although the suburbs are represented as a distinct and less invasive social territory than the Exchange, the harmonious living that characterizes places like Clerkenwell exact a financial price. In order to obtain wealth beyond the subsistence living available in the suburbs, Scarlet and Bobbington must travel to the city to implement their money-making designs and associate with like-minded cohorts.
economic wealth of central London, in this play, seems incommensurate with the communal living that characterizes the outlying communities. Sadly, however, the play seems to offer no possibility of integrating the two; honest merchants are truly inconceivable.

In the end, however, the play casts a disparaging light on its own preoccupations with economic activity. Frank Goulding, the one brother without access to landed capital, succeeds in his suit for Phillis and obtains her father's wealth by artfully manipulating the machinations of others to his advantage. Goulding is certainly not a character to be revered but he does illustrate the potential for social mobility based entirely on wit, even without any recourse to financial capital. It's entirely plausible that a Red Bull audience would applaud a denouement in which the importance of monetary wealth is relegated in favor of sagacity and verbal trickery. Such a reading, however, is atypical of Heywood, whose tendency to moralize is well known (Kiefer 87). To read the play as a moral document would also be instructive to this audience. It would allow playgoers to recognize the evils rampant in the city and to structure their lives in such a way that these dispositions might be avoided and they might better apprehend the moral norms of the community. After all, vigilance was of crucial importance in the ongoing struggle in distinguishing inner truth from outward dissimulation (Maus 44). In this way, the play would follow the didactic form of Dekker's London tracts in addition to well-known Biblical precedents by instructing audiences in the knowledge of good through the cognizance of evil (see, for example, 1 Kings 3:9, Luke 11: 31-33, Jeremiah 31: 18-20). Other plays in the Red Bull repertory were to provide positive reinforcement and
example. That these two contradictory meanings coexist illustrates the interpretive pluralism that permeated the Jacobean theater. It's quite likely that Heywood did intend his play to be understood in a certain way, but, given heterogeneous audiences, no playwright could expect to exercise any control over the ways in which his works were received. Playwrights could, and frequently did (as I argue in chapter five) provide for just such interpretive pluralism knowing that these plays would be witnessed in a variety of settings by a large cross-section of Londoners.

On a metatheatrical level, such representations of economic deceit self-consciously reveal the ingenuity of the theatrical company whose own "quaint disguise" has "devised to win" monetary compensation from numerous audiences through the price of admission (Prologue, A2r). The success of a theatrical company was dependent on what many Londoners claimed was criminal activity. Their well known arguments center upon the theater's licentiousness, the fact that it attracts idlers and criminals, and that the fare presented on stage was of low moral quality. It's possible, however, to regard the practices of theatrical professionals as extortion. I don't mean that players took part in or threatened physical violence against recalcitrant citizens, but that their heavy-handed tactics did extend to undue and often disingenuous persuasion. Any number of prologues and epilogues beseech their audience for applause, suggesting that this humble token of appreciation is the only compensation desired from playgoers. This obscures the

5. See, for instance, my discussions of Four Prentices (chapter one), The Ages (chapter three), the Foxeian drama addressed in chapter four, and Match me in London (chapter five).

6Actually, in certain cases they did. See chapter five, below.
economic realities behind the enterprise, and ignores the fact that playgoers have already
paid to witness the performance, whether they are entertained or not. The cripple's
reflections on his own underworld activities might be applied to usefully understand the
practices of theatrical companies: “Collect their jests, put them in a play, / And tire them
too with payment, to behold / What I have filched from them” (Elv). Anne’s Men, in this
play, and in many others, by taking the material of city life and charging money to witness
its representation under the guise of “quothemicke action,” express a certain anxiety over
the legitimacy of theatrical practice in general. Heywood’s appeal goes to great lengths to
persuade the audience that there is something novel and genuine about their
representations of city life deserving of payment. The extortionary element in all this is
apparent in the empty appeal: it’s not the audience, but the players who determine what
product will be exchanged for payment.

ii - Nobody’s Business

Everybody wants to be “somebody.” The politicians who govern us, the
entertainers who emanate from our television sets, and the wealthy capitalists and
entrepreneurs who provide us with goods and services and finance our own aspirations
have one thing in common: all have somehow “made it”; they are “somebodies.” Indeed,
most substantive visions of the good life in the western tradition since the Renaissance
have emphasized individual gain and social promotion or notoriety in the eyes of one’s
peers (C. Taylor 1991: 16-17). Nobody, it seems, is content to remain relatively
anonymous in a society that prizes accumulation and fame; nobody, in other words, wants

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7The OED defines “quothemicke” as “buskined” or “tragic.”
to be “nobody.” But the political, social, and economic advantages of remaining a
“nobody” are forcefully suggested in the anonymous Nobody and Somebody, played by
Queen Anne’s Men at the Red Bull and printed by John Trundle in 1606. The value of
anonymity, in fact, is especially applicable to those of lower socio-economic status (like
those Clerkenwell residents who witnessed its performance) since it provides an implicit, if
rather amorphous, critique of de jure authority: the “somebodies.”

Nobody and Somebody doesn’t follow the usual models of city comedy in any of
its contemporaneous manifestations. Because the action takes place against the backdrop
of political turmoil, the play has been labeled a “psuedo-history” (Harbage 1964: 90-91) or
alternatively as a “hybrid” incorporating elements of the morality play, chronicle history,
and social satire (L. Wilson 238). But the play certainly deserves consideration among
contemporary city or citizen comedy. It incorporates many of the conventions of that
genre, including representations of citizen clowns, usually in the form of servants, multi-
valenced satire, and a setting that fluctuates between country, city, and court. One of the
play’s subplots comically revolves around such typical fare as a citizen’s (Rafe’s) travails
in marriage. Its pedigree as city comedy is also confirmed in the familiar litany of London
locales mentioned by Nobody. His journey begins at “Paul’s . . .[where] Nobody kneeled
down to say his prayers;” continues “through Fleet Street” to a tavern where he is
attacked by “two swaggerers,” forcing him to flee to a “Thames-side . . .waterman” who is
able to row him down-river. This trip, incidentally, requires no payment since the
waterman was willing to “carry Nobody for nothing.” The barge brings him to “Charing
Cross”, where he is subsequently accosted by the lawyers at the Inns of Court in
Westminster, who are no doubt intrigued by his peculiar legal status (F1r-v). These physical locations and the social topography they represent would certainly resonate with the audience at the Red Bull. Moreover, Nobody’s travails at these landmarks throughout the city is roughly equivalent to the supposed reactions of tradesmen and apprentices at these same locales. Nobody, for instance, is comfortable and accepted at the tavern and with the waterman; he is decidedly out of place and easily victimized at the Inns.

However, part of the attraction of the nobody figure, especially for a Clerkenwell demographic, is the fluidity with which he is able to move within different social settings, be they in country, city, or court. The audience is assured of Nobody’s manoeuvrability even before it is witnessed when Somebody angrily wonders why “Nobody . . . is so renowned and famous in the country?” (B3v). Soon after, we hear from Nobody himself the reason for his ease of motion in different settings and his widespread notoriety when he narrates his ability to extricate himself from touchy situations:

...how I am slandered throughout the world.

Nobody keeps tall fellows at his heels,

...Your cavaliers and swaggerers about the town,

That domineer in taverns, sweat and stare,

Urge them upon some terms, they’ll turn their malice

To me, and say they’ll fight with Nobody,

Or if they fight, and Nobody by chance

Come into part them, I am sure to pay for it (C1r).

Nobody laments his partially absent identity as a source of unwanted inconvenience, but
unlike ordinary rogues and beggars who must pay for their misdeeds with time in jail, Nobody’s name just as easily saves him from account in these same situations. We soon learn that Nobody’s wily elusiveness extends to the city as well. In what must have constituted a fantasy for many in the working-class audience at the Red Bull, “Nobody may have anything he wants without money; Nobody may come out of the tavern without paying his reckoning at his pleasure” (C2r). Of course nobody can leave the pub without paying, but this Nobody can do so after a few drinks.

The ability of Nobody to navigate these different—and often dramatically opposed—environments begins to shed light on the linguistic slippage that is the cornerstone of this figure’s identity. Nobody, of course, does have a physical existence, one that is curiously embodied in the literal depiction of the character without a body, but with elongated arms and legs and in marked contrast to the illustration of Somebody, on the woodcut frontispiece of the quarto version of play (see figure 2.1). The actor who played this character must have appeared suitably costumed since his lack of torso prevents him from being sliced in two by Somebody’s henchman braggart who is only dissuaded from his goal when presented with the physical limitations imposed by Nobody’s stature (F2r). But his corporeal presence is fundamentally at odds with the identity that he often chooses to fashion for himself. In addition to obtaining provisions gratis at his local and a free ride from the waterman, Nobody, in all instances, escapes legal culpability by calling attention to the lack of presence that his name signifies:

\[\text{Somebody:} \quad \ldots \text{I beg against this fellow,}\]

\[\text{Justice, my liege.}\]
Figure 2.1: Woodcut illustrations depicting No-body (above) and his nemesis Some-body (below). From *Nobody and Somebody*. London: John Trundle, 1606 (sigs. A1r and 13v). STC: 18597, Courtesy of the Henry E. Huntington Library (shelfmark: 62750)
Elidure: Against whom?

Somebody: Against Nobody.

Nobody: My liege, his words well suit unto his thoughts,

He wishes no man [be brought] to justice. (H4r)

All of the play’s characters, no less Nobody himself, realize that if “Nobody [is] seized,” he will “bear the blame” with impunity (D4r). Throughout the play, it is the attempt to ossify Nobody’s identity into a singular and representative grammatical meaning that animates the ongoing quarrel between Nobody and Somebody. Nobody seeks to nullify his identity and to exist truly as nobody, while somebody attempts to persuade anyone who will listen that “Nobody” is this gentleman’s proper name and that he should be prosecuted according to the usual legal precepts applicable to all citizens.

The occasional assignment of guilt to fictional subjects was necessitated by the procedural demands of English common law that required the attribution of blame in certain situations where the perpetrator was not apprehended or the guilty party could not be charged for whatever reason (L. Wilson 217-19). But these fictional entities fulfilled assigned procedural roles and were unable to act as agents and actively effect outcomes in the way that Nobody can. In this way, therefore, Nobody acts as an allegory for the condition of anonymity as it operated in the common law: he is able to stand in for the debts of others (L. Wilson 243). In the play, however, we are presented with the specter of action without an agent for whom responsibility might be ascribed. This, in itself, would easily act as a source of wish-fulfillment, as an exculpatory fiction for the audience.
at the Red Bull many of whom are recognized in the Middlesex County Records as liable for crimes committed at the playhouse (see chapter five, below). The crimes recorded as committed at playhouses must have represented only a small percentage of the variety of crimes, civil debts, and churchwarden’s fines for which Clerkenwell residents were liable. Blaming these misdeeds on nobody would dramatically shift the burden experienced by many residents of the community while not evincing a moral burden on their conscience. By shifting liability to Nobody, those accused are not implicating another agent thus forcing her to bear the burden of punishment. Nor are they denying any evidence marshaled against them by suggesting that the crime was never perpetrated. These infractions were committed by “nobody” and, as a consequence disappear in an agential sink (L. Wilson 244).

But the nobody figure in this play in not simply a figure who is able to elide legal liability and escape from touchy situations by punning on his name. Nobody’s ambiguous agential status also has complex economic implications and it is in this sphere where the nobody trope works towards a more politicized and emancipatory meaning for a Red Bull audience. Commentators have recognized that the nobody trope in this play functions along economic models of distributive justice in both legal and moral spheres (L. Wilson 241). Nobody, however, also serves as a metaphor for the distribution of specifically economic resources in a dramatic climate characterized by fiscal anomie both within the domestic economies of citizens as well as the state exchequer. For the citizens in the play, Nobody’s attractiveness hinges on his economic function. Like Robin Hood, Nobody redistributes wealth to the needy. Unlike his legendary predecessor, however, Nobody
does not constitute an implicit challenge to monied interests because the source of
Nobody's bounty is not disclosed. Indeed, as a distributor of economic goods and source
of charity, Nobody proves more efficient than the official channels designated to relieve
the poor which, by the beginning of the play, have stagnated to the point where the king,
Archigallo, has garnered the "general hatred of [his] subjects" (B1r). In contrast to the
king's mismanagement of social welfare, Nobody equitably provides goods and services
for a number of underprivileged citizens throughout the realm:

Come twenty poor men to his gate at once,

Nobody gives them money, eat, and drink.

If they be naked, clothes, then come poor soldiers,

Sick, maimed, and shot from any foreign wars,

Nobody takes them in, provides them harbor,

Maintains their ruined fortunes at his charge

He gives to orphans, and for widows builds

Almes-houses, spittles, and large hospitals

. . . The fragments at his gate

Suffice the general poor of the whole shire.

Nobody's table is free for all travelers (B4r). 8

8. Not surprisingly, Nobody's nemesis, Somebody, "hates" the "poor . . . in all things" and "loves usury and extortion" (B1v).
This litany of Nobody's deeds benefitting the commonwealth can be apprehended in two contradictory directions. On the one hand, the list—and this is certainly how it is intended by Somebody and his servant—expounds unprecedented individual charity, attesting to Nobody's genuine goodwill and a credit to the city and kingdom in which he operates. If this is the case, Nobody would universally and unproblematically be seen as a figure of approbation and a role-model to be emulated for his good works as well as for the exculpatory fantasies he represents. This speech might be taken satirically, in which case it would be apprehended as an implicit reproach against the public administration who, at all levels, have failed adequately to address the growing population of poor: literally, "nobody gives them money, / meat, and drink." Regardless of how these words were taken by the Red Bull audience, they are highly politicized; they are either condemnatory of de jure authority or idealistically attuned to alternative patterns of social life and a more communitarian redistribution of wealth.

Nobody's public beneficence, however, is not entirely altruistic. Nobody's system is more efficient precisely because it relies exclusively on market forces, not upon "wealthy farmers [who] hoard grain" (B4r); "taxation" and "royalties" imposed by the crown (A3v); nor the "usury" and "extortion" effectively realized by the monopoly power wielded by powerful merchants or cartels (B1v). The system of distribution that Nobody has instituted, therefore, is characterized by the efficiency which many were to claim was indigenous to free markets themselves. Moreover, Nobody is able to sidestep the control of monopolies which the courtly characters suggest is a major factor in causing the "state itself [to] mourn in a robe of woe" (A2r). Monopolies are mentioned frequently in the
play and both courtly and common characters view their effects as "interponents twixt the world" (A3v). The characters in the play, therefore, are conspicuously divided along class lines with the issue of monopolies representing the most salient cleavage.

The rapid consolidation of monopoly power under James is well documented and provides a context for works as diverse as anonymous broadsheets to *King Lear*. The problem with monopolies, both as they are represented in the play, and in their manifold effects on the living standards and economic possibilities of Londoners was twofold. At the level of fiscal and monetary policy, monopoly power severely curtailed the gross economic efficiency of the nation by preventing those who did not hold patents, and especially foreign nationals, from selling goods on the open market, a condition that naturally led to partisan political dispute between James and his parliaments (Peck 158-60; Hurtsfield passim.). Another related charge against monopolies was that they victimized the poor who were naturally more sensitive to the stagflation evinced during periods of inefficient markets. By the end of his reign, even the monarch realized that without revoking patents, not only would the English economy suffer, but his reign, which was coming under increasing attack from parliamentarians, was in jeopardy. "Taking knowledge of the complain of his commons," a royal proclamation of 1621 "repealed and revoked. . .the privy seal" precisely because of the alleged abuse of these monopolies and

9. These words are spoken by Elidure, son of King Archigallo, and the future monarch. Here, as throughout the play, he seeks to mediate between the aristocracy and the commons. His reform-minded policies are welcomed by the lower characters and it is Elidure who leads to the complete exoneration of Nobody at the drama’s conclusion.

10. For a useful and detailed overview of secondary material on monopolies in *King Lear*, especially as it pertains to this play’s textual history, see G. Taylor 1983.
the “sundry grievances lighting upon many of his people, and chiefly the poorer sort (fo.1r-v). Resorting to such drastic measures at the end of his reign only serves to underscore the magnitude of this problem in the decades preceding such action.

The nobody trope is a durable metaphor in the history of economic theory and this tradition seems highly relevant to Nobody’s actions in the play. Of course, the fullest expression of these concepts does not occur until much later. Adam Smith, in his frequently and reflectively cited Inquiry Into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations (1776), argues that it is precisely the function of nobodies pursuing individual goals in the marketplace that promotes the greatest economic good for the entire commonwealth. Smith’s most notable precepts occur in the context of an attack on monopolies, precisely the situation which has led to economic stagnation in the play and which had led to economic decline under James:

By directing that industry as its produce may be of the greatest value, he intends only his own gain, and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention... By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of society more effectually than he really intends to promote it (423).

The “invisible hand,” moreover, is just one of several related metaphors designed to express the unintended consequences implicitly pursued by interaction of nameless agents in the marketplace. Others have used such terms as “disembodied agents” and “magic fingers” to describe similar economic phenomenon (Roberts 85).
The idea that free and open markets serve to produce the most beneficial societal outcomes is not exclusive to the eighteenth century. Many early modern Englishmen were keen to enact a similar climate for trade but were hindered by the Jacobean government’s tacit endorsement of monopoly power and a growing Puritan religious climate that looked unfavorably on policies that promoted the accumulation of individual wealth, regardless of the potentially advantageous consequences. Certain commentators began to illustrate the teleology of exchange and the growing expansion of free markets not as the pursuit of individual wealth, but as the God-given ability to foster general prosperity. Beginning with the premise that “all men desire to be in a happy estate, but few take the right course to obtain it” (B4r-v), Richard Barckley suggests that it is the universal pursuit of felicity itself that allows for positive outcomes. Drawing parallels from the Roman Empire, Barckley concludes that it is precisely those emperors who consolidated monopoly power, such as Nero, who led to the downfall of that society (C1v). In what is essentially a tract on the benefits of the division of labor, he enjoins citizens to labor diligently in their sphere of employment and, by so doing, improve the general welfare (C2r). Though the motives in Othello are disingenuous, it is the same belief that Iago stands to prosper that animates his repeated urge for Roderigo to “put money in thy purse” (1.3.333). Iago realizes that Roderigo’s accumulation might be used for his “sport and profit” (1.3.368). Clearly, Iago’s self-interest in this situation is more narrow than most economic transactions, but it is these same principles, when applied to a macro-economy, that ensure the benevolence of the invisible hand. By the end of the seventeenth century, most merchants understood the value of free trade and encouraged the crown to implement such policies. One
anonymous tract, entitled a *Discourse on the General Notions of Money, Trade, and Exchange* (1695), notes that “the profit of a trading people . . . [when] computed . . . from the whole balance of their trade in general” allows for the highest aggregate income for that nation (A3v).

Although these ideas were not integrated into a religious worldview without difficulty, free-trading was to become one of the centerpieces of a Protestant political economy. When the symbiotic conceptual relation between Protestantism and capitalism is historicized, the significance of the nobody figure becomes apparent. Since the purported goal of capitalism is accumulation, and the worldly aims of Protestantism include individual faith and the adoption of an ascetic lifestyle, reconciling the two required merging elements of both into a coherent system. The principles of asceticism mandate a moderate and practical comportment in economic conduct. This meant that though idleness must be avoided, and diligent employment praised, the accumulation of wealth accompanying such pursuits must avoid ostentatious displays and rampant self-interest that might be considered un-Christian (Weber 156–57). Free market models seem to allow for the simultaneous pursuit of both; the economic efficiency that free trade promoted satisfied capitalists, while the pursuit of wealth by anonymous participants, disembodied agents, or an invisible hand mitigated charges of self-interest and lucre.

“Liberality,” therefore, became the term that reconciled religion and economics. In the words of Thomas Floyd, “liberality is a virtue, gratefully bestowing gifts upon others, and is said to be the increase of annual fruits and annuities, of those blessings which God hath bestowed upon us” (L3r). In frequent tracts, free traders, forced to navigate between
their own political ideals and the monopolistic royal policies still pursued under Stuart
governments (especially under Charles), appropriate limited religious terminology in their
attacks. Thomas Johnson, for example, states that monopolies “advance [some] into a
higher room than their fellows” (see 1 Samuel 9:22); are “contrary to the Magna Carta;”
and deviate “from the light of nature, with teacheth men to walk by congruity and
equality” (A2r-v). So as not to meet the fate of more vociferous protesters (like William
Prynne), Johnson seems to practice a form of autocensorship, deliberately avoiding
invoking the name of God, but frequent scriptural allusion and “the light of nature”
confirm his evidentiary context (Patterson 113-15).

In the play, Nobody represents just such a primitive marketplace where the
unintended consequences of his actions work toward the dual aims of economic efficiency
as well as the equitable dispersion of bounty. In this regard, Nobody’s role seems parallel
to that of Everyman: both represent equal opportunity and provide a legitimate voice and
a tangible vehicle of protest for the dispossessed. For this reason, the Lords that maintain
allegiance to Archigallo wish to suppress Nobody, fearing that
The oppressed, wronged, dejected, and suppressed,

    Will flock on all sides to this innovation:

    The Clergy late despised, the Nobles scorned,

    The commons trod on, and the Law contemned,

    Will lend a mutual and combined power unto this happy change (B2r).
The anxiety of these nobles suggests that, like Everyman, Nobody’s very real potency exists in his ability to garner support from plebeians throughout the nation: indeed, Nobody paradoxically embodies the class biases of the laboring middle class.

The economic and legal fluidity of this figure would certainly resonate with a Red Bull audience, at once desirous of Nobody’s lack of ordinary attributes and the freedom it provides him, as well being swayed potentially by the political influence that he signifies. Nobody’s status, however, clearly differs in many respects from that of Everyman (L. Wilson 227). Everyman lacks individuation precisely because of the refraction of his identity; Nobody, on the other hand, lacks such an identity only because of the lack of agential status suggested in his name. Unlike Everyman, whose signification must be abstracted to preserve his collective identity, Nobody is a perfectly viable and unified agent in a Cartesian sense; speaking “I am nobody” is a perfectly valid fulfillment of the litmus test provided in *cogito ergo sum*.\(^\text{11}\) For an audience concerned with the practical and substantive coping mechanisms mandated by their mundane life experiences, Everyman is just another empty promise: he can only provide a voice to articulate or potentially convey dissent; he can shoulder the burden—the liability—of everyone else, but he cannot erase it entirely. Nobody can—and does—enact it. Being nobody, therefore, offers a positive and leveling political alternative to its audience precisely because it allows for *action* beyond the ordinary constraints of stable existence and identity.

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\(^\text{11}\) Attribution of Descartes’ philosophies of subjectivity are not anachronistic in this context. Even if they were not given full articulation until 1641, what were fundamentally modern notions of selfhood descending from Augustine, with minor variations, were common during the early modern period (C. Taylor 1989: 133 and chapters 7 and 8, passim; Cavell 4-5).
Nobody and Somebody, I think, authorizes such a reading in its ancillary material. The prologue suggests that since “no subject” is presented, “a moral meaning you must then expect” (A2v). Some would object that promoting the acquisition of material wealth through efficient markets hardly constitutes a moral meaning. In his embodiment of the market, however, Nobody promotes equality and the accumulation of wealth for subsistence, decent living, and economic efficiency, not for the purposes of ostentatious display or conspicuous consumption. He does, after all, also promote charity and the dispersion of bounty to all. For this public service, and true to his status as a kind of invisible hand, Nobody receives nothing in return because “in doing good to Nobody he [i.e. King Elidure] would get himself an ill name,” presumably owing to the seeming absurdity of such a statement (I2v). Nobody, then, embodies and upholds those bourgeois values widely held by Clerkenwell residents and situates them within the macroscopic arena of English politics and social policy. In upholding these values, the play firmly situates itself within the concerns most germane to and typical of Queen Anne’s repertory during their tenure at the Red Bull and Clerkenwell.

The two plays discussed above offer a representative sample of the kinds of comedies performed by Queen Anne’s Men at the Red Bull. These plays tend to follow two models, both of which play a didactic and socially progressive role in their local community. Plays like The Fair Maid of the Exchange compel the audience to recognize the real material conditions of their existence and the dependence of any desire for upward social mobility on these underlying economic factors. Implicit in this journalistic posture is a strong moral element condemning the onset of socially determining economic factors which operate in the interests of the gentry and emergent capitalists and concomitantly
conspire against the working class of Clerkenwell and the traditional modes of communal exchange and reciprocity familiar to them. Plays like Heywood’s *Fair Maid of the West*, *Four Prentices of London*, Massinger’s *New Way* (addressed in chapter five), and Cooke’s *Greene’s Tu Quoque* follow a similar model, describing London from a particular class-oriented point of view. Other comedies in the Queen’s Mens’ repertory, like *Nobody and Somebody*, offer a more nuanced and politicized approach to the emergent social ills that plagued a majority of Clerkenwell residents. Plays of this type, such as Dekker’s *Match Me in London* (also discussed in chapter five), dramatize the real specter of social dissidence and rehearse potentially emancipatory strategies, in an attempt to galvanize the community around shared interests and concerns. In either case, Red Bull comedies illustrate the value and political significance of everyday life and allow their auditors to envision a more prosperous and equitable future for themselves and their families.
CHAPTER 3
THOMAS HEYWOOD, BERTOLT BRECHT, AND THE SPECTACLE OF HISTORY

The commercial tactics and business model of the Queen Anne’s Men, during its tenure at the Red Bull, is best witnessed through its repertory management and staging practices. In addition to the unique citizen comedies I discussed in the previous chapter, this repertory consisted of a particular type of history play best exemplified by Thomas Heywood’s five-part cycle of *Age* plays (c.1609-1613) which treat mythical history from the birth of Jupiter to the end of the Trojan war. Mirroring humanist and other more learned—and literate—cultural trends, plays on Roman history and mythical legend were in vogue in company repertories during this period. *The Ages* mark a distinctive intervention into this theatrical marketplace. Because these plays are heavily reliant on lavish stage properties, sound effects, pyrotechnics, and other spectacular elements, critics have perennially dismissed them as “drum and trumpet” fare of little value. I argue, however, that these scholars have unfairly overlooked this cycle, failing to recognize in their unique approach to staging and narration, the deployment of a diverse and oppositional ensemble of dramaturgical principles operant throughout their composition, staging, and marketing. Diverging markedly from what we have now come to recognize as “conventional” Jacobean drama (that of Shakespeare, Jonson, Middleton, Webster, and Fletcher), these
plays might be seen as a less political precursor for what Bertolt Brecht termed “epic” theater: a form of commercial entertainment attuned through its formal principles to the entertainment, instruction, and edification of “down” market audiences.

Through my interpretation of these plays, attuned to their original stage effects and audience dynamics and demographics, I argue that spectacular dramatization of legendary events in *The Ages* has the capacity to educate audiences precisely because of its lack of naturalism. Rather, it is due instead to the formal innovations of the theater and the communicative ability of mythical narrative to resonate with basic emotional cravings of individuals and, through collective presentation, to mediate between the individual and the community. The tedious discussions, learned descriptions, and complicated genealogies that characterize Heywood’s Ovidian and Homeric source material, are rendered as palpable stage action and dialogue designed to emphasize the typological significance of the mythical characters. The mythological landscapes themselves are treated as a series of corresponding but self-contained stories related by a narrator, Homer, who comments on the progressively worsening moral character understood to run through the series of Ages. *The Golden Age*, being the most exalted of the four, treats in its episodes Saturn’s usurpation of Titan’s divine authority and the birth of Jupiter, Jupiter’s rape of Diana, and his conquest of Enceladus to defeat Saturn and consolidate his family power in the heavens. This instalment ends with a pageant displaying the various powers of the Greek pantheon. *The Silver Age* relates Jupiter’s love for Alcmena, the birth of Hercules, and the rape of Prosperpine, culminating in her rescue from the underworld. *The Brazen Age* continues the life and various quests of Hercules including his conquest of Achelous, the
hunting of Nessus the centaur, Jason and the Argonauts' encounter with the golden fleece, and the death of Hercules and his subsequent elevation by Jupiter to the firmament. Presumably due to the strength of these plays, 1 and 2 Iron Age were commissioned to dramatize the Trojan war beginning with Priam's decision to send Paris to Greece, through the deaths of Hector, Troilus, and Achilles to Ajax' suicide. Where many dramatic productions compromise for symbolic displays of explosive encounters between mythical personages, Heywood brings them to life. The audience is entranced by spectacle while gaining a functional understanding of classical works of literature and apprehending a powerful moral lesson. Before examining Heywood's contribution to the dissemination of historical information, however, I would like to note the logistics of repertory management and the politics of theatrical competition.

i - History Plays in Company Repertories, 1603-1612

The years from 1605 to 1609 were vexing times for theatrical companies. On the one hand, the three major companies were granted a mark of legitimation from the crown. Shakespeare's company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, was officially made servants of the King in May 1603; shortly thereafter, the Admiral's Men fell under the patronage of Prince Henry and Worcester's Men became the servants of Queen Anne. Although the reorganization of the companies under royal patrons need not indicate any sign of royal favoritism or the new government's affinity for stage players (Barroll 1993: 31-49), it did provide these adult troupes with a more tangible and official warrant to operate throughout England and protected them from upstart adult players who did not have the sanction of the royal family. Of greater impact to the commercial practices of the
companies, theaters in London were closed due to plague for 73 out of the 96 months from 1603 to 1610 (Barroll 1993: 173). Seasonal court performances and sporadic touring when the plague was in remission in the countryside offered a modest source of income when the London playhouses were closed, but the loss of day-to-day revenues would have placed companies in a dire financial predicament, severely limiting their ability to acquire new plays, stage properties, or costuming. Because the plague was so detrimental to the theatrical industry during this period, it necessitates a major rethinking of the companies' repertories and their competitive practices in the crucial years after 1610, when the plague subsided and daily playing resumed. Even more than during plague years, this period would test the financially burdened companies, all eager to generate the revenue necessary to stay in business and recoup losses incurred during previous years.

As Leeds Barroll has noted with regard to the plays of Shakespeare, the plague had a crucial impact on the first performances of new plays and, as a result, on the efforts of later scholars to date them (1993: Chapters 4-6, passim). He argues that, when attempting to date these first performances, the recurrent interruptions of the companies' London playing schedules must take precedence over dating based on internal or stylistic evidence, entries in the stationer's register or chamberlain's accounts, as well as what he calls "the quasi-historical notion of topicality" (1993: 134; Barroll 1965). The frequent theater closings also impacted the repertories of companies in the years following the outbreak. Even if the first performance of a play was given prior to 1611, either at court or during one of the brief respites when playing was permitted, it is unlikely that the companies were able to recoup their expenditures on both the plays themselves and any
new properties and costuming they might require during the truncated acting seasons. A
typical stage run lasted for six months during which the play was performed eight to
twelve times. Moreover, popular plays were frequently continued in the next playing
season, doubling the number of performances and meaning that many plays were in
continuous rotation for a year or more and given almost twenty performances. Finally, the
seasonal repertory was rounded out with revivals which consisted of tried selections from
previous seasons, revisions to already produced plays, as well as "blockbusters" like
Tamburlaine or The Spanish Tragedy that seemed to draw large audiences regardless of
the number of times they had been staged (Knutson 1991: 32-40). With only one six-
month period of uninterrupted playing (from April to September 1605) it is improbable
that any new plays could have completed a full repertory cycle or reached profitability
until the theaters reopened for complete seasons in 1611 and 1612. By this time, all
companies undoubtedly had a large inventory of new plays waiting to be performed for the
first time or to complete their stage runs.

Company repertories are not self-contained or isolated units. Even though the
dramatic offerings at certain theaters were often markedly different from the plays staged
at others, company repertories clearly exist in dialogue with one another. The frequency
of revivals meant that a play staged by a rival company years earlier, due to company
restructuring and the transience of playwrights, players, and impresarios, was sometimes
absorbed into a rival company's repertory. The guiding principle of competition also
partially determined the types of plays that entered the repertory. Eager to capitalize on
perceived fluctuations in public tastes, companies would emulate subtle generic shifts and
subject matter in the repertories of rival companies in order to capture a larger audience segment. Since the opening of Burbage’s Theater in 1576, when theatrical enterprise and repertory playing began in earnest, history plays remained a staple of company offerings. Because history plays were based primarily on the readily accessible English chronicles of Raphael Holinshed, Edward Hall, and Samuel Daniel or frequently translated classical writings such as Plutarch’s Lives, Livy’s Roman History, and other mainstays of classical literature, it was relatively easy to emulate closely the historical material presented in the plays of rival companies. During the 1590s, English history plays were in vogue and the companies exploited one another’s successes by purchasing plays treating the same historical figures and events as their theatrical predecessors. The Queen’s Men’s (an earlier troupe with no connection to Anne’s Men) performance of The True Tragedy of Richard III in 1591 prompted Shakespeare’s Richard III by the Chamberlain’s Men in 1593 and Jonson’s Richard Crookback (C. 1602; Admiral’s); Shakespeare’s Richard II (Chamberlain’s, c. 1595) responded to a play with unknown auspices performed in 1592 entitled 1 Richard II; capitalizing on both the popularity of Falstaff in Shakespeare’s Henry IV plays (c. 1597) as well as their blunder in originally naming that character Oldcastle, the Admiral’s Men followed with 1 and 2 Sir John Oldcastle (c. 1599-1600); and Shakespeare’s Henry V (c. 1599) was an attempt to tap into the tremendous success of The Famous Victories of Henry V, staged by the Queen’s Men since 1586 (Harbage 1941). Clearly part of the success of a company’s repertory was predicated upon their ability to pinpoint waxing trends and tailoring their own theatrical productions to adeptly negotiate audience tastes.
It is this same kind of competition in plays on historical subjects that permeated company repertories from 1611-1613. This time current traffic in history plays centered on the exploits of mythical heros like Hercules or the quasi-mythical “real-life” heros of ancient Rome. There were reasons for the switch in dramatic fare to more ancient historical subjects. On a practical level, the Bishop’s Act of June 1599 curtailed the ability of authors and playwrights to represent English historical figures in print or on stage. The most expedient response of dramatists was to return to subject matter that did not entail such prohibitions. Fortunately, this shift in historical material on stage coincided with—and was probably stimulated by—renewed interest in Roman history and culture among large segments of the populace, from the monarch himself to tradesmen and apprentices.

Classical learning and Roman history had long been celebrated by English poets, statesmen, and chroniclers. The English were keenly aware that their own lineage could be traced to the Roman occupation and to Caesar’s legendary building of the tower of London. England’s ancient kinship with Rome was alluded to in the popular late medieval and early Renaissance chronicle histories which, through the myth of Brutus’ conquest of England, traced English history to the founding of Rome by Aeneas, Brute’s grandfather (Kahn 3-4). Tudor historians, moreover, emphasized a second Roman genealogy. Henry VIII traced his lineage from Emperor Constantine, thus uniting British royalty with the Christian Roman Empire, allowing Foxe to draw a direct parallel between Constantine and Elizabeth as defenders of the Christian faith (see figure 3.1). The escalating humanist ethos in England also contributed to a growing interest in the classics. Latin had long functioned as the language of learned scholars and ecclesiastical authorities, but the
humanists withdrew from what they saw as the debased Latin of their medieval forbears, emulating the classical Latin of Cicero and Virgil and merged this study of Latin linguistics with readings from Roman authors, many of them historians. In ancient Rome, these English humanists found a model for education as the “double translation” of Latin masterpieces set forth in Ascham’s *Schoolmaster* (1570) became a staple of grammar school curricula. Humanists also saw Rome and its history as an important part of the English present. Rome was understood as a “cultural parent;” its history and the virtue displayed by its citizens and leaders was often taken as a model for the ideal organization of social and political life in England (Kahn 4). Heywood himself absorbed this maxim and entitled his own verse mythical history *Troia Britannica* (1609), identifying London as the new Troy (Baines 139). Machiavelli’s *Discourses on Livy* (1531) had demonstrated to the Florentine political leadership the usefulness and applicability of Roman history to current political situations, a lesson that their English counterparts soon seized upon. James I, for instance, keen to defend an absolutist theory of sovereignty, was a frequent translator of Latin history, in which he found a wealth of usable precepts. For instance, Caesar’s speech to his mutinous army in book V of *The Pharsalia*, which James I translated in his 1584 book of poetry, asks if “the loss occasioned by your desertion will hinder Caesar’s career? It’s as if the rivers should all threaten to hold back the waters as they merge with the sea: if they stopped flowing. Would sea-level fall? No, no more than it rises with their influx” (ll.335-39) (Norbrook 1993: 46-47; cf. *Coriolanus* 1.1.66-79). Roman history, both republican and imperial, thus became a significant aspect of political debate. Finally, classical Latin became the benchmark upon which the success of English
literary endeavors were measured. The anxieties of Ascham, Puttenham, Spenser, and Sidney, among many others at their inability to successfully adapt Latin hexameter to English, germinated new and uniquely English forms of versification that paved the way for Shakespeare, Milton and the masterpieces of the English Renaissance (Helgerson 4-18).

General interest in Roman history, moreover, incorporated under its purview a concomitant captivation with the founding myths of that society. In ways that are often unsettling to the neat generic classifications introduced by successor regimes, Renaissance authors and historians viewed the mythical canon as a close subdiscipline of history. Part of the reason, obviously, is the often ambiguous status of the figures and events narrated in epic works like the *Aeneid*. The founding of Rome by the Trojan Aeneas is taken as a real historical event, but the fashion in which this is accomplished, and the deified characters who oversee the quest, introduce elements of myth. But the pragmatism of early modern historians allowed them to collapse these generic boundaries. Each of the figures passed down from the classical period, be they human or divine, could be reconciled with a Christian view of man; that is, governed by a complex array of passions and impulses (Collingwood 57). This suited the purported goal of studying history for the early modern reader, which was not the positive accumulation of an accurate record of historical facts, but rather the establishment of a set of precepts through which a cadre of scholars, statesmen, politicians, and other prominent members of society might be trained by example. Because of this, the mythical Hercules could become functionally identical with a corporeal hero like Caesar, and myth could be labeled history. Heywood's
dedication "To the Reader" of The Iron Age purposefully disintegrates these generic boundaries in just such a way: "I shall presume the reading thereof shall not prove distasteful to any, first in regard of the antiquity and nobleness of the history: next because it includeth the most things of special remark which have been ingeniously commented, and laboriously recorded by the muse's darlings, the poets, and Time's learned remembrancers, the historiographers" (A2r). Because of the antiquity of the subject matter, the poet and the historian are essentially up to the same thing, giving license to either to treat similar subject matter—in surprising similar ways—in their respective works. The Ages then, to both its author and to the playgoing populace, constituted a definite species of history play and were forced to compete with other productions of that genre.

But, of course, neither the vogue for classicism, frequent allusions to Rome in chronicle histories, nor the rising humanist tide can themselves account for the widespread popularity of mythical and Roman history. As I have been arguing, playgoers, especially those who frequented the Fortune and the Red Bull, were not the beneficiaries of a humanist education and, consequently, did not have access to Roman authors in their original language. For these people, some of whom were still illiterate, Roman classics were kept alive through long-standing oral traditions which gradually "dissolved" into manuscript newsletters and more formal medieval chronicles. By the early seventeenth century, however—and partly because of the new printing technologies that increased both the speed and scope of their transmission—interest in classical history was extending to segments of the population that had not previously had more than the most casual access to these narratives (Woolf 26-27). This period witnessed a dramatic increase in the
availability of Roman history in translation. Although North’s translation of Plutarch was first published in 1579, four new editions appeared in the early 1600s, including three in 1603 alone (see table 3.1). During these years, Philemon Holland translated Livy’s *Roman History* (1600), Seutonius’ *History of Twelve Caesars* (1606), and Marcellinus’ *Roman History* (1609), while Lodge contributed a translation of *The Famous and Memorable Works of Josephus* (1602, reprinted 1609) and Heywood himself rendered Sallust’s *The Two Most Worthy and Notable Histories* (1609) and wrote *Troia Britannica* (1609), seemingly a trial run for *The Ages* (Levy 206-07). The material that prefaces North’s translation of Plutarch marshals an ensemble of diverse justifications for reading and understanding the Roman history contained in that volume. Amiot’s lengthy note “To the Reader” rehearses traditional humanist apologies for the study of history. In addition to valuing history as *res gestae*, humanists, following Cicero, viewed historiography as a durable and instructive form of cultural memory, replete with invaluable precepts designed for the perusal of future monarchs, dignitaries, and administrators (A. Ferguson 4-5). Amiot cites Plato’s advocacy of the historiographer’s broad utility, who “stay[s] the fleeting of memory which would otherwise be lost” (A4v). History, so the argument goes, by offering a detailed and accurate register of celebrated examples designed not only to “move and instruct” but provide “the arguments and proofs of reason.” It is this latter feature of written history that, contrary to Sidney, lends “greater weight and gravity” to the productions of historiographers than those of the poets, prone to embellishment and whose “chief intent is to delight” (B1r). But these translations of Roman history were not intended solely for the benefit of a learned readership; those readers, after all, could read
the original Latin. North’s own dedication to Queen Elizabeth, reprinted in Stuart editions, entreats “the protection” of the monarch’s patronage for another purpose. In addition to satisfying the curiosity of educated readers, North hopes that “the common sort of your subjects shall not only profit themselves hereby, but also be animated to the better service of your majesty” (A3r). Not only was Roman history becoming readily available to the literate population, it was actively marketed to a readership without prior knowledge of the Latin originals who did not possess a classical education.

One might expect, given Amiot’s relative distaste for poets, that the desire to instruct a large segment of the population in classical history through publication and translation had little to do with its popularity in dramatic performance. After all, even though poetry—including drama according to Sidney—contained a strong didactic component, that apologist, like Amiot, went to great lengths to distinguish the projects of history and poetry. For Sidney, the historian provided instruction but did not inspire his auditors and readers to the moral knowledge that the poet provides: “the poet doth so far exceed [the historian] as he is to frame his example to that which is most reasonable...where the historian in his bare was hath many times that which we call fortune to overrule the best wisdom” (36, author’s emphasis). The vitriol on both sides suggests that the two sides—if not in theory—were, in practice, virtually irreconcilable. But, of course, this was not the case; historical drama was written; and it was written partially because publishers and translators had constructed a market for its more general popularity. Nor were the two sides doctrinally opposed to the degree suggested by the obstreperous and tendentious rhetoric from both sides. In fact, the humanist climate which encompassed
poets and historians alike, and which mandated the reflective study of both subjects, necessitated that they were not.

In fact, it was a dramatist— and a writer of history plays—that eventually reconciled the two sides according to humanist principles. Heywood’s *Apology for Actors* forges a triangular relationship between drama, history, and didacticism that demonstrates that the teaching provided by witnessing dramatic productions represents the culmination of the humanist project. Naturally, Heywood had his own histories in mind in framing the discussion in the *Apology*—a point to which I will return later—but the more general claim applies to all staged productions. Heywood argues, with Amiot, that the precepts of history have the capacity to inspire; “why,” he asks, “should not the lives of these [classical] worthies, presented in these our days, effect the like wonder in the princes of our times?” (B3v). Like Sidney, though, Heywood recognizes a problem with this formulation. Both realize that the mode of representation must be such that people are able to viscerally apprehend these actions so that they realize that they are not only worthy but capable of imitation. In this regard, books alone will not do. Unlike readers today, instilled with a Romantic ideology that grants great potency to the representational faculties of the imagination, Heywood felt that words on a page were insufficient. Oratory and the visual arts were better because they respectively added an aural and visual component, but here too something was lacking since “a description is only a shadow received by the ear but not perceived by the eye; so lively portraiture is merely a form seen by the eye, but can neither show action, passion, motion, or any other gesture to move the spirits of the beholder to admiration” (B3v). Drama, obviously, contained both, all within
the coherent narrative structure favored by the historian replete with the linguistic artifice and imaginative vigor of the poet.

Drama, then, became an important vehicle for both appeasing the general public's appetite for Roman culture and for disseminating the didactic message that humanists found in the Roman writing of their own history and that of their mythical past. The clustering of these plays on similar themes has prompted scholars to argue that Heywood's *Age* plays were written in an effort to profit from a growing appetite for plays treating Roman themes and in an effort to emulate Shakespeare's Roman histories, performed by the King's Men at The Globe (Knutson 1999: 360). Conventional dating of these plays serves to downplay the immediate commercial relations between these sets of plays, but, owing to the pervasiveness of the plague from 1603 to 1610, a concentration on the repertory years in which these plays were likely to have been performed tends to confirm this insight. Table 3.2 illustrates the various plays treating classical or Roman themes available for performance by London theatrical companies from 1611 to 1613. The list includes new plays as well as many revivals as the companies utilized every means at their disposal to maintain a heavy concentration of these plays in their repertories in the years following the plague. Just as theatrical reputations in the mid to late 1590s (again after a serious infestation of the plague subsided in late 1594 and the theaters reopened) were built upon the players' ability to negotiate the evolving permutations of English history plays, the troupes' fortunes after this outbreak would be determined largely by their offerings in classical history and legend. It seems likely, for instance, that the 1611 repertory year featured Heywood's *Golden Age* on stage at the Red Bull, competing with
Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Coriolanus*, and Jonson's *Catiline* at the Globe and, in the winter at Balckfriars, and any number of Greco-Roman revivals presented by Henry's Men at the Fortune. On the heels of the apparent success of *The Golden Age*, the next year witnessed the Queen's Men debut of *The Silver Age* at court, which they subsequently played in repertory at the Red Bull, most likely in serial form on consecutive days with the continued *Golden Age*. The King's Servants countered with a revived *Julius Caesar* and, quite possibly, continuations of some of the classical plays from the previous repertory year. The close competition among these classical plays might suggest that the theatrical marketplace demanded that the companies tailor their plays and dramaturgy to suit the proclivities of an abstracted and homogeneous audience, that the plays, after a point, largely became indistinguishable from one another as the troupes deployed a marketing strategy that located their offerings in a centralized niche that best represented the cravings of the broadest segment of the audience. This is far from the case. Despite the comparable subject matter of Heywood's *Ages* and Shakespeare's Roman histories, for instance, the two groups of plays significantly diverge in the ways in which this subject matter is treated thematically, as well in the way the action and dialogue is framed. Rather, the companies seem to adopt the dramatic tastes of the day and adapt them to suit their particular house style and the more specific desires of their constituent audiences.

Unlike *The Ages*, Jonson and Shakespeare's offerings for the King's Men use their Roman source material to interrogate an ensemble of often sophisticated political issues, both abstract and topical. If these playwrights did not expect familiarity with the specifics
of their Roman plots, they could certainly expect their more elite audiences—especially those at Blackfriars—to grasp the general contours of Roman political theory and the central figures involved in the drama. In Shakespeare’s Roman histories, the staging of elaborate battle scenes and feats of martial heroism is secondary to the internal motivations of individual characters, their interpersonal relations, and portrayals of competing ideologies of state power. The conflict in Coriolanus, for instance, extends beyond that between Coriolanus and his plebeian tribunate, and might have been readily apprehended as a struggle between fundamentally opposed orientations to the structure of social life (Bristol 1987: 210). The friction here is that between the fierce individualism and military ethos of Coriolanus, which constantly mandates a state of war in order for the individual to demonstrate his virtue and the collective—and economic—motivations of the general populace who demand peace and the opportunities for political representation. Although the situation in Coriolanus does not precisely mirror the conflict between the aristocracy and emergent monied classes, the play’s frequently cited topical allusions to corn riots evoke the strained relations among England’s social groups. These tensions are foregrounded through numerous references to the body politic, a metaphor to which audiences could easily relate and whose usage encourages their participation within the more general debate. Exacerbating the play’s contribution to political contest, images of the body politic are not univocal, but represent the many facets of the debate (Jagendorf 1990; Gurr 1975). Menenius’ position that “the senators of Rome are this good belly...you shall find / No public benefit which you receive / But it proceeds and comes from them to you, / And no way from yourselves” (1.1.149, 152-55) is juxtaposed with that of
Sicinius, an avatar of republican sentiments, who sees Coriolanus as “a traitorous innovator, / A foe to the public weal” (3.1.174-75). The play, in this way, deliberately opens avenues for political debate beyond those implicit in ordinary dramatic representations of historical personages and events; it is not so much didactic as it is provocative.

Two other plays in the repertory of the King’s Servants during this period treat Roman themes but again, like Coriolanus, the emphasis of these staged productions thwarts an accurate imitation of Plutarch in favor of an embellished interpretation of it that highlights the political and psychological motivations of the characters that appeal to the tastes of a knowledgeable historical audience. Again drawing upon North’s Plutarch, Antony and Cleopatra presupposes a knowledge of the earlier conflicts among the first triumvirate as well as the events dramatized in the play itself. In this way, Shakespeare capitalizes upon the proliferation of printed editions of Roman history and uses their familiarity to allow his own representation to exfoliate beyond the received historical record. In fact, the play actively resists an historical representation in any ordinary sense by allowing the characters to construct our perceptions of their counterparts as well as their own versions of the events that seem to overtake them without their agency. According to one critic, agency in this play is subsumed under the machinations of demigods and soothsayers (Leggatt 1988: 161). Indeed, the political conclusion seems foreordained even before the conflict is joined; speaking of Octavius, the soothsayer warns that “the very dice obey him, / And in our sports my better cunning faints / Under his chance. If we draw lots, he speeds” (2.3.31-33). By evacuating the political agency
which forms the centerpiece of his source material, Shakespeare shifts the emphasis onto
the love plot between Antony and Cleopatra. Concentration on this romance offers a
distinctive and welcome dramatization of this popular narrative that takes advantage of the
playwrights skillful wordplay as well as the abilities of the actors in his troupe whose
experience with tragedy provides a competitive advantage over other companies who rely
on different dramaturgical modes to represent their historical subject matter. This kind of
retelling also appeals to Shakespeare’s more upmarket clientele who neither require nor
would appreciate more didactic instruction in the basic events and personages of the
classical past.

Unlike Shakespeare’s Roman plays, Jonson’s *Catiline* was not an immediate
success, receiving “all vexation of censure” at its 1611 premiere. This play, even more
than other plays staged by the King’s Servants, extends the possibilities of staged drama of
the period to such an extent that the playwright lost his audience. Not only did Jonson
rely on classical materials for the play’s source, he relies on the stock features and
rhetorical techniques of classical drama. Reverting to an earlier tradition, *Catiline* makes
use of a chorus to comment upon the play’s conspiracy. Departing from Shakespeare’s
tragedies, the play takes place only in the context of civic life and stability; Catiline and
Cicero are presented only as public figures with no indication of their more private
motivations or psychological comportment. An audience used to some kind of resolution
or catharsis would be troubled by Jonson’s cynical portrayal of the disorderly nature of
public life without any clear affirmation privileging one side or the other at the play’s
conclusion. The play, in its execution, seems designed for the experienced and
discriminating reader of classical writing, equipped with a nuanced understanding of Renaissance theories of history. In this way, *Catiline* is designed to instruct its audience in contemporary state affairs through Roman precedent as directed by theorists like North, Amiot, and even Sidney. As one commentator notes, the play comprises “a heavily veiled classical parallelograph on the Gunpowder plot,” among other current political issues (De Luna 114). But the complexity of the allegory through which these allusions are advanced would elude all but the most learned auditors and the play would insufficiently “teach and delight” a diversely composed public theater audience at the Globe, much less the more plebeian patrons of the northern playhouses.

These plays, then, don’t constitute so much a popularization of history as a presentation, through historical subjects, of competing political ideologies, psychological portraits, or scholastic disputes meant for both the entertainment and contemplation of the audience. They retain the didactic potential prescribed by apologists like Sidney and Heywood, but refract the source material to address the particular interests of more sophisticated audiences at the Globe and Blackfriars. In all three of the works discussed above, the source of their appeal, as well as their more specialized interest, is latent in the content of the plays themselves. This is abundantly evident to modern readers who, more often than not, encounter these plays as literary artifacts rather than as staged dramatic productions. In the next section, I discuss another context for analyzing and assessing dramatic works, one in which the innovations of the Queen Anne’s Men surpass that of their rivals and disseminate political ideology through radically different methods.
When evaluated according to the received tenets of the critical tradition, Heywood's *Ages* don't quite measure up to the classical plays discussed above, especially those of Shakespeare and the King's Men. Indeed, many critics dismiss this cycle altogether, suggesting that, in terms of "quality," the two repertories and dramatists aren't even comparable. T.S. Eliot condemned Heywood for lacking "the artist's power to give undefinable unity to the most various material," while, even more curtly, L.C. Knights dismissed the dramatist as a "minor nuisance" (107; 256). Always basing their analogies on more renowned dramatists, critics wonder "why Heywood profited so little from his discipleship" of Marlowe, or, alternatively, why a play like *The Iron Age*, which borrows extensively from Shakespeare' *Troilus and Cressida*, could itself be so poorly executed (H. Smith 16; Weiner xviii). Yet even despite the disparate sociological composition of the audience at the Globe and Red Bull, the two repertories competed for Londoner's pennies throughout this period. That Shakespeare's company recognized these plays as significant competition is evident in their willingness to participate in a joint performance (with Anne's Men) of *The Silver Age* before the queen and prince at court on 12 January, 1612 (Chambers 3: 345; Steele 170). Apparently the commercial success *The Ages* enjoyed at the Red Bull was sufficient to pique the interest of a more sophisticated courtly audience in a production clearly designed as "low" culture for a mass audience. The performance of *The Silver Age* at Greenwich Palace should not, however, be understood as an anomalous phenomenon wherein the court misjudged the artistic quality of the work proffered from Heywood and the Queen's Men, but rather as demonstrating the ability of
the commercial culture industry to appropriate new markets and interpellate new consumers, thereby gradually attenuating the demand for what was previously considered "serious" art (Adorno and Horkheimer 135). The performance at court, regardless of its meaning within a larger cultural milieu, indicates that *The Ages* were construed by early modern theatrical professionals as a marketing coup for Anne’s Men, and as serious competition to be reckoned with and digest.

The unwillingness of later commentators to accord to *The Ages* the status of serious drama on par with the plays of Shakespeare stems, I think, not only from a blindness to the profit-driven motives of the commercial theater, but also from a failure to satisfactorily account for the importance of dramatic form in generating a market for theatrical productions. Seventeenth-century theatrical consumers—or at least the vast majority of them—did not judge plays based on the abstracted aesthetic criteria of later critics, but on their ability to entertain them and to provide an experience that might otherwise be lacking in their lives. But in order to provide a meaningful dramatic experience, the performance itself must resonate, on some level, with the background of its spectators. The fundamental difference between these two approaches is that of content and form. By concentrating on *dramatic* form, I wish to shift emphasis away from the literary (or formal, or stylistic, or thematic) qualities latent in the playtext itself (and perpetuated in later published editions), and onto those aspects of the play that find their full expression in a contextual reconstruction of the work as presented on a specific
London stage during a more or less precisely demarcated period of time. Nor do I mean to substitute for an analysis of the work's literary or aesthetic qualities a theory of performance that concentrates entirely on the physical aspects of the play's staging and the actor's delivery. Instead, I understand form as the complete set of "organizational values" around which a contextual discussion of the play coheres (Jameson 1971: 25). Locating the appeal of the plays in their formal construction allows us to think of dramatic works as productions of a corporate entity rather than discrete aesthetic units produced by a singular creative force. Attending to the structural importance of form allows us to recognize the dependence of the success or appeal of the given dramatic work on its production values, the theatrical conditions in which it was performed, as well as its institutional context which takes into account such factors as the composition of its audience, the reputation of the dramatic company, and the social and economic backdrop of the performance itself.

Form, in this way, shapes the play's specific content, demonstrating that the habits of playgoers influence individual plays as much or more than individual stylistic and thematic innovations (Jameson 1971: 20). A comparative analysis of dramatic form also usefully isolates the differences between the plays of the King's servants and those of Anne's Men and helps to explain the reluctance of later authorities to accord them an equal footing in the critical tradition. Their credentials as serious connoisseurs of theatric

1. Unlike those plays documented in the daily financial records contained in Henslowe's Diary, precise dates cannot be ascribed to the plays of the Queen Anne's Men. However, often we do know the repertory year and, based on our general understanding of company practices, the season in which a given play was being performed.

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art to the side, in the Jacobean theatrical marketplace, Red Bull consumers did matter and theatrical professionals, like Heywood and the members of his company, were forced to develop a dramatic repertory with them in mind. With *The Ages*, this troupe cultivated a theatrical form differentiated in its basic emphases and dramaturgical structure from that of the King’s Men. Later commentators have had difficulty acknowledging and appreciating these elementary formal variations precisely because the plays of Shakespeare have been taken as the literary benchmark against which other—and inevitably inferior—dramatic productions have been measured. But for the early modern playgoer, not yet assimilated to prevailing critical expectations and dramatic tastes, alternative theatrical forms were welcomed and became very much part of the popular culture mainstream.

An instructive model for analyzing these differences in form and the subsequent truculence of later critics in failing to accord literary or theatrical status to Heywood’s *Ages* is offered by Bertolt Brecht’s importunate call for sweeping innovations in the modernist theater. Despite the obvious historical and political differences between the cultural milieux inhabited by the two playwrights, Brecht’s prescriptions are surprisingly applicable to the early modern theater both in their relation to the prevailing critical authorities and in the substance of their proposals. Throughout their respective careers, both playwrights struggled to turn the commercial theater into a vehicle for socially responsible entertainment that would resonate with the experiences of a class of playgoers neither ordinarily nor satisfactorily targeted by the purveyors of cultural services. Although their efforts varied markedly—and clearly Brecht’s vision was more political—both
saw the key to emancipatory entertainment in a general realignment of dramatic form. For Brecht, the problem with the German theater of the early twentieth century—the so-called “Aristotelian” or “bourgeois” theater—went beyond the content of the plays, and included the “apparatus” of the theater. The theatrical apparatus is conditioned by the social and political elites of the day and their efforts to reproduce the status quo. The apparatus, therefore, is designed to privilege a certain type of play that merely absorbs and reflects the values of the dominant elements of society (34-35).² The quarrel here is between renovation and innovation, between those who seek to alter the theater through the internal substance of the plays presented there and those who would transform the theatrical institutions themselves in their general orientation towards social life.

Shakespeare is commonly viewed as an important innovator of the dramatic field of his day, and Brecht correctly attributes to him and his fellow dramatists the beginnings of the aesthetic trajectory of the modern theater (20). But Brecht also found in the Jacobean dramatists a precursor of his own epic theater (Dollimore 63). In the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, he applauded a form of realism that dissected the causal complexities in human social relations and fully represented and explored the contradictions inherent to them (Brecht 277). In Coriolanus, for instance, the plebeians’ reluctance to take arms against Roman political institutions is taken as characteristic of the internal ambivalence between improving one’s material conditions through revolution, on the one hand, and the risk of losing everything if that struggle were to fail, on the other

². For Brecht, the “dominant element” was the bourgeoisie. The early modern equivalent of this group is constituted by the aristocracy and the court who controlled patronage and pressured the civic authorities to permit public playing in the first place.
The content of the play appeals to Brecht’s materialist vision of society, but the mechanisms by which this social dynamic is represented often centers on the individual and his or her psychology, thereby retaining a more or less monolithic and stable understanding of human nature. Shakespeare’s place in Brecht’s theatrical continuum is therefore that of pioneer, but of a type of drama that, in the end, and through the appropriations of later critics and directors, is itself lacking a socially transformative or emancipatory apparatus due to its affective reliance on “eternal human urges” that are, apparently, sedimented within the playtext itself (20). Because this kind of drama centers upon its own internal formal virtuosity, its historical role is that of “merchandise” that engenders a docile consumer “eager to become as wax in the magicians hands” (Brecht 36-39). In opposition to this type of theater, Brecht posits an “epic theater” in which the entire formal apparatus of the theater—in addition to the content of the play itself—fosters a more active role for its audience. To this end, Brecht counters the tendency of the traditional theater to fuse the various elements of production (gesamtkunstwerk) by advocating a “radical separation of the elements...[where] words, music, and setting become more independent of one another” (37-38, author’s emphasis). In so doing, the epic theater forces its spectator to “take decisions” rather than becoming a passive receptor of theatrical sensation.

Early modern theatrical productions do incorporate a number of discrete structural elements to complement the drama. Usually, however, these elements are subordinate to the main plot of the production and are therefore forced to operate within the tightly delimited boundaries of the narrative contained in the playscript. In The Ages, however,
the playscript itself seems to be a more malleable document, allowing alternate structural
elements to exfoliate beyond the perimeters imposed by traditional dramatic conventions.
Consequently, these elements realize a degree of structural autonomy within the dramatic
performance and constitute supplementary focal points for the entertainment and
instruction of the audience. When one device fails to entertain, any number of others are
available to reinforce it and tangibly affect the audience. The final form of the production
exists as a series of negotiations between actors and audience, “a collaborative cultural
event” in which the playbook merely represents a skeletal outline (Bradbrook 1983: 113).³
Due to these plays’ heavy reliance on spectacle, the narrative is often advanced through a
series of dumb shows. The actors provide an often vividly detailed visual representation
of the narrative situation described by Homer that acts independently of the spoken
dialogue. Homer sets the scene, but stops short of narrating the crucial events presented
by the dumb show: “Diana and all her nymphs. . .unlace themselves, unloose their buskins”
at which time they discover that Calisto is pregnant. Homer then reappears to summarize
the action: “[h]er crime thus found; she’s vanished from their crew” (G.A. 3.1.13 and sd.).
Not only can the dumb show capture the sensuality of this interchange in a way that
descriptive language cannot, the set dramatic piece frustrates an individually subjective,
and therefore passive, interpretation, placing emphasis instead on intersubjective
communal recognition. The plays tend to duplicate this procedure on a macro-level. The
cycle is paratactical: each play is structured through a series of five, often digressive,

³ Bradbrook suggests that the critics’ disparaging comments on Heywood’s oeuvre results from their
basing these judgements on readings of extremely corrupt early texts and a concomitant failure to account
for the heightened dynamic lent to these plays in performance (114).
episodes corresponding to the five acts, there is no single or unified plot thread that
consistently demands the audience’s attention throughout the entire playgoing experience
(Belton 169). This allows the audience to actively engage in a series of linear narratives of
variable thematic content rather than ingest a magisterial plot working towards a
consolidated meaning.

Despite the capacity of certain Jacobean dramatic works—including, according to
Dollimore, several of Shakespeare’s tragedies—to anticipate certain aspects of epic theater
through their content, other early modern plays portend Brecht’s precepts through their
formal structure and in the arrangement or “apparatus” of the theater itself. Heywood’s
innovations within an early modern theatrical climate seek to achieve analogous goals
through surprisingly similar methods. Both Heywood and Brecht considered eloquence of
speech and linguistic finesse almost incidental elements of the playgoing experience
(Brecht 183). Rhetoric, as we have seen above in Heywood, is only one of the necessary
enabling features of a palpable and moving dramatic experience; he included, among other
things, visual and musical elements (1612: B3v). For both, the apparent goal in
marshaling an amalgam of discrete theatrical elements in a single dramatic performance is
to enhance its realism.

Neither playwright, however, understood realism according to the naturalist or
strictly mimetic criteria of critics like William Archer who saw it in strictly literary terms as
verisimilitude or, in his words, a “pure and consistent form of imitation” (134).
Heywood’s humanist training would lead him to comprehend “imitation” much differently.
In his own statements on theatrical form, Heywood follows Cicero, declaring that drama
"is the imitation of life, the glass of custom, and the image of truth" (F1v). By expanding what is meant by imitation to include "custom" and "truth," Heywood forges a more general and malleable understanding that balances both the practical and the abstract. The quotation suggests that a representation of "life" is capable of rendering "truth" (clearly with a moral or didactic valence) more perspicuous and attainable to its auditors. But "custom," as the crucial link between the two, implies that the representation quotation must, in the first place, resonate with that with which the audience is already familiar; they must already have a point of reference. As I have noted earlier, it is precisely through artifice, embellishment, and the quality of the actors, rather than the specific content of plays or the skill of playwrights that Heywood argues provides scope for historical education and moral enrichment. He stresses that, despite the potential for rhetoric and other literary aspects of the playtext to enhance its didactic function, "all are imperfect without . . . action." "Action," he argues, "is the gloss and beauty of any discourse," shifting on to the theatrical apparatus an important component of a play's broader social function.4

Similarly, Brecht constructs his dramaturgical principles with the actor in mind. Recognizing that "not everything depends on the actor, even though nothing may be done without taking him into account" he nevertheless emphasizes the work is "shown by the theater as a whole. . . . [who] unite their various arts to the joint operation" (202). For both, expanding the scope of the theatrical performance and unseating the fixation on

4. This shift in emphasis towards the actor and away from the playwright is sustained throughout The Apology. Throughout the work, numerous individual actors are mentioned and commended while very few playwrights are considered.
individual characters, allows for a heightened social dynamic that will resonate with the spectator's own social relations. Realism is not, therefore, a product of a play's or individual actor's ability to realistically depict the events being staged, but in its effectiveness in rendering a genuine portrait of human relations that conforms to the experiences and expectations of the audience.

Brecht posits a fundamentally different approach to acting in which the actor "shows" or presents his character to the audience, rather than embodying or becoming that personage. The latter articulates a normative set of principles, often based on Shakespearean performance, that has become the standard method by which actors approach their craft, and by which successful productions are judged. This technique of "method acting" resonates with the goals of the entertainment industry and, because it engenders a direct correspondence between actor, playscript (or screenplay), and the character to be embodied, allows for the emergence of star performers, from Richard Burbage to Tom Hanks (Bristol 1996: 35). In these productions, the audience, despite the possibilities for genuine pathos, intellectual contemplation, and political engagement described above, is cast in the role of consumer; the playgoer purchases a cultural service and is then invited to passively witness the performance. That certain playgoers were inclined to identify an actor strictly in terms of the characters they represented is forcefully suggested in an anecdote related in The Diary of John Manningham (1602): "Upon a time when Burbage played Richard III, there was a citizen grew so far in liking with him, that before she went from the play, she appointed him to come that night unto her by the name
of Richard III” (fo 29v). This confused spectator has been absorbed into the dramatic performance to such a degree that, even after the play is over, she is unable to distinguish between Burbage and the character he portrayed. In 1610, another equally germane comment on a production of Othello at Oxford suggests an even more radical displacement of the actor’s identity onto his dramatic character: “Desdemona,” writes Henry Jackson, “in her death moved us especially when, as she lay in her bed, with her face alone she implored the pity of the audience.” Despite the fact that Jackson was witnessing a boy actor playing the part of Desdemona, it is “she” who nevertheless dictates the emotional response. Jackson’s comments again illustrate the degree to which the audience has been absorbed into the dramatic performance, even despite their unmistakable awareness that the object of their aroused passion is merely an actor on the stage (Dawson and Yachnin 19).

The former, more demonstrative approach to acting, however, as Brecht recognized, allows for a more participatory and communal relationship between actor and audience that emphasizes mutual conviviality and shared social meaning. This “style” was introduced neither by Brecht nor the Elizabethans, but finds its origins in more ritualistic and pre-commercial dramatic productions where the point of performance was the narration of a given situation for the purposes of entertainment, instruction, and, hopefully, emulation on the part of the spectator. The productions of the Queen’s Men

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5. Early modern actors, like their latter day counterparts, often subscribed to the tenets of method acting by researching their roles and identifying themselves with the characters they portrayed, almost to the point of schizophrenia. Edward Alleyn, when playing Faustus, would wear a cross to protect himself from potential threats by the real devil, lest the demons mistake the actor for Faustus himself (Gras 26).
opt for this latter approach. Unlike Richard Burbage with the King’s Men or Edward Alleyn with Prince Henry’s Servants, Anne’s Men did not have a resident “star” capable of taking over a performance through his virtuoso embodiment of a title character like Hamlet or Faustus, but relied instead on the combined skills of a cohesive ensemble capable of “showing” a play. Heywood’s commitment to this approach is clear in his refusal to judge the proficiency of actors portraying the same character. In his prologue to the 1632 revival of The Jew of Malta, he defends Richard Perkins rendition of Barabas over against the normative standard set by Alleyn: “nor is it his [Perkins’] ambition / To exceed or equal [Alleyn], being of condition / More modest” (A2r). The quality of any single individual performance, for Heywood, is negligible when measured against the overall effect of the play as a whole.

Both approaches to acting, regardless of their training methods and assumptions, generate and maintain a vigorous connection between actor and audience. The basic phenomenology of theatrical experience, of necessity, dictates a strong awareness between the character and the actor who portrayed him. The self-fashioning of individual actors and companies allows for subtle redefinitions of the relation between characters, players, and audience. To a certain degree, this was largely a matter of marketing and personnel, rather than any conscious adherence to abstract theoretical principles. Anne’s Men simply were unable to promote their plays based on the notoriety of individual stars simply

6. Thomas Greene was certainly a “star.” His notoriety, however, was not based on his skill as a character actor, but on his abilities as a comedian. This kind of talent, it seems, relies on a personal aptitude for improvisation and humor, and therefore might be treated as a more individual performance. The Queen’s Men’s renunciation of traditional dramatic form is signaled by the fact that their leading actor, from Will Kemp to Thomas Greene to William Rowley, was always a clown.
because they didn’t have an actor with the name recognition or perceived talent of a Burbage or Alleyn. But, as we have seen, this company was adept at catering to a specific Clerkenwell audience. The continuing success of the Queen’s Men at the Red Bull attests tho their ingenuity at redefining the theatrical experience not only to suit their resources, but to most satisfy and enliven their audience demographic.

The different methodological precepts that guide the dramaturgy of competing companies can be readily apprehended through the structural apparatus that frames the production. Due to the perplexing temporal and geographical distance of their settings, most early modern dramatic works, and especially history plays, rely on a chorus, prologue, or other similar device to acclimate the audience to the lifeworld of the play. These framing devices comprise markers designed to influence the audience’s reception of the subsequent action and dialogue. But they also orient the audience to a specific mode of observation. The famous prologue to Shakespeare’s Henry V, for instance, attempts to figuratively relocate its audience to a number of exotic locations. The famous invocation of “a kingdom for a stage [and] princes to act” is not just an empty appeal; we soon learn that “warlike Harry” ought to be taken “like himself” and that the mimetic acuity of our “imaginary forces” will determine the success of the play’s realism. By asking the audience to “piece out our imperfections with your thoughts,” the chorus invites the audience to physically and mentally enter the fictive space of the play, an environment which is wholly divorced from the basic reality of everyday life. By the beginning of the third act the transformation is complete; the chorus assumes that, through our presumably homogeneous imaginations, we “have seen / The well appointed king at Dover pier;” that
we “behold / A city on the inconstant billows dancing;” and that we, in fact, have left England. The kind of suspension of disbelief the prologue seems to require here does grant to its spectators substantive and internally subjective powers of imagination. After all, a considerable amount of imaginative and intellectual labor would be required for the audience to meaningfully experience participation in the fictional setting and the ethical predicaments presented in that play. But the parameters of this mental engagement are rather strictly demarcated by the prologue, situating the audience as active receptors of a specific dramatic vision. The mental energies conjured here occupy a liminal space between active imagination and passive reception.

At the Red Bull, on the other hand, the theatrical energy seems to depend more upon visceral emotion and spontaneous excitation. The prologue to The Golden Age, spoken by an apparently transhistorical Homer, does not pretend to transport its auditors to distant locales but is content to narrate the action. This prologue, in fact, deliberately situates the audience in the historical present:

Oh! Then further me,
You that are in the world’s decrepit age,
When it is near his universal grave,
To sing an old song; and in this Iron Age
Show you that state of the first golden world (1.1.21-25).

The goal of the production is to “show” the contrasting conditions prevailing during various historical epochs so that the audience will seek to emulate the heroic virtue of the
“golden age,” not as an abstract concept but specifically within the context of a very different cultural dispensation. Homer’s commentary is necessary to the play’s transformative agenda in two senses. First, his narration organizes the action into discrete episodes and introduces the panoply of mythical personages and their genealogies which might not otherwise be distinguishable to an audience unfamiliar with printed versions of the works. Homer also consistently structures the action so that the audience will maintain historical distance and bring the perspective of a later age to the mythical presentation. In this way, _The Ages_ capitalize on synergistic energies shared between the players and the audience. The intensity of the plays’ appeal and subjective meaning for this particular audience segment is amplified by their roughly homogeneous social horizon and their reciprocal engagement authorized by their form.

The desire to orient theatrical productions around an audience-centered form of realism has obvious political ramifications contrary to those implicit in the reception of “high” art, including that of Shakespeare. To refer to Shakespeare’s drama as “high art” is certainly anachronistic and Shakespeare’s certainly occupied a relatively low position in the literary hierarchy of his time. Nevertheless, on a practical level, Shakespearean performance is frequently read and understood as congruent with its more stylized progeny to which it is perennially compared. In the three plays discussed in the previous section, audiences were invited to passively absorb the events and, often more importantly, characters depicted sought to catalyze individual contemplation of an ensemble of sophisticated issues, both political and aesthetic. These productions, as well as the prescribed ways of viewing them and, later, reading them, by focusing their theatrical
energies on a strictly individual engagement with the material, belied the interests of an
elite and leisurely type of playgoer equipped with the cognitive skills and free time
necessary to fully explore the rich intellectual possibilities of the drama. Brecht and
Heywood have different audiences in mind, however, and, accordingly, a more materialist
and transformative vision of what the theater might mean to its constituents. Brecht
claims that the theater must let itself "be carried along by the strongest currents in its
society." By this, Brecht does not refer to the prevailing social or aesthetic authorities,
but rather the working classes who are in greatest need of popular yet meaningful
entertainment: the theater should move "straight out to the suburbs... at the disposal of
those who live hard and produce much" (186). Three hundred years earlier, writing for a
theater that, not coincidentally, was itself located in a London suburb inhabited by artisans,
Heywood anticipates Brecht's claims:

Plays have made the ignorant more apprehensive, taught the unlearned the
knowledge of many famous histories, instructed such as cannot read in the
discovery of all our English Chronicles and what man have you now of that weak
capacity, that can not discourse of any notable thing recorded even from William
the conqueror, nay from the landing of Brute, until this day... [Plays] refresh such
weary spirits as are tired with labor... to moderate the cares and heaviness of the
mind, that they may return to their trades and faculties with more zeal and
earnestness, after some small, soft, and pleasant retirement (C3v).

7. See chapter one (above), and chapter five (below) for the sociological differences between theater
audiences at the Globe and Red Bull.
Both writers viewed playgoing as a potentially redemptive, instructive, and transformative form of mass communication and entertainment, but, in order for the theater to achieve this goal, both felt the need to define their theater in opposition to its prevalent contemporary manifestations.

But it is not only Heywood who viewed the dramatic form of the Queen Anne’s Men in opposition to that of their rivals. The remarks of several early modern observers point to similar cleavages in the class biases and corresponding dramaturgical structures indigenous to the repertories of various London companies. *Turner’s Dish of Lenten Stuff* (1613) deploys stereotypical class markers to forcefully distinguish between drama at several theaters:

The players of the Bank side

The round Globe and the Swan

Will teach you idle tricks of love,

But the Bull will play the man.

Given the date of this pamphlet’s publication, it’s likely that the author’s comments are based on *The Ages*, each of which enjoyed long and successful runs at the Red Bull over the preceding years. The author’s comments here speak to the overall issue of dramatic form. Plays at the Globe and Swan are often about love, he says, implicating such thematic concerns in a theatrical agenda that offers little practical utility to the types of playgoers he purports to represent. “Idleness,” by extension, also describes the lifestyle adopted by many of the more well to do patrons of the Southwark theaters. Performances at the Red Bull, on the other hand, “play the man.” To interpret these lines, in this
context, as merely referring to the bombastic nature of this drama and the generally patriarchal subject matter instantiated by several Queen’s Men plays, as several historians have attempted (Gurr 1970: 223-25), is to divorce the last line from the stanza in which it operates, evacuate the statement from its overall context in theater history, and perpetuate truisms that are often advanced reflexively and uncritically in order to dismiss the Red Bull and the plays presented there.

Instead, like those proposed by Brecht and Heywood, this stanza constitutes a competing normative horizon from which to theorize the ethical function of the playhouses in question. “Idle,” of course, is not a neutral term in the theatrical discourse of the period. One of the enduring contentions of antitheatrical polemicists is that the theater promotes idleness, along with its attendant vices. In the words of John Northbrooke, plays are the very model of idle behavior because they have manifold detrimental effects on the daily routines of those who frequent them. These individuals, he argues, “play when [they] should sleep and sleep when [they] should labor” (E1r). Northbrooke’s assumption is not that recreation or even plays are inherently evil—after all, he strongly endorses “honest exercises for man’s recreation” (D4v)—but that the drama currently appearing on the public stage has no positive or edifying impact on the spiritual lives of its spectators. The passage from Turner’s Dish, however, reverses the poles of the debate and deflects accusations of moral and vocational lethargy specifically onto the bankside playhouses. Plays, in his conception, do educate their audiences, but their incarnations on the bankside, performed for an audience composed, to some degree, of a leisured class who, by definition, are not engaged in labor intensive employment, can only “teach idle
tricks, "effectively obviating all didactic potential. Given the negative connotations contained in the previous line, "playing the man" at the Red Bull provides a constructive alternative that speaks specifically to the social orientation of the playgoers of Clerkenwell. When "man" is considered in its positive sense, drawing on its etymological roots in the Latin *vir* which describes not only "man" as a differentiated gender, but incorporates into the term qualities of martial virtue as well as moral probity, "playing" at the Red Bull offers opportunities for personal fulfillment and social affiliation specifically aligned to a particular demographic of tradesmen and apprentices. The form of the theater, according to this commentator, is instrumental in its overall mission which, he recognizes, is partially delimited by the composition of its audience.

Clearly then, Brecht and Heywood are working within similar sociological and theoretical parameters in their efforts to render the theater more inclusive and responsive to a broader and traditionally disenfranchised audience. The following section will examine how, specifically, Heywood brings "epic" or socially engaging or transformative theater to the people of Clerkenwell. In so doing, I hope to demonstrate that the ideological orientation of the Red Bull playhouse and the plays presented there are not incompatible with the commercial motives pursued by the Queen Anne's Men. Rather than containing "subversive" content, the burgeoning culture industry in Jacobean London opened up strikingly new possibilities for socially responsive—and responsible—entertainment precisely because the new and impersonal market forces that regulated cultural production and exchange were no longer parallel with the interests or, in any tangible sense, reliant upon the sponsorship of aristocratic patrons attempting to forward a
specific political agenda. With financial prosperity the new arbiter of success, an aggregation of consumers now were able to exert influence on the dramatic offerings of particular companies. The Queen’s Men, with one eye on overall market trends, and the other on the specific composition of their audience base, responded with a technically innovative dramatic form uniquely suited to the needs and desires of their audience.

iii - Staging Spectacle at the Red Bull

Heywood’s Age plays were a calculated response to a string of several turbulent years in theater history, but, due to the costly formal discontinuities they initiate, these plays must have also entailed significant risk. Each of these plays functions as a multi-generic spectacle incorporating discrete elements of comedy, history, and tragedy along with song, dance, lavish costuming, stage effects, and pyrotechnics unprecedented on the public stage. These plays are designed to fulfill a necessary and elementary educative role for a relatively unversed Red Bull audience, while satiating their desire for elaborate spectacle and bombastic entertainment.

The eclectic structure of these plays—their lack of unity in the Aristotelian sense—has the effect of reorienting the audience towards the production in ways that emphasize shared social meanings that are easily recognizable and applicable to the experiences of everyday life. One might object that a cycle of plays set in relatively foreign and fantastical mythical locales populated by characters who are decidedly uncommon in their physical and intellectual capabilities could generate relatively little common understanding among an audience composed of tradesmen and apprentices. The social utility and didactic function of these plays, however, is not just a function of the
content of the plays themselves but, as I have argued, of the dramatic armature of the mis-
en-scene. In this way, the goals of the epic theater might be considered analogous to the
general social functions of the mythical subject matter they portray. As I noted above, the
Greco-Roman material that Heywood incorporated in *The Ages*, despite its deified
characters and otherworldly settings, was regarded by historians in the Renaissance as a
legitimate and illuminating form of history. But this sphere of knowledge also embodied a
separate and distinct ontological status as myth. It is this mythical character, when
merged with the formal principles that characterized their performance at the Red Bull,
that produces their broader social meaning and enhances their didactic potential.

The theatrical presentation of mythical history in *The Ages* effectively mediates
between the collective goals of community or “folk” theater and the deeply personal
appeal of myth. They do so by staging, often several times in the same play, the same set
of durable mythical relations in ways that are viscerally apprehendable and mutually
reinforcing. The recurrence of the quest motif offers an instructive paradigm. Twice in the
Silver Age (the battle with the centaurs and the descent to the underworld), and three
times in the *Brazen Age* (confrontation with Acheleous; cleansing of the stable of Ageus;
sea- battle with the Argonauts), Hercules embarks on quests of various sorts. All of these
pursuits are structured as economical narrative units and rely on formulaic and archetypal
patterns to disseminate the myth and its local applicability within this particular
framework. In all instances, the “quest” begins as a response to a particular threat from
unwanted “others,” be they foreigners, monsters, or other beasts, and a corresponding
desire to remove from a threatening position to the community. The fulfillment of this
quest by the hero usually entails a martial battle, feat of dexterity or mental acuity which asserts the hero’s (and community’s) dominance over nature. The questor’s triumphant return is then marked not only by feasting and celebration, but the bestowal of some kind of reward or compensation from a figure invested with state-sanctioned authority, a display which repeatedly enacts societal meaning across multiple generations. The grouping of similar narrative blocks in this way in symbolic units capitalizes on opportunities for narrative transparency and allows for a less burdensome account for the auditor, but, because of the implicit assumptions generated by these mythical units, they become extremely useful in underwriting an ensemble of societal agendas and ethical goals.

Hercules’ labors against Achelous in *The Brazen Age* offers a useful example both of the durability of the mythical form and its malleability in disseminating normative social opinions. The contention begins with the pronouncement of King Oeneus of Calidon that Hercules and Aacheleous must do battle for the right to marry his daughter Deyaneira. But because Hercules represents Thebes and the traditional geopolitical structure of the Grecian archipelago, this challenge becomes symbolic of Hercules expelling Achelous (the river) from the earthen domain improper to it. When Achelous announces to Hercules his lineage from Oceanus and threatens to make “our broad and spacious currents rise” (B2r), he issues a challenge with potentially disastrous effects on the entire community. In defeating Archeleous, Hercules rescues the community from certain disaster, while enumerating this particular victory in his litany of previous triumphs, all of which reinforce
the basic structural features of the quest as well as the corresponding benefits they have bestowed on the community

Have we the Cleonean lions torn?
And decked our shoulders in their horrible spoils?
The Calidonian boar crushed with our club?
The rude Thessalian centaurs sunk beneath
Our...hand? Pierced hell? Bound Cerberus?
And buffeted so long, till from the foam
The dog belched forth strong Aconstum spring? (B2r-v).

The basic elements of the myth retain a symbolic and structural cohesiveness that effortlessly conveys a deep social meaning to the assembled audience. Rooted in the general functional purpose of myth, both religious and secular, Hercules' exploits rehearse the establishment, both literal and metaphorical, of specific customs and practices which mark the transition from a savage to modern society and thereby celebrate the teleology culminating in the social institutions of modern life (Kirk 11). Myths like these are therefore "transvaluative processes" by which the physical and national milestones of the past can not only be iterated for successor cultures but reviewed, celebrated, and used for instructive and regulatory purposes within the new dispensation (Liszka 15).

It is the predictable and unadorned narrative structure of the quest in its basic form that allows for its similar cross-cultural appeal. Anne's Men, through their method of "showing" the play through the intrinsic cognitive appeal of myth and stage action, are able to impress the basic thematic points in the plays on their particular audience more
effectively than the linguistic trickery and “method” acting that characterized competing troupes. Hercules, in words that might easily pertain to the affective potential of the theater, declares “I cannot bellow in thy bombast phrase; / Nor deaf these free spectators with my braves. / I cut off words with deeds, and now behold...” (B2r). Hercules recognizes that the individual representative skill of the actors’ presentation style is insufficient to convey the mythical meaning; the “spectators” must “now behold” and apprehend this quest and its multiple meanings for themselves through a performance devoid of linguistic embellishment.

Dramatic application of the structural tenets of myth, aside from providing a regular and familiar grounding for the audience’s understanding of the play, affords profitable opportunities to insert additional moral commentary on the event to underwrite more local moral or political agendas. With the spectators already enraptured by the exploits of Hercules and their general mythical meaning, such as man’s subjugation of nature and the elements, excess thematic commentary discusses the importance of reality over deception. Achelous, now Hercules’ captive, espouses the belief, useful in a stable and harmonious community, that

I see no magic, or enchanting spell
Have power on virtue and true fortitude
No sleight allusion can deceive the eyes
Of him that is devoutly resolute (B3r).

The narrative features and symbolic triggers of this mythical episode provide a useful vehicle for Heywood’s own social and personal commentary in the play. As the audience
is engaged through the myth, it is susceptible to the moral lessons embedded in it by later
tellers of the tale. Not only does the company use the relatively unadorned mythical
landscape and personages for its intrinsic didactic value, but to enhance instruction in
related but more contemporarily applicable moral concepts. Finally, the presentation of
the myth itself provides an element of lettered instruction in the founding mythologies of
western culture, an important, if elementary step in versing the Red Bull audience in basic
humanist concepts.

There are a number of interrelated dramaturgical devices that allow for the kind of
theatrical experience that greeted spectators of *The Ages* at the Red Bull. The culmination
of these techniques, and, I would argue, the reason for their deployment in the first place,
is to generate a performance in which the audience is given multiple ways of accessing and
understanding the stage action. If the point is to “show” the play in ways to which the
audience can relate and, potentially be educated, numerous discrete elements must be
available to suit the interests and tastes of a majority of playgoers. The structural clarity
of the mythical episodes manages this by reinforcing the basic narrative structures and
attendant moral lessons sedimented in familiar mythic codes. Related to this, the plays use
the language of myth rather than the stylized verse of more colorful Shakespearean
characters. One critic, comparing the *Iron Age* with *Troilus and Cressida*, suggests that,
stylistically and in terms of character, “Shakespeare is allusive where Heywood is
straightforward,” casting aspersion on the later (Weiner xxvii). These commentators are
baffled by the fact that Jupiter, Hercules, Achilles, and the other heros that populate
Heywood’s mythical worlds speak and behave more like the stock figures of a city
comedy like *The Four Apprentices of London* (1615) or *The Travels of the Three English Brothers* (1607). Rather than formalize the noble locutions granted to particular characters, Heywood’s Greek characters speak with candor and in an idiom that is easily understandable to the audience. Ulysses, for instance, asks “How long hath great Achilles been surnamed / Coward in Troy, that Hector, Troilus, Paris, / Have all that name so current in their mouths” (I.A.3.3.33-35). Ulysses common register of delivery helps naturalize the situation to the audience; he speaks in the familiar language of the streets and taverns of Clerkenwell.

The verbal realism associated with these plays is also a common feature of epic speech. Many of the speeches in the *Ages* are Heywood’s own translations of Greek and Latin originals, deliberately unadorned in order to preserve the naivety that characterizes and enhances epic discourse (Adorno 24). Often repeated epithets like “proud Achilles,” “great Hector,” and “clever Odysseus” are superfluous in a staged production where the character’s identity is signified through costuming and the singularity of the actor portraying them. Nor do these epitaphs function as a memorial aid when severed from their original idiom. In an age of expanding literacy and print technology, such devices native to oral traditions are no longer required. These epithets, though, like the narrative threads in which they are embedded, serve a similar purpose to activate the specific mythical language in the individual and collective consciousness of the auditors. The complex and often contradictory relations developed through this type of language deepen mythical associations and patterns of imagery. Through their individual descriptors, these mythical characters are typologically differentiated from ordinary agents, yet their basic
and relatively unindividuated exploits remain inspiring and transparent to the audience. Both the mythical actions of the Grecians as well as the exhausting indecision that plagues everyday life are rendered more palatable and realistic when the play shows "great Achilles fingering his effeminate lute. . .Thou the champion of Greece, a mere bug-bear" (1 I. A. 3.3.58.61). The subsequent feats of these mythical characters celebrate the heroism of everyday life as a Red Bull audience views in these mythical characters a potential representative of themselves and their values. Achilles, of course, is a larger-than-life figure, but he retains familiar human characteristics which familiarizes and ingratiates to an audience of ordinary artisans. The retention of the antiquated epithets also injects a self-consciously didactic element to the stage presentation as the audience easily recognizes what each character represents on a basic level through the frequent use of such seemingly dispensable terminology.

Another alternate avenue of entry into the narrative, social meanings, and didactic potential of these plays is offered through their unprecedented visual effects. As we have seen, Heywood consistently and forcefully states that the unique appeal and social benefits of stage performances accrued from their extralinguistic devices. Paradoxical though it might seem, he consistently suggested that these dramatic embellishments might, in fact, serve the interests of historiographical authenticity and meaningful understanding, that certain historical stage productions actually intensify the historical efficacy of their subjects as compared to their written counterparts. Yet this is the implicit claim Thomas Heywood lodges for these plays. In the dedication that precedes the first printed edition of *I Iron Age* (1632), the author anxiously anticipates that "the grace they had then in the acting
[might] take. . .away the expected luster hoped for in the reading” (A2r). The plays’
“luster,” of course, refers to the lavish stage effects and pyrotechnics which accompanied
their original staging at the Red Bull Theater, a venue—as we will witness—notorious for its
innovations in stagecraft, its spectacle, and its company’s “broad” acting style. Similar
sentiments are expressed in the prologue subsequently appended to the unauthorized 1610
quarto of The Golden Age, according to which the author is “loath” to see “this play
accidently coming to press. . .and thrust naked into the world” (A2r). This remark is
usually taken as a sign of Heywood’s loyalty to his company and his distaste for the
printing and purchase of documents that have not legally been sold by the company to a
stationer, especially when the play is in active repertory. But in addition to Heywood’s
procedural objections, the playwright’s language belies an anxiety over the quality of
printed word versus the stage spectacle. The printed quarto, fluctuating on the tides of
the book-market at Barrenger’s stall in Paul’s Cross, is left “to abide the fury of all
weathers” of readers tastes, completely devoid of the “ornament” with which it was
adorned at the Red Bull. Heywood is not, however, concerned about the theatrical
consumers; the play, after all, “hath already passed the approbation of auditors.” He’s
concerned, rather, “with the general censure of readers” who are forced to evaluate the
work strictly on its literary merits. The play, as a durable and tangible commodity, has lost
the marketable qualities instrinsic to its dramatic form. The ability to teach and enlighten
through spectacle, an obvious dramatic corollary to Sidney’s famous dictum of “delightful
teaching,” was a crucial aspect of the Renaissance theater’s moral enterprise as Heywood
conceived it.

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More than any other theatrical professional, Heywood knew what it took to bedazzle audiences with stage effects and he knew that no other troupe excelled at the kind of spectacle staged by the Queen’s Men at the Red Bull. True to his written statements on dramatic theory, Heywood, throughout his long career as actor, dramatist, and sharer, was frequently drawn to pageantry and stage effects as an expedient way of entertaining mass audiences and capturing new ones. His early years with the Queen’s Men witnessed the staging of *Fortune by Land and Sea* (1609), a play which would seem to require two discrete sets, including one aboard ship. This preoccupation intensified during the company’s tenure at the Red Bull, including the Ages and other plays of similar type, culminating in Heywood’s frequent involvement in city pageants and Lord Mayor’s shows. Each year between 1631 to 1639 he was responsible for the construction and execution of the annual mayor’s show on 29 October. These pageants called for spacious and intricately detailed sets, including the richly iconic decoration, in 1631, of Charles I’s ship, *The Sovereign of the Seas*, ventures which led to collaboration with some of the best set-designers and pageant-makers in the business, including Indigo Jones, Gerard Christmas, and his two sons John and Mattias (A. Young 129-30). Heywood’s later success as a pageant designer was certainly a result of his earlier work on *The Ages* at the Red Bull and his understanding of the ways in which audiences might be manipulated, educated, and, most importantly, entertained, through the non-verbal aspects of theatrical performance.

Contemporary accounts suggest that the Red Bull was, already, a venue noted for innovative staging and uncommonly marvelous special effects. The seemingly ascendant
popularity of the Red Bull fare struck a negative chord with some dramatists who
disapproved specifically with "your [i.e. Heywood's] huge bombasted plays, quilted with
mighty words to lean purpose" and "this fashion of play-making" more generally (Epistle
to The Roaring Girl). The sheer popularity of Red Bull productions, even despite their
outmoded character, must have been a source of consternation and vexation to theater
professionals of the day. These sentiments are concisely expressed by Peter Heylyn's
general bewilderment that so many would flock to "gather musty phrases from ye Bull"
(J.C.S. 6: 135). But these mythical productions warranted something in addition to
"bombast" and "musty phrases" and the company modified the playhouse accordingly.
Evidence of the scope and quality of these modifications is available from two interrelated
sources: critical discussion of the extensive stage directions detailed in the plays along
with an analysis of the physical structure and performative features of the playhouse itself.
Using this evidence interchangeably, I will construct a portrait of the spectacle witnessed
by the Red Bull playgoer and the ways in which this heightened the theatrical experience,
both for pleasure and for instruction.

The Red Bull, like most of the public ampitheaters, shared the same basic
auditorium features of the other houses (Gurr 1987: 15). Structurally, it shared more in
common with other square-built theaters like the Boar's Head and The Fortune. The
stage may have been larger than others to allow for multiple groups of characters and
various scenes on stage at one time. Presumably to accentuate these discrete groupings,
the Red Bull was unique among early modern theaters. This theater was, apparently, the
only one to have a railing that might also be available for groundlings to alight (Reynolds
Like other theaters, the Red Bull contained trapdoors to facilitate entrances and exits from below the stage, but depictions of the underworld in the *Brazen Age* and *Silver Age* require the movement of several characters from below, at several locations of the stage, at the same time. The stage directions in these plays would necessitate unique structural features at the Red Bull, implying that this theater must have had expanded stage technologies to incorporate additional personnel. The effect of these elaborate trapdoors would have been striking. Near the conclusion of both *The Silver Age* and *The Golden Age* winds “appear” and devils “rise...[and appear simultaneously] at every corner of the stage” brandishing torches to the resounding of fireworks. Hercules then sinks “with flashes of fire...several fireworks...and fireworks all over the house.” This massive pyrotechnic display and the ghoulish uprisings provide a real sense of spiritual possession occurring not only to the character Hercules, but also to members of the audience itself who were frequently exposed to analogous folktales that often warn of the dangers of demonology (Greenblatt 1993: 108-09). Here, strictly through the use of stage technology, the audience is presented with a palpable and frightening display. These elaborate effects exploit popular phobias of demons which would, quite possibly, be considered an everyday threat. The troupe, in this way, enacts fear and pity, suggesting that the hellish spectacle is not deflected entirely onto Hercules but on the universal consequences of a potentially unholy lifestyle.

8. Reynolds 1941 offers a much more detailed and technical examination of staging practices at the Red Bull than I intend to offer here. My goal is rather to emphasize the effects on the audience of these elaborate stage effects.
The pyrotechnic effects themselves that accompany this scene were not unknown on the public stage and torches were used as an integral property in a host of plays (Dessen 70). Of fireworks themselves, of the multiple plays calling for fire, fireworks, burnings, or fireballs, the vast majority are to be found in plays performed by Queen Anne’s Men at the Red Bull (Dessen and Thompson 39, 92-93; see table 3.3). Throughout this selection of plays, numerous stage directions throughout the plays call for their use to various effect. It would seem that Queen’s Men monopolized pyrotechnics on the London stage through their tenure at the Red Bull, possibly acquiring a niche occupied, years earlier, by one Elizabethan company, Strange’s Men, that seems to have cultivated and refined the use of fire on stage, often for depicting immolation (Manley 116). But their use by Queen Anne’s Men for The Ages at the Red Bull was astounding not only for the sheer amount of explosives involved in a given production, but also for the amplitude and technical complexity with which they were deployed. As at other theaters, fireworks are frequently used to accompany the entry and exit of deified characters. A frequent stage direction throughout the Golden and Silver Age involves “Thunders. Lightnings. Jupiter descending in majesty, his thunderbolt burning.” One must assume that, in a naturally lighted outdoor theater, the use of lightning and the lightning rod would be of only marginal visual utility and that their main structural purpose were as sound effects that continually focused attention on the action. This was a source of appeal for those playgoers for whom even the bombastic Homeric dialogue became prosaic and tedious. Jupiter’s fiery staff, however, also functions as a visual marker of his
status in the mythical universe, again using archetypal symbols as an aid to the mythical meanings that underlie the concrete history that’s disseminated here.

Fireworks were used at the Red Bull to do much more than act as visual appendages to the action. It is often pyrotechnics and attendant stage action that propels the narrative, “showing,” in a very real sense, the mythical situation without any dialogue to cloud the underlying mythical situation. By far the most extensive and magnificent, self-sufficient use of pyrotechnics in these plays occurs at the death of Hercules (Reynolds 172). This pivotal moment, at the climax of The Brazen Age, is staged without dialogue of any kind to narrate the action. The visuals, therefore, must have been spectacularly realistic—or at least apprehended as such—to render into believable and coherent stage action the following more or less specific stage direction.

Enter Hercules from a rock above, tearing down trees. . . All the princes break down the trees, and make a fire in which Hercules placeth himself. Jupiter above strikes him with a thunder-bolt, his body sinks, and from the heavens descends a hand in a cloud that from the place where Hercules was burned, brings up a star and fix it to the firmament. (B.A. 252-54)

Many of the Ages’ most spectacular scenes are promulgated through these kinds of dumb shows in order to demonstrate the limitations of words in conveying theatrical action. Dumb shows are frequent in early-modern productions and especially prevalent in the repertory of Anne’s Men. Most dumb shows, however, are used as linking vignettes that reinforce elements already related in dialogue. There use by Anne’s Men is unique in that they are structurally autonomous to the dialogue and integral to the audience’s
understanding of the play. These spectacular elements also confirm Heywood's statements in *The Apology* that a play's quality of dialogue—"a shadow received by the ear"—has, from the Greeks to the Romans, to the present theater, been insufficient to forge a lively engagement between spectator, actor, and the dramatic material (B3v). The abundant use of pyrotechnics excerpted, apparently, from a group of Red Bull plays, prompted an earlier twentieth-century commentator to pronounce, probably exaggeratedly, that "Most Elizabethan plays were filled with enough sissing and booming to make them excellent substitutes for Fourth of July celebrations" (Simonson 219). This is very far from our high-brow cultural understanding of Renaissance drama, but a statement that might indicate the actual situation with greater accuracy.

The abundant battle scenes that were contained in the cycle, especially in the two Trojan war plays entitled the *Iron Age*, continue the cycle's innovations in stagecraft to stage properties and advanced cinematographic techniques. Most history plays of the period, due to the lack of specialized stage devices, were forced to improvise or use crude representational surrogates or a more allegorical emphasis when the script called for murders, deaths in the course of battle, or other episodes involving maiming or fatality. In response to this vexing theatrical state of affairs, Heywood pioneered the introduction of techniques frequently used in the contemporary theater and cinema. The death of Nessus the centaur at the hands of Hercules in *The Brazen Age* is striking for its complexity and for the admirable way in which the troupe staged this scene to thrill their spectators (Dessen 1984: 16-17). The scene demands that Nessus abducts Dejanira, spiriting her across a turbulent river with Hercules left on the other side to wail at the rape.
of his bride. Hercules declares that “I’ll send ‘til I can come, this poisonous shaft.” The following stage direction reads “Hercules shoots and goes in: Enter Nessus with an arrow in him.” Apparently, Hercules does loose a real arrow requiring Nessus to reenter the stage at precisely the right moment, struggling with the arrow in his back. What’s important here is that unlike plays like Henry V, the audience need not rely on choral narration or detailed reported action but can actually witness the initiation of an action and its immediate result, a theatrical effect akin to cinematography modern viewers might take for granted but one which actually shows an Elizabethan audience an act that would be visually unrepresentable in any other medium of the day.

Finally, how might these almost ridiculous features have contributed to the social or didactic goals of the work? One of many representative examples demonstrates both the extent of stage properties used by the troupe as well as the utility of such far-fetched scenes. In a battle between Achilles and Hector in which both characters lose their weapons, the combatants upright a tree and dislodge a boulder in order to continue the fight, maintaining that their martial strength is “equal[ed] in mind,” the arena of spiritual combat (1 Iron Age 2.5.52 and sd.). Henslowe’s Diary indicates that many theatrical troupes had rocks and trees in their stage inventory, but these would have likely been used for decorative purposes on stage. Reynolds suggests that the Red Bull may have had some special structure which rose from the main stage to the balcony level which enclosed a concealing space for the large and heavy items to be thrown about by Heywood’s mythical heros (76). Such a structure and the use of very realistic (if not real) rocks and trees seems plausible because, unlike other playscripts, Red Bull plays provide very few
spectators (Dessen 1984: 16-17). The scene demands that Nessus abducts Dejanira, spiriting her across a turbulent river with Hercules left on the other side to wail at the rape of his bride. Hercules declares that “I’ll send ‘til I can come. this poisonous shaft.” The following stage direction reads “Hercules shoots and goes in: Enter Nessus with an arrow in him.” Apparently, Hercules does loose a real arrow requiring Nessus to reenter the stage at precisely the right moment, struggling with the arrow in his back. What’s important here is that unlike plays like Henry V, the audience need not rely on choral narration or detailed reported action but can actually witness the initiation of an action and its immediate result, a theatrical effect akin to cinematography modern viewers might take for granted but one which actually shows an Elizabethan audience an act that would be visually unrepresentable in any other medium of the day.

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Table 3.1 - English Printed Editions of Plutarch’s *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*, 1579-1642.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Stationer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-1579</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Wight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-1595</td>
<td>Bonham Norton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-1603</td>
<td>John Norton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thomas Wight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>George Bishop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-1612</td>
<td>unspecified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-1631</td>
<td>Robert Allott</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes on Table 3.1

- All editions are translated by Sir Thomas North, based on a French translation by James Amiot.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Queen Anne's Men (Red Bull)</th>
<th>Prince Henry's Men (Fortune)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Play</strong></td>
<td><strong>Consensus Date</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Rape of Lucrece</em></td>
<td><em>1606-08</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Golden Age</em></td>
<td><em>1609-11</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Silver Age</em></td>
<td><em>1609-12</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Brazen Age</em></td>
<td><em>1610-13</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>I Iron Age</em></td>
<td><em>1612-13</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>II Iron Age</em></td>
<td><em>1612-13</em></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2 - Classical Plays in Company Repertories, 1611-1614
NOTES:

-Consensus Date is that of initial performance. Dates are taken from Harbage 1964 and Chambers 1923 for all non-Shakespearean Plays; the consensus dating of Shakespearean plays is taken from Harbage 1964, Chambers 1923, Barroll 1993; Greenblatt, ed. 1997; and the New Arden editions.

-Basis is given when external evidence exists to assist in the dating of the play. If no external evidence exists, the abbreviation TR is used to refer to the scholarly consensus which is usually based on analysis of the play’s stylistics or topical allusions, often prior to Barroll 1993 and disregarding the constraints imposed by the closure of theaters due to the plague. I also give the date of the play’s initial publication to indicate a terminal limit to its date of first performance, assuming that, in all cases, the play was performed before it was printed.

-Likely in Repertory refers to the year in which the play was performed frequently in repertory, taking into account the frequent closures prior to 1611. Based, in part, on Barroll 1993; Knutson 1991.

ABBREVIATIONS:

SR = Date Entered in Stationer’s Register
MR = Date Licensed by the Master of the Revels
Q = Quarto Edition Published
F = Folio Edition Published
R = Revival
C = Continuation
TR = Traditional Date ascribed by scholarly consensus

1. Since the extant records for this company indicate that only four new plays were acquired between 1607-1612, the troupe’s repertory likely consisted of numerous revivals. Given the popularity of plays on classical themes, the plays listed here, all owned and performed by the Admiral’s/Prince’s Men, are available and likely candidates for revival. All of these plays are lost (Harbage 1964).

2. Barroll 1993 suggests that attempts to date the play through topical allusion are not inconsistent with a much later first performance than usually ascribed, a statistic confirmed by the plague records (210-42). I therefore feel confident in placing the play in the company’s 1611 repertory.

2. Barroll 1993 conjectures a potential gap of 100 weeks or more between this play’s court performance and its staging in repertory (168). Since the plague likely interrupted or delayed the original stage runs of Antony and Timon, they were likely continued and/or revived in 1611.

4. Accounts for the Office of the Chamber indicate that a play entitled Caesar’s Tragedy, undoubtedly a revival of Julius Caesar was in repertory in 1611-1612 (Knutson 1999:358).

5. A Third quarto of this popular and violent play in 1611, coupled with the steady appetite for Roman plays, strongly suggests that this play was revived in 1611 (Knutson 1999:359).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-arrow</td>
<td>the only &quot;shooting&quot; of an arrow occurs in <em>Brass Age</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-bar</td>
<td>a portable railing where characters might stand trial; brought on stage for court scenes and exclusive to Red Bull.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-burn</td>
<td>especially common in <em>The Ages</em> and at the Red Bull, but also appears in <em>Tamburlaine</em> and <em>2 Henry VI</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-cloud</td>
<td>only substantive use at the Red Bull; predominantly employed in <em>The Ages</em>, this property also appears in <em>Messalina</em> (1635)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-distaff</td>
<td>used twice during the period, exclusively in <em>The Ages</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-fray</td>
<td>exclusive to <em>The Ages</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-hell/ hellish</td>
<td>exclusive to the Red Bull.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-iron/ irons</td>
<td>2/3 of usages unique to Anne's Men or the Red Bull.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-lance/ lances</td>
<td>often found at the Red Bull and in <em>The Ages</em>, but also appears in <em>Coriolanus</em> and <em>Edward III</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-snake</td>
<td>3/4 of the mention of this device were at the Red Bull during the Stuart period. Exception: Barnabe Barnes' <em>Devil's Charter</em> (1607)</td>
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- this item is mentioned in only one stage direction of the period (Brazen Age).

"Blazing Stars" appear in If You Know Not Me, Birth of Merlin, Battle of Alcazar (1589) (all staged at the Red Bull at one time), and The Revenger's Tragedy.

Table 3.3 - Stage Directions Unique to Queen Anne's Men and the Red Bull Theater

It's often remarked that the Inuit, in their language, have over a dozen words for snow. Those aspects prevalent to one's immediate environment tend to proliferate in vocabulary, they say. The same might be said of the theatrical vocabulary of Queen Anne's Men in their dramatic environment at the Red Bull. The table below notes stage directions unique to the dramatic idiom of the troupe and also those terms dominant in their dramaturgy. Since so much of the action of The Ages and other plays of this company cohere around violence, warfare, and spectacle, it's not surprising that words with such connotations are used so frequently in these stage directions. The list below is not meant to be taken as a sole evidentiary source: the proliferation of individual stage directions might well have to do with a shorthand developed by the company or the idiosyncrasies of their dramatists, especially Heywood. Nevertheless this list is uncanny in its exclusivity and in its penchant for the types of words it contains. Oddly enough, both "drum" and "trumpet," frequent and derogatory epithets for the plays staged by the troupe at the Red Bull, are not among them.

CHAPTER 4

FOXEIAN DRAMA IN LONDON’S COMMUNITY THEATERS

Both Thomas Heywood’s *If You Know Not Me You Know Nobody* (1604) and Thomas Dekker’s *Whore of Babylon* (1606) take episodes of Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments* as source material. Both were originally staged at community theaters to the northwest of London wall: *If You Know Not Me* at The Red Bull in Clerkenwell, *The Whore of Babylon* at The Fortune a half-mile to the south, and later at the Red Bull. These theaters, unlike the Globe and other playhouses on the bankside, drew their audiences from the local community and the nearby environs within London wall, rather than the city as a whole. In both cases, the local communities consisted primarily of professional tradesmen and their apprentices engaged in labor intensive industries such as brewing, plastering, haberdashery, draping, and butchery. Even more than other London neighborhoods, Clerkenwell and the environs to the east in Finsbury around Golding Lane and Whitecross St. in the parish of St. Giles, Cripplegate contained disproportionate amounts of poor. These theaters, therefore, tended to cater to these more plebeian audiences because, though easily accessible to the growing well-to-do population in London’s west end via the major thoroughfares of Holborn and the Strand, they were hampered in their ability to attract these audiences due to the simultaneous opening of the Blackfriars and another private theater in Paul’s churchyard, within the city walls (E.S. 2: 435).
sophisticated and satirical repertory at these private theaters as well as the significantly higher admission prices appealed to the pretensions of a more elite clientele for whom a chance to be seen in these fashionable venues mattered at least as much as the quality of the dramatic performance. Consequently, both the Red Bull and the Fortune provided popular “low” culture entertainment to raucous audiences who, due to their limited access to other forms of current news media and political and religious propaganda, might be considered more susceptible to the ideologically motivated statements disseminated in dramatic performances.

*If You Know Not Me* adapts Foxe’s “Miraculous Preservation of Lady Elizabeth” in tracing the princess’ examination, incarceration and eventual deliverance from the Marian regime administered by Stephen Gardiner, the Bishop of Winchester, Lord Chancellor Sir Henry Beningfield, and others. The play depicts a nervous regime seeking to repress potential adversaries before they are able to foment a return to the principles of the Reformation. Mary’s sister, Elizabeth, is identified and taken into custody by Gardiner and Beningfield and endures undue hardship, humiliation, and false accusations during her imprisonment in the Tower of London and house arrest in Woodstock. At the mercy of the Catholic authorities, she is in grave danger of execution before the death of both Gardiner and Mary I. Throughout her ordeal she is sustained through the munificence of her loyal servants, nobles, the commoners of London, and supernatural devices that can only be attributed to God’s providence. Although *The Whore of Babylon* does not draw specifically on any single narrative in Foxe, it traces several important themes iterated throughout the volume, and especially in those books discussing the state of the church.
during the reign of Mary I. Prevalent among these is the portrayal of a persistent and apocalyptic dichotomy between the true and false church. In this play, Fairieland, or the English state under its Fairie Queene, Titania (glossed as Elizabeth I), confronts a military and spiritual attack from Catholic forces led by the Empress of Babylon and her underlings, the allegorical analogues of the Kings of France, Spain, and the Holy Roman Empire as well as Jesuit operatives in England. When the Catholic league’s veiled attempts to infiltrate the kingdom through diplomacy and the covert operations of Jesuits under Roper and Campion are thwarted by Truth and Plain-Dealing, the Empress dispatches an Armada to break the kingdom. The Armada is miraculously dispersed by Time and routed by Titania’s armies outfitted by Plain-Dealing and motivated by an impassioned speech by the queen herself, thereby confounding the Whore of Baylon and driving her to insanity. Both plays, therefore, draw upon topical and highly contentious subject matter presented in a lively manner in a clear effort to appeal specifically to, influence, and evoke a unified partisan reaction from the local theatergoing constituency who, despite shared financial circumstances, were potentially divided on religious matters.

i - London’s Suburbs in Reformation historiography

Attending to the audience dynamics of these plays and evaluating their impact upon local religious controversy confronts numerous contested issues among historians of Reformation England. An often acrimonious debate has ensued concerning the spread of the Reformation throughout large segments of society. How many were actually reformed? When did this reformation take place? What was the intensity of the reformist zeal among those who numbered themselves Protestant by participating in prescribed
services of worship? Since both of the works I discuss are engaged in the construction of Renaissance historiography, an interpretation of these two plays in their originary performance contexts will depend largely on competing narratives concerning the spread of the theology of the Protestant Reformation throughout England, and especially to those poorer environs of London that are clearly not at the cusp of intellectual or ideological reform. If we accept, with A.G. Dickens, that England had become a stable and unified Protestant nation with the Elizabethan settlement of 1559 (333), the numerous editions of The Book of Martyrs published throughout the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries¹ are partially evacuated of their polemic force as there would be little pressing urgency to spread the ideology of Reform at a time when its basic tenets and institutional hegemony were well established. Given this conception, The Book of Martyrs would contribute to the constitution of a formal and liturgical infrastructure—like The Book of Common Prayer, The Book of Martyrs had an enormous presence in Protestant churches and households—and the enhancement of the scope and precision with which Protestant ideology might be applied to a vast array of social and religious practices². The interest in these two plays would therefore be an historical rather than ideological curiosity, emphasizing the political dimensions and modifications of the source material as well as

¹. The first edition was printed and published by John Day in 1563 with subsequent editions by the same printer in 1570, 1576, and 1583. Other complete editions were printed in 1596, 1610, 1632, and 1692. In 1589, Timothy Bright published an abridgement of The Book of Martyrs, and “Short Views” of the complete edition, entitled The Mirror of Martyrs, were published in 1613, 1615, 1625, 1631, and 1633.

². The Book of Martyrs then would act as an analogue to what Thomas Kuhn labels “normal science,” a period concerned with the global articulation and filling out of the minutiae of an established mode of discourse after the rapid and overwhelming reorientation of the basic tenets and goals attendant upon the succession of an emergent paradigm (36-39).
the inauguration of new modes of historical reconstruction. Concentrating on the interplay of synchronic and diachronic modes of historiography, Ivo Kamps offers an insightful interpretation of If You Know Not Me which does just this, suggesting that Heywood’s play contains a movement away from its “Elizabethan past” towards a new “inner logic” that more accurately characterizes the new permutations of the Jacobean writing of history (67).

But if we follow Christopher Haigh, Eamon Duffy, Patrick Collinson, and Caroline Litzenberger, among others, in considering the English Reformation—even in London and Middlesex—a largely unsettled movement, active reformers as anxious and vehement proponents of radically new theological and political ideas, and the majority of the common populace as confused and relatively unversed followers of a new church while residually maintaining older Catholic traditions and beliefs until well into the seventeenth century, Foxe’s Acts and Monuments and popular dramatic versions of its contents are rendered important polemic and propagandistic interventions leading to the eventual mastery and dissemination of the ideology of the reformed church. Furthermore, the activities of recusants and their Jesuit priests continued, to a greater or lesser extent, even into the eighteenth century. The government continued to view recusancy as a destabilizing presence and instituted taxes and other regulatory measures against Catholics in 1715 and 1725 until these policies were finally abandoned in 1733 (Magee 176-77). This latter narrative comprises a more compelling version of the history of the Reformation, especially in its account of its spread among the skilled and unskilled
workers of London and other industrial centers who were often the last to receive the reformed gospel.

The situation in London is even more difficult to discern. Susan Brigden notes that though the “men of London were notoriously easy to rally to a cause” and had a long history of supporting interests contrary to the crown, widespread acceptance of emergent religious movements was difficult to achieve due to the diversity of London’s population and its constant fluctuation and growth (130-33; 155). At the same time, however, during the return to Catholicism under Mary, many embraced the awaited return to Catholicism while many others, for whom religious debate rarely entered the everyday life, conformed willingly with whatever doctrine prevailed at their local parish church which, of course, was dictated by the diocese at the behest of the crown. Many parishes, including St. Botolph Aldersgate near the Fortune, enthusiastically returned to the old religion even before the order from Archbishop Edmund Bonner in 1554, and only reluctantly conformed to Protestantism again under Elizabeth (Brigden 586). While for some, religious orientation was less a matter of personal conviction than financial gain. Many Londoners reaped the rewards of the dissolution of monastery lands and seizure of monastic wealth and were willing to embrace Protestantism less out of a conviction that they had discovered the “true” church, but rather that it was a relatively effortless path to wealth and the increased social standing that it entailed (Brigden 579-80). Clearly, even when it was possible to determine the allegiances of London churchgoers, their religious zeal was neither as homogeneous nor as ardent as suggested by impassioned apologists on both sides. The urban poor, on the other hand, represented a different but no less serious
problem for zealous reformers. According to Peter Clark, this group represented a "third world" of the spiritually ignorant, many of whom attended church infrequently, if at all (156; Collinson 1982: 216-17).

The tenuous grasp of Protestantism and the psychological divisions it exposed within once harmonious local communities is forcefully registered in John Swinnerton's *Christian Love-Letter* (1606). In it, the author, believing that "they cannot agree in love that disagree in faith," appeals to his beloved to turn away from the Catholic faith so that the couple might be married (B3v). He fashions himself among the poorer and relatively uneducated classes, thereby aligning himself with playgoers in the neighborhoods in question. He admits that though he has "no special place allotted me in the building of the holy temple of our savior," in circumscribed arenas he is able to "set [his] hand thereunto though I rank myself among the meanest of the laborers" (A2r). Swinnerton falls short of advocating tolerance for Catholics, but feels that moderate reminders of the Protestant belief in justification by faith and *sola scriptura* serve the cause better than the vehement rejection of Roman doctrine. The *Christian Love-Letter* demonstrates the important ways in which religious controversy impinges on the everyday lives of disenfranchised people far from the locus of this debate while suggesting that the lack of a widely-held consensus on these matters had unanticipated social and personal consequences. The fact that such a "mean laborer" would take the trouble to pen and eventually publish an extended tract on his personal reflections on the ongoing religious differences attests further to the vulnerable hold of the official religion on the general public, even into the seventeenth century. Clearly Protestants were in need of any sort of galvanizing pressure to solidify
the popular support of the new religion and to repair the divisions exacted upon families and communities that are largely unnoticed by historians interested in canvassing the beliefs of the city or kingdom at large.

Given these competing claims, residual devotion to the old religion became indistinguishable among several disenfranchised segments of society, including those in the north at a greater geographical remove from the centers of religious innovation, as well as the urban poor and working class who wouldn’t have the time or education to be engulfed in the first waves of Protestant ferment (Scarisbrick 137). Recusancy was a well understood, if not always outwardly visible problem: a network of Catholic houses throughout London provided food and money to poor papists; tradesman’s guilds often provided protection to Catholic members, offering them their only access to mass and other sacraments (Scarisbrick 158); and sizeable numbers of Jesuits who traveled throughout the nation were especially conspicuous in ports. In addition, since there was no way of judging the religious convictions of individuals within Protestant parishes which included outwardly conforming Catholics, zealous Reformers felt obliged to entrench their cause at any opportunity and to imagine affective ways of localizing this message.

The fear of mounting Catholic activities among those at all levels of society was exacerbated in Clerkenwell, home since 1185 to the erstwhile priory of St. John of Jerusalem and St. Mary’s nunnery. The estates of this priory were confiscated by Henry VIII in 1546 (Pinks 218), and the attached church become a parish church in 1559 with

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3. The dissolution of this priory occurred much later than that of other monastic lands throughout England. During the reign of Mary (1553-1558) the buildings belonging to the former priory were repaired for the purpose of celebrating mass for the merchant-tailors and other London companies. The
the accession of Elizabeth, but it's probable that, due to nearly 400 hundred years of intimate ties to the Church of Rome, members of this community maintained Catholic allegiances longer than the general London populace. Indeed, of those cited for recusancy and “failing to attend church” in the Session records of Middlesex County, a disproportionate number were parishioners at St. James', Clerkenwell. Fears of Catholic activity in the community were confirmed on 14 March 1628 when a Jesuit College located in a mansion belonging to the Earl of Shrewsbury adjacent to St. John’s in Clerkenwell was discovered and raided by order of parliament. Subsequent investigations demonstrated that this brotherhood of ten priests was well funded and well supplied with utensils, relics, and books containing the emblem of the Society of Jesus. These documents also indicate that this group evaded persecution only through the patronage of influential members of the nobility, civil service, and local authorities (Foley 1: 99-111).

Records do not reveal how long the “conclave” was in operation but suggest that it was in existence at least by 1614. But regardless of the date on which the college was established, the decision to locate it in Clerkenwell suggests that at least some members of the community maintained Catholic sympathies to a greater degree than other London parishes. The Whore of Babylon, perhaps in an effort to alert its audience of the close order was not completely abolished until 1559 (Pinks 218-19).

4. Account books indicate that annual expenses amounted to £227 10s. 5d., and that the books seized were valued at £400. See British Library Mss. 5506, fol. 67r.

5. Later accounts attest to the anxieties aroused by this discovery. Sir John Elliot, in the parliament of 1628, exclaimed that “here is a ground laid for a new religion, and a foundation for the undermining of the State” (quoted in Foley, Vol. 1: 104). The proceedings of the parliament of 1628 In a quasi-fictional religious “vision” set in early Stuart London entitled Messis Vitae (1886), John Stuart Blackie expresses anxiety that “In St. John's at Clerkenwell / Subtle Jesuits are training / Simple English youths for hell!”
The fear is not merely that Jesuits are active throughout England as a whole, but rather that the "simple" or relatively uneducated lower class "youths" of Clerkenwell are especially susceptible to their influence.
proximity of the Jesuit threat, specifically alludes to the existence of these and similar conclaves, claiming that some “fill our rooms...to watch our entrance, / And arm all against us” (1.1.179-81).

Religious controversy in the neighborhood extended to the members of the Queen Anne’s Men. Although Greene, Heywood, Swinnerton, and other prominent members of the company were firm proponents of Protestantism, Christopher Beeston, despite his outward conformity, maintained Catholic allegiances. Beeston’s wife, Jane, was cited for recusancy on nine separate occasions and the family may have been victims of popular persecution because of it (M.C.R. 2: 386; M.S.R. 220). One of Beeston’s descendants, Heathcliffe, in a manuscript letter dated 12 December, 1932 to Shakespeare biographer John Quincy Adams, elaborates on the actor’s faith. He suggests that both Christopher and his brother William “labored under extraordinary difficulties throughout their lives because they were staunch “papists and recusants” in times when to be suspected of leaning in this direction was to court fines, imprisonment, and often death” (Folger Mss. Y.c.123 (A-E), fo. b-c). This, he suggests, is what forced Beeston to assume the alias Hutchinson. His comments illustrate how religious controversy permeated all aspects of social life, even within outwardly cohesive organizations. Moreover, recusancy statistics were unusually high in the parish of St. James’ throughout the period (M.C.R. 2: 386) The existence of divisive religious conflicts within otherwise coherent communities may have suggested, to some, including the dramatist, the urgency with which some kind of effective mechanism was needed to “complete” the reformation and galvanize communities around a common religious faith to complement shared lifestyles and material
circumstances. Perhaps part of Heywood's intent was to reform those presenting the play in addition to those witnessing it.

It is within this climate of nervous Protestantism that I wish to discuss the localized appeal of these two Foxeian-influenced plays. *The Book of Martyrs* utilizes aggressive, ideologically charged narratives of martyrdom and persecution not only to spread Reformation doctrine to a wide segment of English society, but, given the widespread feeling that the Reformation was itself somewhat insecure, to bring a new and zealous Protestant audience into being for the first time. Steven Mullaney notes that Foxe's real agenda was to lodge religious and political claims in the realm where "affect and ideology intersect" (Marotti and Bristol: 236). That is, *The Acts and Monuments* sought to erase the inner conflicts among anxious Protestants who—due to personal misgivings, inadequate access to statements of Protestant theology, or whatever—were incompletely "reformed." Early Reformers had established a useful binary by which subjects might apprehend the theological differences between the two churches, especially in the matter of individual conscience. In his *Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue*, Tyndale attacks the Catholic tendency to rely on the ritualized institutions of the church over against personal beliefs, suggesting that "Mr. More (as there are tokens evident) wrote not these books for any affectation that he bare unto the spirituality" (16). The quarrel with More and the Catholic church in general is that, by relying on formalistic rituals, prohibiting individual access to scripture, and an hierarchical—and therefore impersonal—episcopal structure they simply fail to produce an affective and visceral state, taken to be the hallmark of Protestant faith.
Students of psychology observe that “affective traces,” like various religious phenomena, of the type that actively pervades social behavior, entail a state beyond ordinary cognition and perception. It’s an “emotional state” reliant on some sort of “extraneous arousal” actively perceived by the affected agent (Bersheid 27). By merging emotional responses with conscious decision making and the expression of individual opinion, any ideologue is capable of exercising control over those whose judgements are clouded by emotion. These social scientists cite recent empirical research to suggest that the phenomenological aspects that pervade subjective experience are not necessarily the products of self-conscious thought and are thereby susceptible to external control without the subject being aware of this manipulation. When asked to justify an action or opinion, the subject will attribute external coercion to ordinary, self-conscious, cognitive processes (Oswald 90-91). Emotions and emotional appeals, therefore, offer a fertile ground for those who seek to manipulate public opinion while maintaining the fervent and undiluted support within individual consciousness.

Recognizing the potential for acquiescence through psychological manipulation, vocal proponents of the Protestant faith sought to engender this kind of affective state on an individual level. But Protestant leaders soon recognized that universalizing such reforms required mobilization of individuals as a collective unit, that is, institutionalization of this new approach to personal faith as a national Protestant church. The difficulty of instilling a strongly affective sense of religious fervor on a macro-level is a problem inherent in the tenets of the Reformation itself, which stresses faith on a personal level and an individual relationship with God and scripture. Part of Tyndale’s project then, is to
reformulate what is commonly understood by “church [ecclesia]” as a “congregation” of individual believers, “the whole multitude of all that profess Christ” (14, emphasis added). Since Protestants insisted that the tenets of their belief required the arousal of some kind of affective or emotional state in the vast ensemble of citizenry, the most expedient solution necessitated the utilization of forms of mass media that could most efficiently and effectively bring about this widespread emotional response. In other words, they sought to make affect ideology. *The Book of Martyrs* and the numerous sermons preached and tracts written by Protestants serve this purpose, and by all accounts did so quite compellingly.

Staged drama, in addition to reaching an audience that included illiterate members, furnished an even more effective vehicle for the transmission of the abstract tenets of the Protestant faith by appropriating the visceral emotional responses towards situations and characters in the service of religious doctrine. The increasing popularity of secular drama in the decades before attests to the emotional appeal of plays as noisy audiences regularly hissed at staged villains and applauded their demise throughout performances (Gurr 1987: 45-46). Unlike a written text or a preached sermon, the dramatic form provides active verbal and visual stimulation which had long been understood to more directly and immediately arouse the individual affective responses that Protestantism seems to dictate. Theorists regularly discuss the emotional dimensions of literature of all sorts and invariably isolate drama as the most expedient way to stimulate large audiences. In the *Poetics*, Aristotle suggests that, due to their constructive principles, dramatic works more powerfully evoke an emotional response from their auditors. Drama, for Aristotle, unlike
spoken-word or written forms of mimesis, combines aspects of means, object, and manner in a simultaneous representation and therefore more effectively generates pity and fear, or the desired emotional response suited to the genre. It is this spectacle intrinsic to a staged representation that provides this augmented affective appeal (1448b-1449a). Even Philip Sidney, disgruntled with the current fare offered on the public stage, recognized that the dramatic form itself sedimented the potential to affect its audience to a greater degree than printed works of literature which he saw as a difference between “reporting and representing.” Because even the most vivid written description requires its readers to use their intellects to reconstruct the scene, the concrete physical representations provided in dramatic performance are advantageous in that “even the dullest wit may conceive it” and thereby the work is better positioned to “teach and delight” a wide segment of society (66-67). Antitheatricalists were certainly willing to grant that the public theater manipulated the affect of its audiences. In his Refutation (1615) of Heywood’s Apology For Actors (1612), I.G. complains that players arrogate the authority usually reserved for clergy in their ability “to cause men to fly that which is evil, and to follow that which is good.” Of course, since players are unable to determine the spiritual needs of their audience, they effectively “seduce, ensnare, and entrap silly souls” (H2V). Moreover, the actual imitation of the emotive qualities of normal speech in staged productions inherently tends to be more persuasive, enticing the audience to suspend ordinary misgivings, and allowing
anecdotes to achieve popular currency without being traced to the sources of competent
authority routinely cited in written accounts (Shiller 163).

Protestant ideologues soon recognized the evangelical capacity of dramatic form. Paul White usefully documents the numerous ardently Protestant and vehemently anti-papal plays presented during the Tudor regime in the years before the erection of the first public theater in 1576, suggesting that these works, performed under the closely supervised patronage of reformed noblemen, became a propagandistic instrument of the Protestant state, especially during the reign of Edward VI (42-43). As his investigation shows, the troupes that presented these interludes performed before both elite and popular audiences during tours of the countryside, especially in the south between Dover and Bristol. London performances, by contrast, usually took place at more exclusive London venues, before members of the royal family or at the Inns of Court or at Westminster, and were therefore unlikely to have a direct impact on the devotional practices and religious beliefs of working class Londoners. These moral interludes, like dramatic works of all sorts, flourished under the patronage of Elizabeth. After 1558, performances of sparsely decorated plays on liturgical themes became a mainstay of Elizabeth’s progresses. Moreover, the The Duchess of Suffolk, the Earl of Warwick, and especially the Earl of Leicester used their patronage of touring companies to promote various Calvinist reforms in the church (Chambers Vol.1: 5; White 63-65). While it’s likely that the advent of

6. The printed edition of The Whore of Babylon actually contains explanatory glosses keyed to the text to explain the allegorical representations of historical figures, a gesture unnecessary on the stage.

7. Foxe himself wrote two such plays, Titus et Gesippus (1544) and Christus Triumphans (1556).
permanent venues within the city during the late 1570's and early 1580's brought some of these religious works to a wider London audience, Elizabeth’s growing distaste for vehemently Protestant drama led to increasingly secular content in staged productions, suggesting that the increasing public consumers of the theater later in the century were yet to be exposed to a wide array of propagandistic productions. Nevertheless, acting companies, including the all-star troupe, the Queen’s Men (formed in 1583) were under the patronage of influential Protestant privy councilors Liecester and Walsingham. It has been suggested that their interest in touring dramatic companies—if not particular plays—was an important means of strengthening the government’s religious policy in light of a growing fringe of radical Puritans who opposed public entertainments of all sorts (McMillin and MacLean 30-31).

Many commentators have documented the Protestant agenda and Foxeian resonances present in numerous early-modern stage productions performed in London before public theater audiences and have sought to interpret these plays accordingly. Concentrating predominantly on the plays of Thomas Middleton, Margot Heinemann effectively repudiates commonplace assertions that the public theater did not engage with highly charged Protestant—even Puritan—sentiments and that Reformers were generally hostile to the stage, contending that the relationship between dramatic works and individual religious beliefs comprise more than isolated exceptions to their general exclusivity. She suggests, in fact, that audiences at more plebeian playhouses like the Fortune and Red Bull, many of whom became active participants in the civil wars of the 1630's and 40's, were amenable to religiously-inspired stage productions (24-26). Her
analysis, however, fails to address the reciprocal role played by earlier Jacobean drama in producing such sentiments. The cultural and disciplinary apparatuses of radical Protestantism were largely antithetical to the secular and seasonal cycles of plebeian communities based in a carnivalesque ethos (Collinson 1988: 15). Early Jacobean plays like *If You Know Not Me* and *The Whore of Babylon*, by containing polemical Protestant messages within the conventional mechanism of the popular theater, allow for a compromise between didacticism and entertainment according to the traditional Horatian dictum “to teach and delight.” Plays like this mark a gradual shift away from carnivalesque dispensations and attitudes through the structural vehicle which partially allowed for their expression in the first place, paving the way for later plays which concentrate on the moral and political attributes of the increasingly dominant Protestant order. Indeed, these plays seemed to have a significant effect on the perceived moral character of the community.

Thomas Jordan’s retrospective prologue to *The Poor Man’s Comfort* (1661), a play staged at the Red Bull in 1617, notes the positive changes in the moral and religious character of popular drama in the neighborhoods where it was revived in the 1630’s and 40’s. He suggests that “players are turn’d [religious] phanaticks” and “the Red Bull where sports were wont to be, / Is now a Meeting-house” in which “actor and auditor” alike are “inspired” with “mutual fire.”

Huston Diehl locates the affective appeal of Protestant Jacobean stage drama more directly in terms of specific Foxeian resonances. She reads the *Book of Martyrs* as self-consciously constructing a kind of iconoclastic godly theatricality that replaces ceremonial Catholic ritual with the allegedly more genuine ones that replace them (43). She fails,
however, to consider seriously the material differences between written and oral forms of literary production for an early modern audience. The choice of form dictates the accessibility of the message to a large segment of the population as well as their ability to interpret the nuanced typological depictions contained not only in the text of *Acts and Monuments* itself, but the highly allegorical illustrations so important in spreading Protestant ideology. Thus, popular plays like *If You Know Not Me* and *The Whore of Babylon*, which seem so central to the project of the Reformation, are excluded from her analysis.

ii - Thomas Heywood, *If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody* (1604)

Readers since the seventeenth century have considered Thomas Heywood’s popular play *If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody* (1604) to be in close dialogue with the narrative of Elizabeth’s incarceration and escape in John Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments* (1st edn., 1563). This play, taking Foxe’s narrative as its primary source, shares his most general goal, to spread effectively and polemically the theology and politics of the Reformation to the widest possible audience and to instill an ideology of reform in those lower-class segments of society not usually targeted by religious ideologues, Protestant or Catholic. The play’s performance at the Red Bull has the capacity to extend bellicose Protestant ideology to those who are completely illiterate as well as those not disposed to attentive churchgoing and ordinary forms of sermonizing. But despite its obviously close relationship to its Foxeian counterpart, Heywood’s drama not only incorporates but also enhances and extends Foxeian techniques of popular appeal, rendering the rhetoric of reform in an idiom understandable to playgoers. My interpretation of the play will
highlight several notable deviations between the staged version of this narrative, and note the ways in which these changes situate this play firmly within the collective, community-oriented preoccupations of the Red Bull theater and the Clerkenwell community. To view these works in dialogue is to witness the interplay of two locally viable forms of popular education, both suited to particular communities. Part of the mission of this play, as realized by playwrights, actors, audiences, and the various civil authorities which licensed it, seems to be to popularize history for a broader audience, rendering it more useful as religious and political propaganda since the very features which differentiate the dramatic version from the original are inspired by aspects of *Actes and Monuments* calculated to intensify the work’s appeal among a lower-class and pedestrian readership.

*The Book of Martyrs* undertakes to disseminate the ideology of Reform to a vast cross-section of English society in an effort to maintain and complete the project of reform and simultaneously stave off the specter of a Counter-Reformation and to thwart a return to the massive and violent persecutions of Protestants under Mary. Evidence suggests that this goal was achieved beyond the hopes of either its compiler or its printer, John Day. According to Richard Helgerson, the *Book of Martyrs*, along with the vernacular Bible, was one of the few books with which the illiterate and semiliterate public was familiar in any detail (287). Indeed, by order of the Privy Council, a copy of the 1570 edition was placed in every cathedral church in England and in the homes of clergy (Loades 1997: 4). Subsequent editions, especially those of 1576 and 1583, project a

8. Although it was not required, many parish churches followed suit of their own volition and displayed a copy of the *Book of Martyrs* along with an English Bible.
significant role for the *The Actes and Monuments* in pursuit of an actively Protestant foreign policy throughout Europe in the interests of the “elect nation” (Parry 172). This increased emphasis on nationalism and England’s place in an emergent Reformed Europe served to entrench the connection between the English nation and the Protestant Agenda.

Several factors contributed to the success of this project. For its time, *The Actes and Monuments* is a very heavily illustrated book. These illustrations most often consist in rough pictorial depictions of easily apprehended binaries showing the contrary states of the true and false church which provide a poignant register for ready interpretation, especially for those who don’t wish or are unable to read the accompanying narratives. Margaret Aston, arguing for the centrality of the woodcuts to the overall experience of the *Actes and Monuments* for the seventeenth-century reader, argues that they “helped graft users of the work into the kindred and affinity of the persecuted church” (68). These illustrations, therefore, assert a powerful influence on the uneducated both through their ability to represent symbolically on their own as well as enhance the narratives.

But much of the credit for the success of *The Book of Martyrs* must be given to its zealously Protestant printer, John Day. Julian Roberts notes that Day clearly had a personal stake in the printing and publication of such a large and unwieldy work that would have taxed both the capital resources and skilled labor force of even the most successful of Elizabethan printers (Loades 1997: 37-38). It was Day, in keeping with the Reformation desire to spread the word of God, who encouraged Foxe to transfer his Latin martyrology, *Rerum in Ecclesia Gestarum* (1559), to a larger and unlearned English-speaking audience including numerous iconographic woodcut illustrations (Loades 1997:
After being awarded an exclusive patent, Day printed over 40 editions of ABCs, Catechisms, and metrical psalms during the years 1558 to 1571—especially in those years in which an edition of the Book of Martyrs was not published—using the proceeds of these profitable works to subsidize the printing of The Acts and Monuments. But not only was The Book of Martyrs effectively distributed and financed, it was more affordable to sections of the reading public that could not otherwise afford such a capacious folio volume. The third edition of 1576, often known as the “cheap” edition, is much smaller in size, is printed on a poorer quality of paper, contains a lesser variety of different typefaces, and generally uses smaller type to conserve the amount of paper required for each volume; Simon Parret, in a 1582 letter, complains of “the foule paper and obscure print” of this inferior publication (Loades 1997: 48-50). It seems that Day used the capital-intensive editions of 1563 and 1570 to generate the revenue necessary to make the 1576 edition readily available at a reasonable price and in a slightly less unwieldy format. It also reprints many features, initiated in the 1570 edition, which ameliorate the book’s daunting complexity among the class of readership I’ve been concentrating on. The book contains numerous appendices, tables, and indexes, which assist the reader in finding specific accounts by year, author, or martyr. One unique innovation consists in a table “to help the unlearned” which the compilers “thought it good

Figure 2.2. (Next page) Woodcut illustration depicting the conflicting states of the true vs. false churches

to set forth the plain numbers with Ciphers in algorithm, whereby they might understand
the numbers better” (q9r). Here, for instance, a Roman numeral will be given alongside its
Arabic equivalent leading to what many might consider the over-simplified explanation
that “ii [the Roman numeral]=2.” The 1576 edition also introduces various readerly
“helps” of its own, including a previously unpublished set of concordances, for scriptural
references and theological doctrines, as well as an expanded index (Loades 1997: 62).

But, in many cases, even these devices to assist the unlearned may not be enough
to educate a large segment of the population in London’s poorest neighborhoods.
Craftsmen, apprentices, the poor and dispossessed make up a substantial portion of Foxe’s
intended audience. In “The Epistle Dedicatory to the Queen’s Majesty,” he states “though
the story being written in the popular tongue serveth not so greatly for your own peculiar
reading, and for such as be learned...[it is] in the necessity of the ignorant flock of Christ
committed to your government in this Realm of England” (q1v). Susan Felch suggests
that Protestant ideologues used The Acts and Monuments as a guide to scriptural
interpretation in the attempt to forge a “consensual community” which allows for
collective participation in the reformed church within the dictates of sola scriptura (54).
But despite his desire for inclusiveness and interpretive coherence, Foxe relies on his
audience’s ability to read and decipher Elizabeth’s plight in terms familiar to those already
engaged in this theological debate. “Elizabeth’s Preservation,” like the Book of Martyrs
in general, is presented in terms of an Augustinian dichotomy between the true and false
church, a context with which a semi-literate audience at the Red Bull would not
necessarily be familiar. Heywood’s play successfully remedies this disparity by transforming the abstracted interchange between reader and text into a palpable, dialogic interaction in which Clerkenwell audiences are invited to fashion themselves among the persecuted and thereby become participants in Elizabeth’s plight. According to Kathleen McLuskie, Heywood attempts to “naturalize the politics of Protestantism” by placing religious concerns within a more “human” agenda. This strategy not only enhances the play’s “dramatic emotion” and more general affective appeal (41-42), but, I argue, is also necessary, at the very least, to make the play intelligible to its intended audience. He does this by enhancing moments of spectacle, magnifying the role of lower-class characters, and instituting a focus on the economic charity of Elizabeth towards her citizens.

Attesting to the success of these innovations, the prologue to the first authorized quarto edition in 1639 mentions the widespread popularity of the play—it was printed surreptitiously six times between 1605 and 1639—which the author attributes to the play having been “well perform’d at first” among the plebeians of Clerkenwell at the Red Bull (1639: A2r). The epilogue suggests that this original success was due to the strength of the historical subject matter, that the narrative serves a didactic function, “that now in you doth rest / To know... the princesse young Elizabeth” (1639: G3r, my emphasis). The use of the term “rest” evokes the dually visual and auditory nature of a play’s appeal as well as the presence of a forceful didactic apprehension that goes well beyond the intellectual comprehension to incorporate the sixteenth-century usage of the term as

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9. This material was eventually absorbed in annotations to the Geneva Bible and Book of Common Prayer. The theology therefore might have been widely heard in parish churches in a relatively uncomplicated form.
freedom from the toil, care, and spiritual concern associated with future life (OED 4.4b-c). Elizabeth’s story not only provides an example of godly perseverance but—and partially because of this—offers a Protestant figure who becomes the locus for a new discourse of positive national history during the “halcyon days” of her reign, juxtaposed against her antithesis Mary, one of the obvious targets for the vitriol in both the pieces I’m discussing (J2r).

In The Book of Martyrs, Mary’s reign is introduced as “the utter destruction of the Realme which indeede afterward came to passe” (GGGg4v). In “The Miraculous Preservation of Lady Elizabeth” itself, it is Mary and the Bishop of Winchester, Stephen Gardiner, who are centered out as culprits in a narrative where very few of the perpetrators are singled out for fear of ongoing persecution. In the play, both characters, especially the latter, take a much more active role in endangering the life of the princess: in act one she explicitly gives the order to commit Elizabeth to the tower, shunning all appeals for mercy (ll.111-132). Foxe tends to focus his attack on surrogates like Gardiner and Bonner while Heywood, perhaps owing to the change in dynasty, heightens the attack on Mary herself. Ivo Kamps notes that the play’s opening in medias res leaves the identity of the queen ambiguous, suggesting that “for a brief, uncomfortable moment the crowd believed that Tame and Shandoysye are discussing a marriage between Elizabeth I and Philip II,” emphasizing this narrowly averted catastrophe and aggrandizing the audience’s fears at a potential renewal of Spanish marriage negotiations (70). But at the end of the play, Mary appears benevolent, releasing Elizabeth, and entreating her sister to “feast with me” (l.1303). Events such as the imprisonment of Jonson for Sejanus a year earlier, the
use of Shakespeare's *Richard II* in the unsuccessful Essex uprising two years before that, as well as the constant fear of the Master of Revel's obloquy, had taught playwrights not to represent instances of royal treachery on the public stage. The play's principal villain is Gardiner, who even after Elizabeth's release, while on his own deathbed, vows to charge one of Elizabeth's servants "upon suspicion, of some treachery, / Wherein the princess shall be accessory" (ll. 133-35). The choice of Winchester as villain also serves a dramatic purpose: true to bombastic dramatic convention, especially popular with Queen Anne's Men at the Red Bull, Heywood provides his audience with a kind of villain akin to the vice figure of the earlier Protestant drama of John Bale and Richard Weaver, among others. The reported dialogue in Foxe is rendered dramatically as a rancorous condemnation of ideal Christians like Elizabeth and her supporters. Under a veneer of civility to her person, Gardiner reports to Mary that Elizabeth is "saucy," and later pursues the princess' execution with a haste not warranted by the queen or her officers. The Bishop of Winchester's duplicitous and increasingly acrimonious tone in the play may be intended to rile the audience against a traditional stage villain. Like Richard III and other contemporary stage villains, the bishop orchestrates the political intrigue and deliberately urges the queen to manipulate her supporters and accuse her half-sister falsely, suggesting that "she in Wyatt's expedition, / And other insurrection lately quelled was confederate" (100-102). Whereas Foxe's demonizing of Gardiner emphasizes an apocalyptic context relying on scriptural typology, beast fables, and broadsheets such as Turner's 1555 *Hunting of the Romish Wolf* (King 29-30), Heywood places this villain firmly within
dramatic conventions which need not presuppose any knowledge not readily available to
avid consumers of the public theater.

John King suggests that many elements in the Foxeian narrative act as “symbolic
details that have the appearance of artful embellishments” (28). Among these are the
seemingly superfluous role played by Elizabeth’s servants, a little boy who brings
Elizabeth flowers, and an ensemble of impoverished onlookers who greet Elizabeth on her
various journeys. In keeping with the task of popularizing history, the play in general
seems to accentuate these seemingly embellished items at the expense of dramatizing the
nuances of the various council scenes and examinations which form the centerpiece of the
Foxeian narrative. In the play, these more serious scenes are promulgated through a series
of rapidly moving dumb shows which depict the entrances, exits, and deliveries of various
petitions to and from various nobles without tedious dialogue which an audience of
apprentices might find difficult; in 1612, the audience at the same theater reproved
Webster’s *White Devil* for the overuse of unintelligible court dialogue and intrigue. The
dumb shows have the added benefit of heightening the dramatic immediacy by injecting
supernatural elements not mentioned in Foxe but expected before this audience used to
fantastical “drum and trumpet” plays such as John Day’s *Travels of the Three English
Brothers* (1605), Heywood’s *The Four Prentices of London* (1600), *Fortune by Land and
Sea* (1609), and his numerous Age plays (1610-1612). In scene 14, for example,
Heywood introduces the prominent device of the English Bible as symbolic of the truth
and faith embodied by Elizabeth. Rather than merely alluding to the typological
relationship between the English Bible and Book of Truth by referring to Matthew 29:25 (
Heywood uses a dumb show in which Gardiner, Barwick, the Constable of the tower and other Friars enter along with two angels "at the other door...the Friar steps to [Elizabeth], offering to kill her: the angel drives them back...The Angel opens the Bible, and puts it in her hand as she sleeps" (ll.1050-53). Upon waking, Elizabeth finds the Bible open to Proverbs 29:25 ("whoso putteth their trust in the Lord shall not be confounded") and, upon learning that none of her ladies in waiting have placed the book in her hand, exclaims "then 'twas inspiration, heaven I trust / With his eternal hand will guide the just" (ll.1062-63). This added providentialism is later confirmed by Gardiner's grudging admission that he believes Elizabeth's "life is guarded by the hand of heaven," a line with no analogue in Foxe's account (l.1150). According to one critic, the dramatization of these profound religious experiences through dumb shows offers a "combination of magic and superstition" that economically illustrates the affective dimensions of popular religion (McLuskie 44). But not only does Heywood provide an appealing theatrical elaboration of the printed story, he takes this opportunity to heighten the didacticism by reinforcing scriptural lessons left for the reader to decipher from The Actes and Monuments. Rather than preserving an aura of mysticism and regality around the future queen as McLuskie suggests, I contend that the dumb show, by simplifying often complicated and convoluted matters of faith, emphasizes Elizabeth's commonality and the trials of faith and religious protection shared among all believers. The prominence of the Bible also draws upon woodcut illustrations depicting the future queen with the Bible (King 1989: 110-13; see figure 4.3). The prominent tropes of time, truth, and the English Bible as material aids to the princess draw upon popular and printed material in addition to Foxe, recalling
Elizabeth's triumphant entrance into the city prior to her coronation that became part of the enduring memory of this and subsequent generations of Londoners. A pageant, also depicting time, erected by citizens at the Little Conduit in Cheap in Richard Mulcaster's *Queen's Majesty's Passage* (1558), provokes Elizabeth to notice that "'Time hath brought me hither'. . .[and] in the opening, when Her Grace understood that the Bible in English should be delivered unto her by Truth, which was therein represented by a child, she thanked the city for that gift and said she would oftentimes read over that book" (C2r). As in Foxe and Heywood, the emphasis upon iconic figures and symbols in Mulcaster's text is designed to forge a triangular link between Elizabeth, the citizens of London, and the Protestant faith. But unlike Foxe's *Books of Martyrs*, both Mulcaster's popular text and Heywood's play foreground Elizabeth's reciprocral acts of charity, which emerge as significant highlights differentiating the dramatic version from Foxe's narrative.

Elizabeth's interactions with those of lower rank in *Acts and Monuments* are amplified in the play and handled in such a way that the audience is able to apprehend viscerally Elizabeth's affinity and charity for her poorer subjects. In the Foxeian version, for instance, after a young child is examined for bringing and subsequently forbidden to bring flowers to Elizabeth, "she smiled, but said nothing" (RRRTr4v). Here, the boy, and his exchange with Elizabeth, is used to underscore the surveillance visited on all those, regardless of age or station, who demonstrate sympathy for Elizabeth. In Foxe, the boy is examined by various authorities for purportedly delivering the prisoner a letter from the
Figure 4.3. Woodcut illustration depicting Princess Elizabeth with a Bible.

Earl of Devonshire. He acquits himself adequately and “the discretion of the child, being but iii years of age” is commended by the narrator. But again the intricacies of the boy’s examination and his role in political affairs are spared playgoers. In the play, the scene concentrates and expands the boy’s interaction with and devotion to the princess, while eliminating the monotonous interrogation:

*Eliz.* Welcome sweet boy, what hast thou brought me there.

*Boy.* Madam, I have brought you another nose gay,

But you must not let it be seen, for if it be,

I shall be soundly whipt, indeedla, indeed I shall.

*Eliz.* God a mercy boy, heeres to requite thy love (ll.781-85).

The Foxeian version tends to preserve an aura of regality and aloofness around the future queen in an attempt to magnify her providential deliverance. It also diminishes the magnanimity of the boy’s gift by indicating that, though he did “bring her grace flowers,” he “did likewise to the other prisoners that were there.” At the Red Bull, however, where the boy and the boy playing Elizabeth would most likely be of the same stature, an audience would be able to view the verbal interaction with the admiring child as an expression of the monarch’s solidarity with a plebeian community while also providing a sense of meaningful participation in the alleviation of the heroic princess’ grief.

Perhaps the most significant encounter with commoners in the context of the Red Bull and its community occurs en route from the Tower of London to Woodstock where Elizabeth again plays a more purposeful role. In *The Book of Martyrs*, though her loyal
followers "were very desirous to see her," Elizabeth reportedly "sayd: yonder I see some
of my men: go to them and say these words from me: tamquam ovis" [like a sheep led to
the slaughter](RRRRr5r)(see Isaiah 52.7). These Latin words, though intrinsically potent
in a book aimed at least a semi-literate audience, would be lost on the majority of the
audience at a raucous public theater like the Red Bull. Though the play preserves these
words, they are followed by a brief exchange between some of these "lower" characters,
whose misprision of Latin terminology satirizes the unintelligibility of the Roman Catholic
service of worship:

1 Poor Man. Tanqus Ovrus pray what’s tanqus Ovrus neighbor.

2 Poor Man. If the priest were here hee’d smell it out straight.

Cooke. Myselfe have been a scholar, and I understand

What tanquam Ovis means.

We sent to know how her grace did fare,

She tanquam Ovis said, even like a sheep

That’s to the slaughter led.

1 Poor Man. Tanqus Ovrus, that I should live to see, Tanqus Ovris.

2 Poor Man. I shall n’ere love tanquam Ovris againe for this trick (ll.889-97)

Aside from the satiric content of the passage, this interchange is likely a realistic portrayal
of an uneducated populace forced to decipher Latin phrasing. "Tanqus Ovrus," is, of
course, gibberish but the poor men do not understand, even after explanation, the nuances
between the two phrases and instead tend to view the entire discourse as a some kind of
treachery perpetrated by the Catholic authorities persecuting Elizabeth. Also lost on the
play, is the scriptural and liturgical significance of the phrase “tamquam ovis” (like a sheep to the slaughter). Avid churchgoers and the learned would recognize that these words from Acts 8 constitute the epistle said on the Tuesday after Whitsunday. Nevertheless, the play effectively interprets and conveys the verse’s scriptural significance for its demographic. The gloss on this verse in the 1599 Geneva Bible suggests that this verse, as an image of Christ’s sacrifice, teaches that “those things which seem most to be governed by chance or fortune... are governed by the secret providence of God” (Ggg4r).

The poor men fear the event portended by “tamquam ovis” as a Christian might fear the crucifixion, but they cannot understand or “love,” thereby enacting man’s failure to compass God’s wisdom which passes human understanding. The poor men’s misprision, therefore, provides metacommentary on the play’s mission. Their inability to comprehend this phrase and recognize its place in the rituals of the church calendar illustrate the necessity of other, more popular, means of religious teaching. These two seemingly insignificant characters in Foxe’s narrative stand as important models of the average Christian for the intended audience of the play. The ordinary parlance of these familiar figures, as humorously represented in the play, affectively fosters religious awareness and conviction—not to mention anti-Catholic sentiment—more effectively than ordinary sermonizing and other theological channels, especially for disengaged plebeian types.

This scene is presided over by a moralizing speech by the Lady Elizabeth herself to the assembled crowd:

It shall not need the poor are loving, but the rich despise,

And though you curb their tongue, spare them their eyes,
Your love my smart always not but prolongs,

Pray for me in your heart, not with your tongues... (ll.856-59).

Continuing the play's preoccupation with the importance of indwelling faith, Elizabeth teaches that outward formalities—or idolatrous worship practices—are incommensurate with prayers from the heart. The play's Elizabeth therefore confirms that this audience, which "pray[s] in [the] heart," might be counted among the godly, despite their lack of education and common station. Her gesture, drawing obliquely upon Matthew 19:24, extends the Foxeian binary between "blessed" and "cursed" to include "poor" and "rich," allowing the audience's fixation on their meager means of material subsistence to merge with more abstract Protestant ideology.

Heywood also infuses a material dimension to Elizabeth's symbolic munificence to surrogates for the Red Bull audience. Upon learning of her impending imprisonment, she appreciates the service of her humble servants, imploring them to "divide these few crownes amongst you" (ll.334). This action highlights the princess' charity but also contributes to the overall didacticism of the play through an emphasis on humility. After distributing the coins, Elizabeth comments on her actions, explaining that "being possest of that [i.e. faith in the Lord], / I shall need nothing" (ll.338-39). Again, during her initial incarceration in the Tower, she "spend[s her] labors to relieve the poor," instructing Gage to "Distribute these [gold coins] to those of need (ll. 809-10) Such charitable gestures may allude to the general tendencies of all theatrical companies to allot a portion of their profits to assist the local poor in addition to the more immediate concerns of the poorer
audiences that witnessed this play for whom financial exigencies are more acute than symbolic words.

Confirmation of the enhanced localized appeal and didactic force of the dramatic version of this popular narrative for a more indigent Clerkenwell audience through these celebratory representations of common life is suggested by the absence of these features of the drama in his prose version of the same narrative entitled England’s Elizabeth (1631). In this version, based on both Foxe and the more recent If You Know Not Me, Heywood accentuates political intrigue and seeks to arouse pathos evoked by the emotional turmoil of the Lady Elizabeth’s desperate and misunderstood plight rather than highlighting the role played by apprentices and other commoners in her eventual deliverance. This divergence highlights the role of the undistinguished members of the community for the pleasure of Heywood’s theatergoing audience while de-emphasizing these concerns in his more learned and scholarly account, addressed to Henry, Lord Hunsdon.

The play’s revival at the Cockpit in London’s gentrified Drury lane during the 1620s, where the play appealed to a more upscale and bourgeois market segment, sheds further light upon the socio-economic dimensions of the play’s original performance fifteen years earlier. The protean appeal of If You Know Not Me is such that this private theater audience could perceive the play much differently, as evoking nostalgia for Elizabeth’s reign and the booming economy during these years which witnessed the building of the Royal Exchange by Thomas Gresham who plays a small role—not mentioned at all in Foxe—in the first part of the play but becomes a bourgeois hero, overshadowed only by Queen Elizabeth herself, in the second part of the play. Our
knowledge of the demographics of the Phoenix and its Drury lane audience suggests that during the revival the second part of the play, depicting the momentous triumphs of Elizabeth's reign, the evolution of a burgeoning economy, and the emergence of an acquisitive upper middle class citizenry, was more popular than the hackneyed didacticism of its predecessor. But such external documentary evidence serves only to substantiate what a close comparative reading of the play and its Foxeian original implies: *If You Know Not Me* enhances and extends the Foxeian project to an even wider audience than even the popular and relatively inexpensive 1576 *Book of Martyrs* could hope to realize.

In my discussion of the play, I have only attempted to outline and situate the differences between these two versions of Elizabeth's preservation narrative in the context of the theatergoing audience in London's more impoverished neighborhoods. These deviations, however, almost certainly have a further bearing on broader topical political issues in the transitional period from Tudor to Stuart monarchies and provide a useful vantage point for gauging popular apprehensions concerning the new king's domestic and foreign policies, and the specter of a Spaniard sharing England's throne in the not too distant future—a concern confronted in earnest in *The Whore of Babylon*.

Like Heywood's drama, John Fletcher and William Shakespeare's *All is True*, or *Henry VIII* (1613) is heavily invested in a Foxeian providentialist model of history in which past events are interpreted teleologically, as conditions underlying the emergence of a unified Protestant nation under Elizabeth and maintained by James I. But unlike *If You Know Not Me*, however, the thematic action is neither inscribed on nor is its terminology adopted from the familiar mise-en-scène of plebeian life. Instead, the action takes place
firmly within the circumscribed world of Henry’s court. I argue that the altered nature of the political and religious representation which markedly distinguishes Henry VIII from If You Know Not Me is a function of the different demographic the authors seek to attract. Although this play was performed three times at the Globe, including the famous performance which brought down the house, it was apparently commissioned for The King’s Men’s private winter home at Blackfriars. The inclusion of derisory references to the common populace may, in fact, have been a strategic aim of the company which sought to broaden their reputation as London’s leading theatrical troupe and solidify its popularity among the lucrative private theater audience by basing its new repertory on gentlemanly romances (Gurr 1996: 367-69). Fletcher’s contributions to this play, often dismissed as secondary, might be seen as an attempt to draw on this playwright’s extensive experience writing for such venues, both for the boy companies which populated these acting spaces prior to 1609 and later with the King’s Men.

In contrast to If You Know Not Me, which injects elements of citizen comedy into its presentation of Protestant historiography, Shakespeare and Fletcher introduce embellishments of interest to a refined and acquisitive audience. Here the Foxeian source is treated in more sophisticated ways and fused with other historical accounts which invite the audience to engage in the historiographical debate rather than simply celebrating the emergence and subsequent triumph of the “true” faith and its proponents. In Heywood’s

10. The Globe Theater burnt to the ground on 29 June, 1613, during a performance of Henry VIII.

11. Several episodes in this play, in addition to the overall providential tone, are borrowed from Foxe. For the amalgamation of various historical methods in the play, see Kamps 110ff.
play, Princess Elizabeth’s acts of charity evoke the sentimentality of a vanishing communal order where wealth is freely distributed to those with greater need. In Henry VIII, similar actions are transposed into an economy based on the exchange of goods and services where competition and bargaining are requisite. The king gives 100 marks (roughly 65 pounds) to an old midwife who has just assisted in the delivery of princess Elizabeth. Despite this generous monetary gift, the midwife deplores its paucity, exposing and Chiding the king’s charity:

An hundred marks? By this light, I’ll ha’ more.

An ordinary groom is for such payment.

I will have more, or scold it out of him.

Said I for this girl was like to him? I’ll

Have more, or else unsay’t; and now, while ‘tis hot,

I’ll put it to the issue. (5.1.172-77)

The old woman’s reaction recognizes and demands a market-driven price for the kind of service she provides. In this sophisticated economic exchange, the symbolic role played by the monarch and the subsequent attitude toward the royal person is radically reversed. In If You Know Not Me, the disparity between the economic status of royalty and commons sparks the generosity of the plebeian characters. Here, though, the proactive midwife tacitly argues that the disparity in the social hierarchy among various occupations ought to affect her remuneration. Her occupation, as midwife to the royal family, she argues, is more economically viable than that of an “ordinary groom.” She considers “unsaying” the political importance of the newborn Elizabeth after realizing that such a
proclamation wasn’t worth it after all. This is in stark contrast to the generally positive atmosphere with which the cook and other laborers greet Elizabeth’s analogous gift in If You Know Not Me. It’s likely that the woman’s statement is designed to evoke the scorn of a Blackfriars audience, a group already predisposed to vocally registering their contempt for London’s ordinary citizens and towards such a self-important midwife.

Unlike Heywood’s play, Henry VIII attempts to direct its theatrical energy toward educated social elites, distinguishing itself from the usual fare offered on the public stage. The prologue suggests that “those that can pity here / May, if they think it well, let fall a tear”: witnessing this play will clearly require some sort of intellectual engagement (ll. 5-6). The prologue does grant that the play might appeal to those who seek merely the entertainment associated with theatrical spectacle: “[t]hose that come to see / Only a show or two, and so agree / The play may pass” (ll. 9-11). But it flatly dismisses the kind of playgoer for whom gross entertainment value is the primary arbiter of dramatic taste, suggesting that this play’s appeal lies in its ability to engage its audience intellectually:

Only they
That come to hear a merry bawdy play,
A noise of targets, or to see a fellow
In a long motley coat guarded with yellow.
Will be deceived. (ll. 13-16).

Such pronouncements evacuate the affective dimension from the Foxeian narrative, shifting the emphasis to an intellectual engagement with more abstract and abstruse matters of Reformation theology. Given this dramatic framework, the Foxeian teleology
rehearsed by Cranmer in the play's last act seems designed to reinforce the narrative of
reform and emphasize its coherence and ongoing cultural applicability rather than to
disseminate and popularize Reformation ideology and highlight its inclusiveness.
Cranmer's speech, highlighting the various historical and spiritual means by which "God
shall be truly known" through Protestantism, is delivered dramatically in a higher
rhetorical register as an encomium to James I. The fact that this oblique historical allegory
of English Protestantism would be indecipherable to those not already familiar with this
narrative seems of little concern to its authors who recognize that "Tis ten to one this play
can never please / All that are here" (Epilogue 1-2). Like Heywood, Shakespeare and
Fletcher, by writing Henry VIII as high culture, demonstrate that they are adept at
isolating and catering to their troupe's upwardly-mobile market segment.

iii - Thomas Dekker, The Whore of Babylon (1606)

Whereas If You Know Not Me seeks to disseminate Protestant ideology through a
palpable and sentimental rendering of a specific historical manifestation of the struggle
between the two churches, which locates this struggle directly within the affective horizon
of its indigent audience, The Whore of Babylon capitalizes on anxieties immanent in the
daily lived experience of the burgeoning Protestant nation. If If You Know Not Me merely
suggests the many potential geopolitical incursions lurking to disrupt the steady
ascendancy of English Protestantism, The Whore of Babylon, staged almost immediately
after the Gunpowder Plot (5 November, 1605), focuses on the frequent and potentially
disastrous external attempts to destabilize the English state. The play was likely
performed in repertory at The Fortune during the spring and summer of 1606, was entered
in the Stationer’s Register on 20 April 1607, and published shortly after by Nathaniel Butter. During this period, numerous tracts were issued denouncing the Gunpowder Plot and the event was frequently—and tendentiously—discussed and alluded to in sermons and broadsheets, forging it in the popular imagination. In this way, Dekker’s play can be seen as more topical, not only attempting to reinforce the founding ideological tenets of Protestantism, but maintaining it in light of a clearly active Counter-Reformation. In addition to documenting instances of treacherous Jesuits leading a Counter-Reformation, Dekker’s play readily confronts the fractional hold of Protestantism in England. The First Cardinal initially acknowledges that, in England, “the stream of ceremony / Is scarcely settled,” thereby imploring his colleagues to “trouble it more” so that “Babylon / And all we are, is not driven clean from thence” (1.1.197-203). Titania too laments the threat to the emergent Protestant order in England posed by Jesuit “leopards” who “build caves / Even in our parks” (4.2.132-33). Admissions of this kind forcefully bring the play’s concern with wider geopolitical issues within the purview of Dekker’s audience by suggesting that individual Protestant communities must shoulder the blame for not maintaining faithful guard against Catholic incursions.

The immediacy of the Gunpowder plot did much to alert Londoners of the threat against an emergent Protestant order. Commentators suggest that Dekker’s overtly allegorical representation of little-known figures makes for an unintelligible and ultimately unsuccessful play, especially given its performance at The Fortune before an audience unfamiliar with historical minutiae (Hoy 303; Franz 271; McLuskie 52). For these scholars, it is precisely the play’s indebtedness to Foxe’s apocalyptic pattern and the
consistent rehearsal of commonplace antipapal tropes and ideology that lead to an indecipherable piece for the public stage (Gasper 63). I contend, however, that this oblique allegory adequately fulfills its goal of arousing popular animosity toward the incursion of various Catholic forces by concentrating these figural representations on momentous events like the Armada, assassination attempts against the Queen, and the well-publicized and easily visible actions of Jesuits. It’s unlikely that the behind-the-scenes orchestrations of the Marian regime against Elizabeth, nearly fifty years before, would be part of the living memory of audience members, but the Armada—not to mention the Gunpowder Plot—certainly would. Shortly after the event, sermons, woodcuts, written accounts, and social action were produced to describe and commemorate the event (Cressy 142-45; King 2000: 61). Many, in fact, were inclined to view the gunpowder plot in dramatic terms. William Barlowe’s sermon preached at Paul’s Cross on 9 November, four days after the apprehension of the perpetrators, suggests that the plot itself is a “tragico-comical treason,” implying that the dramatic form might usefully capture and explicate the events. A dramatic model was also frequently employed to explicate a similarly apocalyptic work: the book of Revelation (Lewalski 50-51).

The emblematic allegory of The Whore of Babylon was a tested method for conveying religious and political ideas both in more complex multi-layered works like The Fairie Queene and in its more readily apprehended popular usages in coronations and city

12. Eamon Duffy suggests that many Counter-Reformation theologians, like Jesuit Robert Parsons, consciously sought, like their Protestant forbears, to bring “the tepid to the boil by awakening preaching [and] creating a godly nation of conformists” to the new Protestant regime (Tyacke 42).
pageants publicized in familiar accounts by Foxe, Mulcaster, and later, Francis Herring. Through allegory, Dekker is able to depict simultaneously the ensemble of forces threatening the stability of the Protestant order. Emblematic representation, easily enhanced through costuming and stagecraft, frees the playwright from the compulsion of a linear narrative. Rather than a single moment of crisis, Dekker blends several events into a unified dramatic whole to synergistically register the cumulative effect of all Catholic plots, both foreign and domestic. The result is a dizzying bombardment of Catholic devices, all designed to tempt and coerce England back into the Catholic fold. Herring’s account of the Gunpowder Plot, *Mischief’s Mystery* (1617), creates a similarly abstracted rehearsal of Catholic treachery by demonstrating how the combined actions of English recusants, foreign Jesuits, and Spanish invaders deploy a multi-faceted attack upon individual and isolated Protestants (see figure 4.4). And although in both cases the allegory is registered globally, the consequences are felt within individual consciences, thereby allowing plebeian audiences who might otherwise feel removed from the arena of conflict to participate in the spiritual struggle and view their role in maintaining the stability of the English nation and its Protestant church.

The localized appeal of the allegory in *The Whore of Babylon* operates in two interrelated ways. Through figurative representations of Plain-Dealing and the actions of other “ordinaries,” plebeian audiences are shown their personal stake in the larger geopolitical struggles of the Protestant church. Furthermore, the play’s allegory enacts

13. George Price notes the Spenserian phrasing of the Lectori: “The generall scope of this Drammatical Poem, is to set forth (in Tropicall and shadowed collours) the Greatnes, Magananimity, Constancy, Clemency, and the other incomparable Heroical vertues of our late Queene.” (69).
the respective differences in individual agency enjoyed under Protestant and Catholic regimes. The play suggests that political and religious authority among Catholics centripetally coheres around a central figure—the Empress of Babylon—who dictates and coerces her subjects’ obedience. The negative portrayal of the pervasiveness of that church’s dictatorial and corrupt global leadership shows a centralized group unaware and
unresponsive to local concerns and the cohesion of traditional neighborhoods. Agency in Protestant England, on the other hand, is distributed among large segments of the populace, drawing strength from individual members of the community consciously functioning collectively to effect outcomes. In effect, the potentially divided audience is offered a choice not between two different Christian churches and theological structures, but between distinct approaches to life: individual agency and personal enlightenment are juxtaposed against the dictates of an impersonal and invidious hierarchy and ultimate servitude under Roman Catholicism. The play's negative portrayal of the Catholic church is designed to appeal simultaneously to all segments of the audience, albeit in different ways, by capitalizing on current anxieties brought to public attention with the failure of Fawkes' plot. The play invites its audience to relive the gunpowder plot and hyperbolically it them of the potentially disastrous consequences of Catholic control of England even if, as in the Gunpowder Plot, the nation is saved from the brink by the end of the drama. For staunch Protestants, this exaggerated presentation offers confirmation of previously held convictions with an aim to prompting a more militant stance from these plebeian communities. For the large segment of those "nervous" Protestants, the play summons latent anxieties of instability and radical change in their accustomed way of life. These more immediate concerns touching on the potential radical disparity in the lived experiences of Protestantism versus Catholicism are more palpable to members of the plebeian audience than the larger-scale political and religious upheaval usually treated in official and learned accounts of the Gunpowder Plot.
But the play, like *The Book of Martyrs*, was also designed to reach out to those with residual Catholic leanings. The latter’s prefatory material includes two questions specifically addressed “to all the professed friends and followers of the pope’s proceedings.” Drawing on numerous works in the reformation tradition, these questions present images of both churches casting the reformed church in a positive light while vilifying the Church of Rome. The questions decry the spilling of Christian blood, a practice allegedly popular among Catholics but eschewed by Protestants. The first, drawing upon the 11th chapter of Isaiah, suggest that “killing and slaying” are prohibited in the “peaceable mount of Sion.” The second forges a link between the mount of Sion and the “true” church and “peaceable government in this realm of [reformed] England.” Foxe argues that the clemency demanded in the Bible towards fellow Christians and the mercy showed to papists in England is not reciprocated by Catholics. Where Foxe’s written account uses abstruse Biblical and historical examples to make this case, the play palpably dramatizes these differences. Titania notes, to the third king, that “lambs of ours are killed by wolves of yours” (1.2.231; King 1990: 38). The king does not deny these charges but catalogues the numerous official apparatuses by which non-conforming reformers are persecuted by means of “the dispensation of sacramental oaths. . .bulls loaded with hallowed curses, / With interdictions, excommunications. . .And with large patterns to kill Kings and Queens” (1.2.261-264). In a scene clearly designed to evoke the treachery of the Gunpowder Plot as well as Edward Squire’s attempted assassination
of Elizabeth, Paridell attempts to assassinate the queen only to be discovered when the queen presciently turns to view the raised dagger (5.2.81). The audience of the play, especially those with Catholic leanings, is invited to apprehend the violence of the pope’s regime in light of current events which seem to confirm this prophecy. Where many negative portrayals might backfire and pique the ire of the vilified group, *The Whore of Babylon* escapes this undesired result by using the Gunpowder Plot to render its claims plausible and coherent.

The play continues to implicate its audience in religious controversy by underscoring religious affiliation as a choice between competing ways of life and visions of society. At its outset, Plain-Dealing illustrates to Titania the importance the different conceptions of agency under both churches, offering that “in some games of chess, knights are better than pawns, but here a good pawn is better than a knight” (2.1.96-97). The nature of the “game” is fundamentally different in England where individuals are invited and expected to develop their own sense of personal faith and religious obligation. Plain-Dealing exhorts Titania to “let them cure themselves first, and then they may better know how to heal others: then have you other fellows that take upon them to be surgeons” (2.108-109). Plain-Dealing’s remarks not only emphasize the importance of cultivating an individual response to religious matters through personal devotion and reading of

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14. Squire, with the financial support and spiritual counseling of Jesuits both in England and abroad, attempted to kill Elizabeth by poisoning the pommel of her saddle. These events are narrated in *A Letter Written Out of England to an English Gentleman remaining at Padua, containing a true report of a strange conspiracy, contrived between Edward Squire, lately executed for the same treason as actor, and Richard Wallpole, A Jesuit, as Deviser and Suborner against the Person of the Queen’s Majesty.* (London: Christopher Barker, 1599); and in *The Rat-Trap or The Jesuits taken in their own net.* (London, 1641).
scriptures, but register a distrust of any authoritarian apparatus which seeks to coerce religious opinions and the parameters of collective action. This apprehension is partly due to the difficulty—especially in a nation incompletely reformed and infiltrated by Jesuits—of determining the religious allegiances of the citizenry: “If I give you a copy of the City’s countenance, I’ll not flatter the face, as painters do; but show all the wrinkles in it” (2.1.124-25). Plain-Dealing’s words here are dually intended as a warning to Titania to beware of Catholic insurrection within London of the type that allegedly led to the Gunpowder Plot, and as an example of the flattery which permeates The Empress’ court and will eventually lead to her downfall.

The play’s concern with the “city’s countenance” is engaged with contemporary sermons involved with the determination of the religious and political loyalty of Londoners. Both the play and other media posit that the religious and spiritual health of individual citizens in various communities must necessarily precede a robust nation state and the effective operation of foreign policy. In a sermon preached in 1608 at Hampstead in Middlesex county, in close proximity to the two neighborhoods in question, Clerkenwell and Finsbury, William Bailey compares the dangerously volatile religious situation in London with that of the wondering Israelites at the time of the dispensation of the Ten Commandments. He suggests that due to the prevalence of dissimulation among an ensemble of religious and political leaders, Londoners, like the Israelites “could not, or would not distinguish between the sign and the thing signified” (A4r). Bailey assesses religious controversy as essentially a problem of interpretation, suggesting that history—of Bible times, or contemporary events—must be read in diachronic ways in order to

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determine whether a given sign is true or false. This approach enables the exegete—and invites the congregation—to apprehend topical events in terms of ongoing religious struggle.

In light of the failure of the Gunpowder plot and the inability of civil or religious authorities to properly identify Guy Fawkes and his accomplices well in advance of the planned conspiracy, issues of identification of potential Jesuits, other Catholics, and those that harbored them within London grew to paramount importance. In this way, the Gunpowder Plot itself becomes an important instance of properly divining the proper message portended by this sign. Less tendentious historical accounts of the averted conspiracy viewed it as a poorly planned and disorganized attempt to disrupt the official religious trajectory of the inchoate Jacobean regime with little real chance of success from the outset (Nicholls 21; Parkinson 74-77), but militant Protestants consistently and vociferously interpreted this event as a mark of God’s special providence for the English state in his deliverance of the king, Prince of Wales, and parliament from a Catholic subjection which would hardly follow. Contiguous accounts of the plot are ideologically motivated to capitalize on public anxieties15 and accentuate the potential religious implications of the plot and its fortunate discovery. The government’s official pronouncements, issued in a series of nine proclamations all bearing the usual “by the king” preamble and printed by the king’s official printer, Robert Barker, forgo the

15. Immediately following the failed plot, a large-scale investigation ensued which consisted in sifting information obtained from a variety of sources throughout the city and the counties, including meticulous examination of Guy Fawkes, Thomas Winters, and other rebels. The plot and the results of this preliminary investigation were made public in a Paul’s Cross sermon preached by William Barlow on 9 November and through the publication of the King’s Book later in the month which included transcripts of the examinations and attendant commentary (Nicholls 25-27).
moderate and inclusive rhetoric typical of these publications. Instead, the pamphlets refer to the narrowly averted "Romish servitude" and, while considering Guy Fawkes, Thomas Percy, and their accomplices guilty of treason, the author diminishes the degree to which they are truly culpable since they are "so utterly corrupted with the superstition of the Romish religion." Other, more vehement tracts, soon appeared which continue the process of refracting the identities of the perpetrators to include all English Catholics. The goal among all commentators seems to be to raise the specter of Catholic rule in England and heighten public uneasiness in light of these newly discovered transgressions by interpreting the Gunpowder Plot allegorically, as just another sign of the pope's devious stratagems.

The play's confrontation of the issue of discerning good from evil therefore capitalizes on current public phobias as well as the perennial binary between the true and false church in a way that advances the ideological agenda of the Protestant church, but also actively instructs its audience in living a godly life. Both the physical and spiritual action of the play revolves around the "discovery" of the names and hiding places of the perpetrators as their true identities are obfuscated through their feigned service to the Fairie Queene. They are expressly instructed by the Empress to "turn your selves then to moles, / Work underground and undermine your country... Fly with the bat under the eyes of night / And shift your nests (3.1.150-59). The figure of Plain-Dealing is central to this concern and it is this character who initiates debate on proper identification and interpretation, asking Truth "But how shall I know thou art the right truth?" (3.3.1). Truth's response, suggesting that his truth is signified by his plain aspect, which is in
marked contrast to the “strange ugliness” of the Empress of Babylon, is refuted by Plain-Dealing who offers that since there is no way of physically determining a Christian from a Turk by outward appearance alone, how would it then be possible to determine truth from falsehood in this manner? Plain-Dealing argues that a true Christian’s conscience must match his plain apparel and demeanor in a way that implicitly condemns equally all social groups within the city for their lack of outward modesty and its concomitant reflection of inward humility: “I saw no more conscience in most of your rich men than in tavern faggots: nor no more sobriety in poor men than in tavern spigots” (3.3.38-40). This answer, despite the implicit admonishment of contemporary lifestyles and the attendant instruction to reform, leaves the matter of discernment ambiguous. Plain-Dealing’s insistence on adopting a “plain” lifestyle, however, draws upon a tactic utilized by earlier English Reformers. A number of earlier works in the Reformation tradition, Biblical translations by Tyndale and others, as well as sermons by Hugh Latimer and Thomas Cranmer maintain that the true Protestant religion ought to be expressed in a “plain style,” including not only a modest lifestyle, but a clear, unadorned, and accessible elocution of its principles (King 1985: 140-43).

The Whore of Babylon explores and extends the possibility of the “plain style” by presenting ecclesiastical politics in an intelligible and compelling manner to a nervous, yet largely uneducated audience. The prologue intimates that the actors “present / Matter above the vulgar argument/ Yet drawn so lively, that the weakest eye... may reach the mystery” (ll. 3-7). It goes on to draw a direct parallel between this straightforward narrative mode and the “wakening” of “truth” (l. 26). The play, as with If You Know Not
Me, attempts to blend didacticism and entertainment in order to activate and enlighten its audience to the Protestant cause. But there were those who believed, apparently, that the play might be rendered even more transparent and who sought just that. Dekker himself, in the “Lectori,” admits that the play may not have achieved this goal as successfully as he might have wished, blaming the actors that “are for the most part out of tune” and therefore failed to effectively disseminate the spiritual message. One early commentator made numerous manuscript additions and changes to the 1607 printed version of the play in order to amplify the political implications of the play and to make explicit the allegory.16

In this version, the names of characters, places, and concepts are changed globally; “Fairie Queene” becomes “English Queen;” “Fairie” is changed to “English;” “sooth sayers” are identified unambiguously as “holy priests;” “the spring in Fairieland” is rendered as “religion in England;” “Babylon” is frequently changed to “Rome;” and “Babylon’s proud queen” becomes “Rome’s proud prelate.” In addition, some scenes, usually more intricate councils relying on more extensive external knowledge of religious and political history or current events than the average Fortune theatergoer might be expected to know, are marked for deletion. In many cases remarks concerning Catholics are even more inflammatory than in the original, perhaps in an effort to escape the censor. While the intent of these emendations is unknown, they render the play more understandable and likely more palatable to the segment of the population for whom the play was originally

16. This text and corresponding manuscript notes are currently located in the library of Worcester College, Oxford (Plays 2.1(1)).

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presented. It’s possible that these changes were intended for later performances in the theater, given it’s original failure at the Fortune.¹⁷

Both the original play and Bailey’s sermon seek to alleviate questions of mistaken or false identity, feigned allegiance, and true faith posed by Plain-Dealing by positing a fundamental distinction between the structure of conscience among Protestants and Catholics. Of course, the prevailing understanding of the operation of the conscience under each creed has ramifications for the social structure mandated by the respective regimes. *The Whore of Babylon* presents England, and London more specifically, as a collection of atomized individuals rather than the hierarchical structure of the Catholic church and the nations under their sway, especially Spain.¹⁸ It’s this atomized psychological and sociological structure which guarantees the importance of “pawns” in England and obviates the impact of individual community members in Catholic regimes. Due to their placement within a strict hierarchical organization, the ability of individual Catholics to act is dictated from above and any discretionary actions are discouraged and even circumscribed. Because of this, in the event that the Empress or other important elements in this hierarchy are disabled, individuals are ill-equipped to continue the fight without the guidance of their leaders.

¹⁷. Although scholarly emendation is a possibility here, I think it unlikely since anyone with any kind of scholarly disposition wouldn’t require annotation on these lines and would probably view such glosses as amateurish, if not completely absurd.

¹⁸. According to Susan Kranz, the Catholic church and the Spanish nation are uneasily conflated throughout the play in order to preserve the opposition between true and false church and in an effort to indict both parties in the Gunpowder treason (273).
The marked contrast in the council scenes which depict the strategic deliberations of English and Catholic forces displays this important distinction. The Empress of Babylon presides magisterially and unilaterally over her followers, explicitly dictating their orders in details which cover numerous contingencies, without explaining the underlying purpose of her requests. A similar order characterizes the Cardinals’ leadership of the Jesuits who have infiltrated England:

we have driven

With full and stiff winds to the Fairie Stronds,

Should all break in at once, and in a deluge

Of Innovation...

Swallow the kingdom up (3.1.194-98).

The first cardinal describes the Catholic forces as embodying a single, mystically unified, collective agency able to disrupt the English forces in a single “deluge of innovation.” The results of such a blow are “all” registered “at once,” implying that the force that applies it is a singular will rather than a collection of many entities whose impact is diffused across space and time.

Titania’s court, on the other hand, is a much more discursive and consensus-building forum in which her decision is constantly tempered with the advice of her councilors. This disparity is exacerbated by the fact that the two courtly groups self-consciously reflect on the other’s form of adjudication and dispute resolution. The Empress and her followers soon recognize that a single, unilateral strike against Titania will prove ineffective since, unlike her court, all power doesn’t reside solely within a single
agent whose volition is distributed throughout her adherents acting merely as receptacles for this singular will. The First Cardinal realizes that “to fell down their queen is but one stroke / Our axe must cleave the kingdom, that’s the Oak” (3.1.246-47). The English “kingdom” offered in the play is a collection of individual wills that come together in support of a common cause. Titania’s remarks to her soldiers, modeled on Elizabeth’s 1588 speech at Tilbury, seek to acquire their fealty not through “oathed allegiance” but through appeal to individual “courage.” Titania vows that “your queen will to the field,” offering an example to her subjects rather than dictating orders in absentia (5.2.221-29). Later, she exhorts her soldiers to exhibit commensurate courage: “My fellow soldiers I dare swear you’ll fight, / To the last man. . .strength, courage, zeal, / Meet in each bosom like a three-fold flood” (5.4.12-18). As monarch, Titania is a leader among equals each of whom exhibit individually the attributes necessary for success in this martial and spiritual endeavor. By contrast, the Empress compels the submission of her followers; her Herald summons her forces to arms in the name of

her who hath power given her to make the backs of stubborn kings her foot-stools, and emperors [who dictates] that no captains generals of armies, generals of squadrons, admirals, colonels, captains, or any other officers of her magnificent, incomparable, formidable, and invincible Armada. . .shall presume to set one foot on ship-board, till her sacred hand hath blessed the enterprise by sealing them all on the forehead, and bowing their knees before the beast (4.3.29-40).

The Empress uses the “sacred” and mystical “power” allegedly granted her directly from God to exercise complete psychological control over her followers whose autonomy has

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atrophied within the rigid hierarchy and ritual observance demanded by the Catholic regime. Protestants would likely notice the apocalyptic allusion to Revelation 17 while avid theatergoers would recognize the parallel with Marlowe's *II Tamburlaine*, a popular play frequently in repertory at the Red Bull in which the title character yokes the kings of Trebizond and Soria to drive his chariot (4.3). Those familiar with the Geneva Bible would recall the direct association of the Whore of Babylon with the Roman Catholic church. Glosses on this chapter by Junius in the 1599 edition depict the whore similarly, in a magnificent procession "with deadly gidiness," upon a beast ("that Empire of Rome"), attired "with a red and purple garment . . . that the Romish clergy [wear] with such delight" (Pp6v). But unlike the annotations, the ugliness of the "damnable harlot" and her grotesque mount on stage is not just a metaphorical association but provides audiences with visual reinforcement of quotidian rhetoric.

Militant Protestants were keen to highlight the perceived disparities in the exercise of individual free will propounded by the two religious orders. Both the play and the annotations in the Geneva Bible emphasize the strange and unexplainable mystical authority from which the whore derives her power. Tyndale argues that, like the Empress of Babylon, Catholicism employs a kind of psychological tyranny to regulate its adherents (Mullaney 1988: 99). Through the sacraments and the mandatory observance of an ensemble of rituals, Tyndale believed that Catholic authorities were able to "sit in the consciences of the people and lead them captive" (N2v). These alleged encroachments are

19. The description of the whore in the Geneva Bible is quoted nearly verbatim when the Third King describes the whore in 4.4.25-31.
so pernicious not only for the unconscious surveillance they employ, but, more important, because they detract from the spiritual comportment of the individual by replacing "God's word in [one's] heart" with worldly and corrupt doctrine (N1r). By contrast, Protestantism allows for, and, indeed, mandates the exertion of individual volition because of the necessity of justification by faith. Bailey's sermon similarly recognizes that it is only through "gird[ing] up the loins of our minds, and taking our states in our hands" that it is possible to discern and combat the spiritual enemies implementing social distress in London (B2r). The strategy of protestant ideologues, therefore, is twofold: to demystify this mystical authority and assert its alternative. In the play, the third king recognizes the whore's grotesque procession as "but tyrannous pride, and not your due." Prompted by the cardinal's belief that "earth and heaven are all one when you are here," he intimates that the terrible magnificence attending the queen might be just as easily be apprehended as "a hell on earth, or if not hell" (4.4.18). By locating the site of her authority explicitly within individual consciousness and not in objective reality, the tyrannical spell is broken and the whore is no longer able to control the external world, leaving her wondering why "the base earth [feels not] our weight" (4.4.1).

The play's reinscription of the terms of religious controversy onto individual psychology is specifically attuned to the dispositions of the demographic witnessing the play. Like Heywood's depiction of the role of ordinary citizens within the overall struggle, Dekker demonstrates the structural importance of individual faith and localized actions of community members in preserving the Protestant state. All members of the audience are invited to take partial credit for the numerous victories celebrated in the play.
precisely because they possess virtues of truth and plain-dealing which are arguably more applicable to and more apparent in citizens without the economic capital, rhetorical skill, or military training to otherwise contribute to the campaign. The play’s representation of Catholic treachery and Protestant virtue is also a useful means of quelling the latent discontent of the dispossessed who, in reality, are trapped in a no less pernicious hierarchy owing to structural limitations to social mobility. Due to the acute affective appeal of the play, the process might be seen as a positive form of psychological tyranny that concentrates on permissiveness rather than interdiction or obligation. Whereas the Catholic church, as depicted in the play, seeks to efface individual identity through psychological manipulation, Protestantism enhances it, contributing to the atomized society that functions as a collection of individual wills coming together in ways that aren’t rigidly defined, and allows individuals to consider their place in it in positive terms. By designating individual free will and personal faith as the arena in which agency might be exercised, citizens are discouraged from collective action that might destabilize the social hierarchy within the city and its suburbs and are instructed to focus these social energies in ways that will contribute to the further entrenchment of the national church and the control that will make it possible. If intellectual activity is directed inward, individuals are dissuaded from collective action, any kind of sustained and productive counter Reformation would be impossible.

The topicality and polemic Protestantism of both *If You Know Not Me* and *The Whore of Babylon* is self evident through a reading of the plays, but their unique localized affect both elaborates on and differentiates from the more general messages they offer.

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The role played by performances of these plays operates in multiple ways, tracing a dialectic with potentially both positive and negative social consequences. On the one hand, the plays complete the didactic project initiated by Foxe and other Elizabethans to instruct a large segment of the populace in the importance of scriptural authority, justification by faith, discerning the true church from the false, and other tenets of the Protestant religion. More than this, the plays situate the audience directly as participants within the religious struggle as defenders of the faith, along with monarchs, soldiers, and diplomats. On the other, the religious propaganda advanced in these two plays has the negative—and probably undesired—effect of entrenching established social and economic hierarchies within these financially underdeveloped communities by focusing attention on strictly personal aspects of salvation. Finally, it is difficult to determine, in lieu of adequate records, the precise social impact religiously-motivated drama like this had on its audiences and communities from which they were drawn; this discussion is only intended to suggest the dimensions that such reaction might take and speculate upon the range of emotions these performances might elicit, given the demographic of the two theaters. It seems plausible, however, that these two plays were a consonant force in the devotional life of the developing Protestant parishes of these northwestern suburbs.
CHAPTER 5

MOVING UPMARKET

Late in 1616,¹ The Queen Anne's Men transferred their theatrical operations from Clerkenwell's Red Bull to a recently refurbished private playhouse known variously as the Cockpit and the Phoenix in the newly fashionable Drury Lane in Westminster. Though economic considerations clearly precipitated this move to what they considered a more profitable private theater, the company clearly did not anticipate the vocal—and violent—reaction of its former audience: a group of Clerkenwell apprentices registered their dissatisfaction with the company's move in a riot which caused damage to the new theater, forcing the company to return temporarily to the Red Bull. The actions of the rioters again force us to consider the operations of this company not only as those of an autonomous firm in a competitive marketplace, but as an important fixture in the local community. In previous chapters, I discussed the impact of various plays on plebeian audiences at large amphitheater playhouses in working-class neighborhoods in London's northern suburbs. Here, after addressing the multiple ramifications of the Clerkenwell riot and the violent reaction of the company's former audience, I consider the reception of these plays, after the move, in a markedly different theatrical and social setting. How did

¹ Christopher Beeston leased the buildings from John Best on 9 August, 1616 for a 31 year period beginning on 29 September. They commenced playing at the new house a few months later, perhaps after the Christmas 1616 court season (J.C.S. 1: 160-61).
the company fashion a repertory consisting of newly commissioned plays as well as Red Bull stalwarts that appealed to the dramatic tastes of the more pretentious and discerning audience at the Cockpit? I suggest that, in several cases, the “crossover” plays in question warrant a protean reading which recognizes their potential to simultaneously appeal to diverse audiences in radically different performance spaces. Finally, I ask to what extent did the company achieve their goals of greater financial prosperity, recognition as an upscale company playing at a private playhouse, and a solid rival to the King’s Men at the Blackfriars.

i - The Clerkenwell Riot

The events of 4 March, 1617 dramatically illustrate the civic responsibility demanded of the theatrical troupe by its local audience in Clerkenwell. A letter of March 5th from the Privy Council to the Lord Mayor and aldermen reports that the previous day “a Rout of lewd and loose persons Apprentices and others” committed “tumultuous outrages . . . in attempting to pull down a Playhouse belonging to the Queen’s Majesty’s Servants.” Their attempts were not unsuccessful, as a letter of March 8th confirms:

Though the fellows defended themselves as well as they could, and slew three of them with shot, and hurt divers, yet they entered the house and defaced it, cutting the players’ apparel into pieces, and all their furniture, and burnt their playbooks, and did what other mischief they could. (J.C.S. 1:161-62)

Apparently the rioters gathered at The Fortune in nearby Finsbury and moved to both the Red Bull and the Cockpit with a clear design to cause damage to the newly occupied
playhouse. The group was large, homogenous, organized, and intent on achieving their goals. In the aftermath of the event a contemporary writes:

> the prentices on Shrove Tuesday last, to the number of 3 or 4,000 committed extreme insolencies . . . a justice of the peace coming to appease them, while he was reading a proclamation, had his head broken with a brick bat. The other part, making for Drury Lane, where lately a new playhouse is erected, they beset the house round, broke in, wounded diverse of the players, broke open their trunks & what apparel, books, and other things they found, they burnt and cut in pieces.

(J.C.S. 5: 54)

The sheer number of apprentices involved in this altercation proved a force too large for either the players or the municipal authorities to deter and the fact that plays were presented at neither house for several months suggests that the attack, at least from the rioters perspective, was a resounding success.

More light is shed upon the intent of the Clerkenwell protestors by an event that never happened a year following this first altercation. By that time Beeston and his company had resumed playing at the Phoenix. But the apprentices appeared unwilling to grant this particular Phoenix the long life accorded to its mythical namesake. Even despite the fact that “such of [the crowd] as were taken his majesty hath commanded shall be executed for example’s sake” (J.C.S. 5: 54), the apprentices organized a second riot the following year. This time, the authorities were warned of the apprentices’s plans. A letter of 12 February 1618 from the Privy Council to the Lieutenants of Middlesex cautioned that a large number of apprentices planned “to meet at the Fortune,” which they would use

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as a staging ground, “and after that to go to the Playhouses the Red Bull, and the Cock Pitt, which they have designed to rase, and pull down” (J.C.S.: 1:163). Apparently adequate preventative measures were taken to ensure that these plans did not come to fruition.

The disgruntled residents of Clerkenwell did not confine their expressions of anger to damage against playhouses. The troupe’s manager, Christopher Beeston, himself became a target. On 20 March, 1617, two weeks after the riots at the playhouses, Henry Baldwin and Christopher Longe, both of Clerkenwell (occupations not specified), along with several unnamed accomplices, were arraigned “for a riotous assault and spoil done upon the dwelling house of Christopher Beeston.” Baldwin pled not guilty but was “taken in irons for a year” and forced to pay a fine of £6 13s. 4d. Longe, who pled guilty, was delivered a lesser sentence of three months in irons and a fine of 40s (M.S.R. 220).

Several citations for recusancy against Beeston and his wife Jane (see chapter four, above) may already have made him and his family conspicuous members of the community. Absconding with the local theatrical troupe would have only incensed them more, perhaps marking the beginnings of a private vendetta against the hapless impresario.

It’s possible to interpret the actions of these rioters in several different ways. One could argue, with Alfred Harbage, that the strike against the Phoenix, like attacks on playhouses generally, has “no especial place in dramatic history.” He argues that, because playhouses were “conspicuous and public,” they became frequent targets upon which young apprentices might simply vent their aggressions: “riotous collegians now de-trolley street cars and destroy goal posts, expressing thus no general pique against public transit.
or the game of football" (1941: 107). Harbage is correct in insisting that all acts of
destructive behavior and civil disobedience need not profitably be read as evidence of
organized hostility directed at strategic targets. Riots were frequent in early modern
London and were especially conspicuous on Shrove Tuesday, the traditional day of license
for apprentices in the city. There are twenty-four Shrove Tuesday riots recorded in
Elizabethan and Jacobean England, many of them involving damage to theaters (Burke
1985: 33-36). London’s mayor and alderman consistently expressed anxiety over riots,
not because of concern over harm to specific individuals and institutions, but because any
act that might be construed as evidence of widespread or chronic civil disobedience posed
a threat to the general law, order, and peaceableness of the city. A manuscript letter dated
13 October, 1606 suggests that James himself became concerned over the “oftentimes
tumult” in the liberties in and around the Tower of London that impinged upon “his
majesty’s staff royal” (Ellesmere Mss. 6221). In this case, the rioters did not damage any
property belonging to the royal household but merely constituted an unwanted annoyance
to the king’s servants that derogated the peaceful public face of city life that James was
eager to maintain. The concern of the royal family is echoed by all branches of civic
authority. Coke’s influential Institutes provided the model for current judicial thinking on
this matter. He describes riot as “three or more [participating] in any lawful act, as to beat
any man, or hunt in his park,. . .or take possession of his land, break down hedges or
pales, or cast down ditches” (176). Coke’s precedent was frequently reformulated on the
local level, often slackening the criteria upon which a gathering is labelled a riot, and
stipulating punishment. One manuscript, entitled What a Justice of the Peace May Do
(1627), consists of a calendar of quasi-official statutes that form the basis for the execution of practical justice in local communities. The section on “Riot, Rout, and Unlawful Assembly” encourages the justice to exercise broad discretionary powers in determining what constitutes unlawful assembly and in punishing the perpetrators. It mandates that “to make a riot, rout, or unlawful assembly, 3 persons at the least must be gathered together.” If the justice determines that this small group is gathered with “the intent to do any unlawful act with force or violence” he is under the obligation to deal with the offenders “in that matter and form as is contained in the statute of forcible entries.” A subsequent offender, automatically, “shall be 3 months imprisoned” (Huntington Mss. 17298: fo. 132). These manuscripts demonstrate that, as a practical matter, all branches of the Jacobean civil justice system worked in concert and with severity to prevent riots regardless of their intent. From this, it would seem logical to infer, with Harbage, that, given the pervasiveness of riot, any disorderly act might be read as symptomatic of larger patterns of social behaviour rather than situation-specific protest against isolated targets. Furthermore, The civic authorities’ frequent paranoia over acts of civil unrest, I suspect, has led to the reluctance of later historians to label a certain conflict a riot, in the modern understanding of that term. Is it correct, then, to theorize the Clerkenwell riot as just another unlawful assembly without clear direction, arising from the over-active testosterone of local apprentices on their day of licence, to which authorities were perennially overreacting?

There are several reasons, however, why this riot is exemplary and constituted a strategic rebuttal to the actions of the Queen Anne’s Men. Most of these other riots,
especially those involving playhouses, did not result in serious loss of life or property, and
the attack on the Cockpit is extraordinary for the amount of damage done to the theater
and the extent to which the players went to protect their livelihood. Clearly, the rioters
actions were aimed directly at a single company. Although they gathered at The Fortune,
no attempts were made to damage that theater, nor was there any evidence of violence
directed at any persons other than those belonging to Queen Anne’s Men. That the
apprentices did not damage the Fortune, suggests that they were provoked not by a
particular animus against theaters in general, but rather that, for one reason or another, the
Cockpit and the Red Bull were of special interest. Their actions might instead be read in
terms of a particular kind of exchange that E.P Thompson labels a “moral economy.”
Focusing his observations on bread and grain riots in the eighteenth century, Thompson
argues that the frequent riots ensuing price inflations were specifically designed to register
the crowd’s displeasure over what they felt were unfair business practices. In this case,
Thompson argues, the rioters were defending traditional rights and practices against the
onset of an increasingly impersonal and mercantile means of exchange. The communal
consensus of the crowd constituted a legitimate grievance that outweighed fear and
deferece to local authorities (1971: 78; Hannah 285-86). I argue that it is this same
dissatisfaction with the disruption of ordinary community-oriented theatrical operations
and customary norms that culminated in the altercation on Shrove Tuesday: The moral
economy of the Clerkenwell apprentices conflicted with the market-driven model followed

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Figure 5.1. Map of Greater London showing the location of theaters built between 1576 and 1640. Note that the distance between the Red Bull and the Cockpit is not great, despite the fact that the two playhouses were located in markedly different socioeconomic settings.

by the troupe who were motivated by profitability, the accumulation of cultural capital, and increased social respectability. The dense social and commercial networks that characterized early-modern London's division into wards, guilds, and parishes provided an efficient regulatory mechanism for rapidly apprehending and penalizing opportunistic individuals or groups whose profit-taking and business practices were thought to conflict with customary norms and the rights of consumers.

Clerekenwell apprentices had numerous grounds to view the company's move upmarket as an affront to communal principles of fair-dealing. The most obvious is that residents could no longer enjoy dramatic entertainment in their own neighborhood. The new playhouse was only twenty minutes walk from the Red Bull (see figure 5.1), but most apprentices could hardly afford the drastically higher price of admission: instead of paying a penny, playgoers would now have to hand over sixpence for a seat in the top gallery, one or two shillings for a better vantage in the middle and lower galleries respectively, and a veritable fortune--two and a half shillings--for a vaunted seat on the stage or a private box (Sturgess 15). For many apprentices as well as tradesmen, this sum would be prohibitively expensive, representing a significant portion of their weekly earnings, many of whom brought home as little as 1s. 2d. in a week (Cook 277-79). Because of the high cost, Anne-Jeneline Cook, arguing that public and private theaters alike were the domain of the "privileged," suggests that, despite contemporary evidence, very few apprentices attended the theater at all (218-20). Her reading downplays an abundance of references to apprentice playgoers, most of whom attended amphi-theater playhouses like the Red Bull, but some of whom, in the interests of social status, fondness for the theater or particular
plays, the expectation of greater production values, or any of a number of reasons, undoubtedly would be willing to pay the higher price at the private houses, which was still potentially within reach of those apprenticed to wealthy or particularly generous masters in lucrative trades. Apprentices were, after all, better off than the large segment of the population who were prohibited from earning a livelihood by practicing a trade because they lacked an apprentice's credentials (Dunlop and Denman 61; C. Wilson 17). Many apprentices, despite the social stigma attached to their occupations, came from families of decent pedigree who supplied them with modest amounts of spending money. Some apprentices, too, were roundly criticized for their unseemly social pretensions. Quicksilver, in *Eastward Ho!*, declares that he is "entertained among gallants," and, because he frequently brokers loans for his master Touchstone, "may use his recreation with his master's profit" (1.1.16-17, 31-32). Plays, among other leisurely distractions including bearbaiting, bowling, cockfighting, and the omnipresent alehouse, were clearly an important source of this "recreation." Apprentices, with their food and lodging costs provided by their master, were inclined to spend a large proportion of their disposable income on leisure pursuits at the expense of savings or durable goods beyond subsistence. An anonymous youth from Cornwall alludes to the place of playgoing in the course of leisure spending: "most of my money being spent, / To St. John's street to the Bull I went, / Where I the roaring Rimer saw" (Gurr 1987: 246). It is not unlikely, therefore, that the private theater may well have remained an option for Clerkenwell's more well-to-do middling sort (Harrison 145). It's even possible, if *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* is an accurate indication, that masters would occasionally treat their apprentices to a play. In
this play a citizen grocer, George, and his wife provide running commentary throughout
the play, alluding to their "man" Rafe who they have seated amongst the spectators, and
who eventually plays a major role in the action of the play. Although the role of the
citizens and their apprentices in this play is largely satirical, it's certainly plausible that, like
the vast majority of satire written for the London stage, Beaumont was sending up what
many viewed as indecorous yet frequent practices at these upscale private houses.

The price of admission at the local playhouse remained constant amid a period of
rapid and broad price fluctuation. And, in fact, the widespread price inflation in London
actually meant that the cost of seeing a play actually went down, even though this savings
might, in many cases, have been offset by a decline in real wages due to the proliferation
of cheap labor. Cook argues that, even at public theaters, the penny admission cost would
be too much for an apprentice (220-21). The argument is often made that the cost of
seeing a play was equal to the price of a loaf of bread, the dietary staple of indigent
Londoners. This, however, is not a cogent reason for assuming that this penny wood be
spent on food rather than entertainment. When considered in real terms, the cost of a loaf
of bread is relatively negligible, even considering much different price characteristics in
today’s economy. The entertainment budgets of many individuals and families would be
significantly less onerous if the price of a ticket to the cinema was equal, or even
somewhat commensurate with that of bread. When one considers that a pint of beer cost
threepence, seeing a play became an even more attractive option for the budget-conscious
Londoner. Youth, than as now, are not known for their sagacity in spending habits.
Finally, the proliferation of apprenticeship throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries
guaranteed a concomitant increase in youth culture and, therefore, a significant percentage of the populace seeking to spend their earnings, however modest, on recreational diversions (Rappaport 11).

Clearly then, cost and distance, were not the only factors that angered local apprentices. The new venue was also socially distant from the familiar confines of Clerkenwell. Steven Mullaney provocatively argues that London’s public theaters—both those in the northern suburbs and on the bankside—were symbolically distant from the city proper and the increasingly affluent areas in the west end. He suggests that the geographical location of the stage represented a “culturally and ideologically removed vantage point” which allowed for its effectiveness in commenting on contemporary politics and social mores (1988: 30-31). The liberties in which theaters were prominent enhanced the licentiousness of the theatrical experience for the working class audiences to which they regularly catered. For these consumers, he argues, the theater was attractive precisely because it was a physical part of and, in many cases, celebrated the values of familiar local communities. Mullaney further suggests that it is just this licentiousness that contributed to frequent denunciations and concerns over both the substance of dramatic works and the practice of playgoing among civic authorities, religious ideologues, and those among the upper classes concerned with the declining morality of the general populace. It’s possible, however, to theorize concerns over the social space of the theater in the reverse. It’s likely that the Clerkenwell apprentices refused to attend performances of their former troupe at the Phoenix precisely because of the different theatrical atmosphere and the location of the new private theater in London’s increasingly elite west.
end. Despite the obstreperous contentions of the theater's detractors, theater historians generally agree that it wasn't the theater itself that was the source of their ire. Harbage suggests that it was the alehouse and not the theater that led to riotous assembly and raucous audiences (1941: 95-96). Not only would the regular and harmonious alehouse crowd in Clerkenwell find themselves out of place in foreign taverns along Drury Lane, they would be unable to carry on their usual banter in the decorous confines of the Phoenix. The general "scene" at the Phoenix was much different. This theater was adjacent to Lincoln's Inn (one of the Inns of Court) amid the fashionable houses of the wealthy who would typically arrive at the theater by coach attired in finery (Sturgess 16). It's little wonder therefore, that a lone apprentice would feel intimidated arriving at the Cockpit's grand entrance on foot, fresh from the shop and a few refreshing beverages. Even with a familiar play, imported from the erstwhile Red Bull repertory, on stage at the Phoenix, the production and general theatrical atmosphere would hardly be recognizable to those accustomed to the troupe's former venue. Because it was indoors, the Cockpit's artificial lighting would provide a radically different perspective on the stage action; the spectacular pyrotechnics that typify several popular Queen's Men plays would be too dangerous; and the relatively diminutive size of the hall would not provide scope for the broad acting style of the "terrible tear-throats" at the Red Bull. Finally, our hypothetical apprentice would almost certainly be the victim of the ridicule of both the elite crowd at the Phoenix as well as his mates upon his return to Clerkenwell.² What Mullaney labels

². Though some apprentices had pretensions to gallantry, they were probably best to keep these ambitions to themselves around their master and more sullen fellow laborers.
the "liminal" space in the liberties outside the city walls was a comfortable home for its residents who would view the "civilized" west end with the same apprehension that Londoners traveling to Clerkenwell, Finsbury, or Southwark for dramatic performances would view these unfamiliar neighborhoods.

Perceptions of respectability clearly played an important role in who went where in London's theaters. Harbage correctly suggests that a primary source of conflict among audience members was due to the natural antagonism that existed between apprentices and young gentlemen, the two largest and most vocal groups of playgoers. Because theatrical companies were hard-pressed to cater to both at once, they usually sought to target either one or the other. For an ensemble of reasons not reducible to cost alone, apprentices tended to frequent public theaters while private houses were almost exclusively the domain of pretentious students and city gallants. However, overlap was more frequent than companies and their playwrights seem to have anticipated, exacting limitations on the player's ability to satirize the operations and dramatic fare of rival troupes. It is just such overlap and the Children of the Queen's Revels inability to accurately gauge their audience that led to the failure of Beaumont's *Knight of the Burning Pestle* at Blackfriars in 1607. That play, quite explicitly through the running commentary of George and his wife, asks to be understood as a parody of the usual characters and themes of citizen comedy. At one point, discussion turns to the repertory at the northern public theaters where the drama in question "'tis stale [since] it has been had before at the Red Bull" (4.4.31). Apparently the elites that this company expected to be in attendance were either not present or did not readily apprehend the barbs directed at rival theatrical productions. The publisher of the
first quarto edition of the play suggests that the audience missed "the privy mark of irony about it," probably because the audience apprehended it as straight citizen comedy rather than satire, prompting Andrew Gurr to label it "a complete flop." (1992: 216). The case of the *Knight of the Burning Pestle* not only demonstrates that audience overlap existed among theaters, but also that audiences loyal to one theater were fully aware of the types of plays staged on rival stages. Evidence of overlap makes it difficult to theorize networks of theatrical traffic and to generalize about the audience dynamic at one theater over others. Janette Dillon offers a provocative alternative that reconciles audience loyalty to certain plays and theaters while allowing for migrant audiences. She suggests that audiences should be viewed as fluid markers of patterns of social life and aesthetic valuation that are loyal to generic "types" rather than certain plays or houses (10). The implications of her argument places the onus on theatrical companies to maintain a stable audience base while experimenting with newer dramatic forms in order to expand attendance. Intentionally or not, the Queen Anne's men, despite retaining modified Red Bull plays out of logistical necessity, conveyed to the apprentices of Clerkenwell a willingness to capture an audience of young gentlemen in their move to a private theaters.

The actions of the company also violated communal principles of fair-dealing in more easily quantifiable ways. As I noted in chapter one, Queen Anne's Men, upon commencing their tenure at the Red Bull, made a number of lucrative concessions to the

3. It's interesting to note that these elite opinions of theatrical value have persisted to the present. In the explanatory note to the line cited, the New Mermaid edition of the play, edited by Michael Hattaway, provides the following commentary: "The Red Bull [was] a popular theater in Clerkenwell, built about 1605. The boy sneers because spectacular plays of little value were presented there" (p. 84, emphasis added).
Clerkenwell community. In October of 1617 Christopher Beeston, who, with the death of Thomas Greene in 1614, took over management of the company, was charged before the Sessions of Peace for Middlesex for being in arrears on his highway contributions (M.C.R.: 2:235). Beeston's company was not actually using the theater at this time, and they argued that they should be exempted from making these payments. It can reasonably be assumed that without capital underwriting from Anne’s Men, the road work would be terminated along with the employment of many local residents, many of whom were likely regular visitors to the Red Bull. In addition, the regular payments to relieve the poor were transferred to the new parish in Westminster forcing the congregation of St James, Clerkenwell to seek other means to alleviate local poverty. Not only was the Queen Anne’s Men ceasing to provide regular entertainment in an otherwise bleak neighbourhood, it was abandoning this community in a very real sense by discontinuing all charitable endeavours.

Productions at private theaters, because of their proportionally high satirical content directed explicitly at lower classes, effectively excluded tradesmen, apprentices, and others not inclined to witness derogatory and often spiteful portrayals of members of their social class. The company’s choice to target a particular demographic over another, thereby breaking an implicit social contract with its local community proved a dilemma not usually present in a normal competitive marketplace where an appeal to one target group does not actively dissuade another group of consumers. For instance, NBC’s popular sitcom *Friends* specifically targets a demographic of twenty-something viewers, but this does not prohibit many older viewers, including my parents, from enjoying the show. The
simple fact that the network’s production does not cater directly to the lived experiences
of older viewers does not pique their odium in the same way that Anne’s Mens’ move to
the Cockpit, both as a matter of practical economics and dramatic sensibility, excluded
their previous audience.⁴ Again, the precarious situation of Queen Anne’s Men might be
usefully theorized as a moral economy overlaid onto the usual commercial ethos. Many
scholars consider playgoing as a type of exchange and, concomitantly, the theatrical
experience and theatrical productions as a commodity. Although this model successfully
captures the essential mercantile elements of this economy, the difficulty, as many have
argued, is in determining what precisely is being exchanged (Dillon 43). For players and
theatrical companies the unit of exchange—the benefit—would seem to be cash proceeds
leading, in many cases, to immense financial gain for sharers and investors. But, as we
have seen, Queen Anne’s Men were forced to consider more intangible factors en route to
fiscal prosperity. Defining the unit of exchange for the theater’s various consumers is
more problematic still. It’s often argued that the common value that all of these market
segments seek for paying the price of admission is entertainment, difficult as this is to
quantify. Lars Engle notes that, due to a “plurality of value systems” existing among these
diverse playgoers, the concept of entertainment during this period is exceedingly difficult
to delimit (2). In terms of the plays themselves, Dillon argues that what’s at stake are
various views of the world, “to celebrate what the play celebrates and reject what it

⁴. An interesting—and deliberate—exception to this general rule occurs with NBC’s coverage of the short-
lived XFL. In an article in the Washington Post on 27 January, 2001, Leonard Shapiro suggests that the
network’s decision to market the game to 17-24 year old men intentionally excludes other demographics
in an effort to enhance its popularity with that target group.
rejects" (44). My preceding arguments insist, however, that playgoing must be considered in terms of a wide-ranging experience that incorporates more than the play itself. For instance, the venue at which a play is staged would seem to have a differential effect on its perceived "entertainment value" depending on the market segment in question. The "value" of the same play would, for an apprentice, be higher if staged at the Red Bull than at the Phoenix, despite its lower monetary cost.

I posit a number of converging economies that account not only for the company's need to compete for its consumer's money, but playgoers need to compete for the kinds of productions and theatrical experience that they value most. The breakdown of a regular, efficient economy in this situation is based on the preponderance of a number of conflicting external factors. Externalities arise as discrepancies between the private and social costs of certain goods or services that are important enough to consumers to affect the price of that item. Externalities are common in today's advanced economy and firms are typically forced, either of their own accord or through the action of regulatory bodies, to account for them in their business models. A much different, but no less trenchant, ensemble of social costs impinged upon the economic life of the Queen Anne's Men at a time when they were ill-equipped to understand and account for these factors. The greater distance that Clerkenwell patrons were forced to travel, regardless of the increase in admission price, would increase the total cost (counting the loss of working time) of theatergoing for those who previously had local access to theater. The cessation of

5. The environmental cost presented by transregional and transborder pollution, for instance, is one of the most visible ways in which externality costs impact regular economic practices in today's economy (Anderson and Blackhurst 49).
regular performances at the Red Bull also had a detrimental effect on many other local businesses which relied on the daily increase in pedestrian traffic in their neighborhood to augment their business. One such establishment, an unnamed “tavern on Clerkenwell Green” was a frequent haunt for actors and theatergoers both before and after performances at the Red Bull (quoted in Sisson 1954: 62). There were likely many similar taphouses catering to the theater crowd.

Despite the lack of similar documentary evidence for the Red Bull, Henslowe’s *Diary* suggests that victualing at the theater itself was a lucrative enterprise for those involved. John Cholmley, a grocer, agreed to a partnership with Henslowe in building the Rose playhouse. Cholmley was contractually obliged to pay a total of £816 in quarterly installments of £25. 10s. in exchange for one-half of the gallery receipts and the exclusive right to provide theatergoers with food and drink (Eccles 16). Since his takings from the gallery alone were never likely to amount to the monies necessary to recoup his investment, provisioning the house’s patrons was clearly a profitable venture. Although it’s unlikely that one individual entered into such a financially burdensome contract to supply the Red Bull’s audience with refreshments, certain local grocers lost a lucrative source of revenue with that theater’s closure.

The social costs of doing business, however, would ideally be offset by other intangible factors offered by playing before social elites at the Cockpit. Due to the reduced number of spectators, the marginal costs of playing at a private house were probably higher than those outdoors. The hall had to be lit (a task requiring thousands of candles), more personnel were likely required to cater to the needs of the wealthier
clientele, and it would have to be maintained at a higher standard than the amphitheaters. On the other hand, the smaller hall would be unable to accommodate the spectacular stage effects and pyrotechnics common at the Red Bull (see chapter three, above). These effects were expensive, and would represent a significant savings in operating costs. At the same time, however, the marginal profits at private houses were significantly higher. Enterprising companies like the King’s Men and Anne’s Men and entrepreneurs like Heminge, Condell, Burbage, and Beeston, realized the potential for nearly unlimited profits at these venues.6 Because, to varying degrees by cost, attendance at the hall playhouses offered a highly visible marker of one’s social status and upward mobility, private theater performances were conspicuous consumption goods. Conspicuous consumption goods are commodities that, due to their extrinsic qualities or “snob appeal,” have positive demand curves and are nearly perfectly inelastic for those individuals or groups who regularly indulge in them (Lipsey and Purvis 138; Veblen Chapter 4 passim.).

As the price of admission increases, the desire to attend is greater and the demand to witness performances at private theaters is virtually insensitive to fluctuations in price. There are two interrelated social reasons why this is so. For this upwardly mobile or pretentious segment of the audience, the entertainment value provided by the dramatic performance—despite the difficulty in quantifying this—is negligible in comparison with the social desires satisfied by attendance and subsequent exposure to peers at the theater. The

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6. Henslowe, recognizing the opportunity for great financial gain, repeatedly attempted to acquire a stake in a hall playhouse. His efforts, in 1614, to replace the Whitefriars with a private house in the same area were prevented by a staying order. In response, he financed the building of the Porter’s Hall in Puddle Wharf which was again thwarted by the opposition by local residents. His projects remained unrealized upon his death in 1616 (Sturgess 28-29).
social character of private theatergoing far exceeds its intrinsic values as a cultural
commodity and becomes a marker for a set of social relations: "a social hieroglyphic," as
Marx would have it (1954 1:78-79). A significant aspect of participation in this social
ritual, however, requires the demonstration of pecuniary strength and gross consumption
of such socially inflated goods, with failure to do so considered a mark of demerit (Veblen
74). Both the price of admission to this distinguished social echelon as well as the costs of
participation once admitted, therefore, contribute to the peculiar demand characteristics of
this commodity. Of course, the company was unable to capitalize on these price factors
precisely because of their one-dimensional focus on the accumulation of wealth and their
failure to consider the detrimental impact of social costs which culminated in the riot that
destroyed the venue.

After the loss of the Red Bull, one might expect that its audience would simply
migrate to the Fortune once theatrical presentations ceased at the Red Bull. As I noted
previously, that theater offered a similar repertory that would seem to offer a lineup
suitable to those accustomed to the Red Bull. The Fortune was also in close proximity
and, by some reports, offered a similar atmosphere to the Red Bull. These two theaters
are closely associated in extant commentary on the London theater. Actors at both houses
were dismissed as "terrible tear-throats" by their more discriminating detractors (J.C.S. VI:
218). The two theaters are also compared in the induction to The Careless Shepherd
(1618) where a citizen, Thrift, voices his preference for "the Bull or Fortune, and there see
/ A play for twopence, with a jig to boot." Brief excerpts like this have led to the frequent
and perhaps misleading generalization that "The Fortune and Red Bull. . . provide popular
theater [exclusively] for a down-market clientele” (Sturgess 13). Though both were large amphitheaters, evidence suggests that the social dynamic may have differed between the two venues. The Red Bull was known for its distinctive house style replete with a broad acting style, frequent battle scenes, and numerous stage effects (Leggatt 21; Reynolds Chapter 8 passim). The Fortune seems to have catered to a more diverse and less easily discernible demographic mix. On the one hand, the quality of its productions seemed more to the tastes of elite theatergoers. Given current scholarly opinion as to the conduct at this theater, one might wonder what performance Busino, a Venetian visitor to The Fortune in 1617 witnessed when he reported observing “such a crowd of nobility, so very well arrayed that they looked like so many princes, listening as silently and soberly as possible.” Other notables also attended performances at The Fortune, including the Spanish ambassador and his entourage who banqueted with the players afterwards (Gurr 1970: 144-45). On the other hand, and perhaps owing to its more prestigious clientele, it seems to have been more prone to criminal activity; it was identified in the Middlesex county order of 1612 for the high preponderance of cutpurses plying their trade in its yard and, in 1613, a spectator was stabbed to death (E.S. 1: 264-65). These seemingly paradoxical reports might be reconciled by suggesting that the Fortune was not a community theater to the extent of its northwestern counterpart. Albeit for different reasons, the Red Bull crowd might have been equally hesitant to attend plays at The Fortune as at the Cockpit. A Red Bull audience would view both venues and their locales with trepidation as strange and unfamiliar, detracting from their enjoyment of the
playgoing experience which, we must assume, encompassed much more than the action on the stage.

Of course many Clerkenwell residents did attend the Fortune and had been doing so for many years. On 16 June, 1613, one “Richard Bradley of St. James’, Clerkenwell, yeoman,” was cited for assaulting a gentleman, Nicholas Bestney in that theater’s gallery’s (M.S.R. 141). The fact that the rioting apprentices used the Fortune as a meeting place but refrained from damaging it also suggests that they were amenable to the dramatic productions staged there. Clearly, however, this theater, despite its similarities, was not considered a suitable substitute for the Red Bull. It’s possible that, as with the familiar environment, audience, and production values at the Red Bull, the apprentices had a particular affinity to specific plays in the repertory of the Queen Anne’s Men. The troupe regularly performed a number of plays long regarded as citizen favorites like Marlowe’s *Jew of Malta* (c. 1589), I and II *Tamburlaine*, as well as newer favorites by Heywood and Dekker. Many of these, including *The Jew of Malta* and Heywood’s *Ages*, were transferred to the Cockpit but the pyrotechnics, elaborate attire, and overall spectacle that made these plays attractive to the Red Bull clientele were not possible indoors and, quite possibly, were no longer available to the company following their destruction by the rioters.

The company’s decision to move to a new venue took into account a diverse ensemble of factors of their own quite different from those worrying local residents. By

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7. Henslowe’s *Diary* conclusively indicates that apparel was the costliest factor of daily theatrical production. After losing much of their costuming in the riot, Anne’s Men would be severely constrained financially to recoup even a portion of these losses.
tailoring their repertory to the tastes of the Red Bull audience, they had achieved enormous popularity, a stable audience base, and thrived as a community institution. But the innovations in stagecraft that led to their success at the Red Bull were costly and the bottom-line revenues at this theater were not nearly as profitable as those available at a private house. Ascertaining the daily revenues of theatrical companies based on estimates of attendance is a notoriously dubious exercise especially given that, unlike Henslowe’s companies at the Rose and Fortune, no daily record of earnings exists for the Red Bull to corroborate these figures, but some approximations might be made here. Harbage calculates the capacity of the Fortune, a playhouse of roughly similar size to the Red Bull, to be 1,526 in the galleries and an additional 818 standing in the yard for a total of 2,344, for a total take of £16 2s. 6d., when the theater was filled to capacity (1941: 22-23).

Many historians, however, believe that Harbage’s estimate is unreasonably high. Eccles revises this figure to 1,937 people at the 1587 Rose (1,404 in the galleries; 533 groundlings), a figure that accords more closely with Heywood’s statement in Chancery (3 October, 1623) that, on prosperous afternoons, “there hath been eight or nine pounds in a day received at the doors and galleries” of the Red Bull. Of course, the theater would rarely, if ever, be filled to capacity so these daily attendance and revenue estimates should be adjusted downwards for a typical business day. At the Cockpit, however, with a regular attendance of about 400 but drastically higher admission prices, receipts could

8. This figure also aligns with the court’s practice of paying an additional £10 (thereby doubling their fee) to companies for court performances in the afternoon to compensate for the loss of that’s days profits in the public playhouse (E.S. 1: 369). The court, out of generosity and gratitude, probably overestimated slightly a company’s daily revenue.
have amounted to a daily take of £19 6s. 6d., not to mention the increased respectability
the company would garner playing upmarket.\(^9\) The company was willing, therefore, to
accept a loss in their extremely impressive top-line growth in exchange for an
improvement in the bottom line, perhaps hoping that their success in the former regard
would guarantee a rosy future at their new home.

The micromanagement of the company during this period seems to reflect a change
in their larger corporate policy and commercial objectives, a change largely due to the
private aspirations of Christopher Beeston. For Beeston, as for many other members of
the company who were residents of Clerkenwell and parishioners at St. James, part of the
original attractiveness of locating theatrical operations in Clerkenwell must have been the
ability to play in a comfortable setting before local community members from which a
loyal audience might easily be recruited. The seven sharers were also, apparently, able to
draw upon local connections to negotiate favorable terms on the lease of the Red Bull
from Aaron Holland who had, in turn, leased the land from Christopher Beddingfield and
built the theater (Wallace 294). The company paid a mere £17. 10s. annually as well as a
modest share of the profits\(^{10}\) to Holland to lease the theater and according to the terms of
this arrangement, a player, Thomas Swinnerton, stood as the gatherer, responsible for
collecting the daily box-office receipts for which he was entitled to an additional one

\(^9\) My tentative calculations of the daily maximums at the Red Bull and the Cockpit accord with Smith's
determination of the King's Mens' 1610 daily average incomes at the Globe (£8 10s.) and the Blackfriars
(£15 15s.) (I. Smith 263).

\(^{10}\) Holland received one seventh of the total receipts. This is significantly less than the share taken by
other theater owners. In his theaters, Henslowe received one half of the takings of the galleries, a much
larger sum than Holland's seventh. In addition, Holland was responsible for normal "housekeeping"
duties, including maintenance, ground rent, and taxes.

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eighteenth of the proceeds. In February 1608, however, a new agreement was drawn up, presumably on the same terms, making Philip Stone the gatherer. Stone was not a member of the company and evidently saw the opportunity to make a ready profit on his investment in the increasingly popular troupe. In 1612 Stone, needing money, sold out to a merchant, Thomas Woodford, who left a fiduciary, Anthony Paine, solely in charge of this aspect of his financial affairs (Wallace 294). Woodford’s interest in the company was clearly speculative. A resident of St. Dunston’s in the West, Woodford had been involved in the Paul’s Boys in 1600 and financing the troubled private theater in Whitefriars from 1607-1614. That he viewed the theaters as a “source of easy wealth” is evident in his pattern of using the courts to recoup losses from risky investments (Ingram 1985: 213). This time, Paine proved a less than capable financial agent. Three months following the transaction, Paine failed to pay his employer’s share of the rent on time, prompting Holland to enter a case in the Court of Requests demanding not only the payment of back rent, but also what is essentially a renegotiation of the terms of the original lease in which he would receive regular rent payments in addition to the gatherer’s place:

if the said complainant [sh]all satisfy and pay all such sums of money as he the complainant...whom he claims have unjustly detained or caused to be detained from him, he is well contented to make a new indenture unto the complainant in his own name, under such covenants, articles, provisos, conditions, & agreements as

11. All evidence suggests that Woodford was a man of ill repute. In addition to his questionable ethics during his career as a money-lender, he was cited by the Admiralty for “piracy,” and by the Middlesex justices for passing counterfeit coin (Ingram 1985: 228).
are contained in the said indenture formerly made by him to the said Philip Stone.

(Woodford vs. Holland, Court of Requests, 10 James I).

The wording of the document clearly indicates Holland’s willingness to take this opportunity to renegotiate along the same lines as the Woodford/Stone agreement which, like Burbage, Henslowe, and other theater owners, gave him access to more of the company’s profits by way of the lucrative gatherers share. It also attests to the popularity of the Queen Anne’s Men, suggesting that Holland had underestimated the company’s earning potential in 1605, believing the playhouse had grown more profitable than the building reflected. At the same time, however, it diminished the company’s net profits by effectively increasing operating costs and proscribing the amount of money allocated to day-to-day expenses. The troupe, in essence, was forced by the court to relinquish a percentage of their future earnings without the immediate capital infusion of a normal equity transaction.

This was not the only concern troubling Beeston and his company. Beginning in 1609 Thomas Swinnerton, either in an effort to augment his personal income or to alleviate his company’s financial predicament, used a duplicate patent while touring which essentially allowed the group to play in two places at once, thereby increasing their profits. He was apprehended by the Norwich authorities in 1616 who, fortuitously, did not inform the Lord Chamberlain (who had the authority and obligation to revoke the company’s

12. That Holland would miscalculate the building potential to turn a profit is not difficult to imagine. Holland, apparently, was easily duped. George F. Reynolds suggests that because he was “utterly unlearned and illiterate,” he was easily and routinely taken advantage of in business transactions (6).
patent) of the offense (REED Norwich 145). Beeston, who by all accounts fashioned himself more as an impresario than an actor, was forced to intervene in these conflicts between the company, its investors, and its creditors.

Whether Beeston genuinely wished to rescue his company from its escalating debt or, as Andrew Gurr puts it, to “siphon its cash” for his other enterprises, Beeston secured for the troupe £95 in loans from the widower of Thomas Greene, formerly an actor-sharer in the concern (1996: 324). Far from ameliorating their financial crisis, Beeston’s excessive borrowing from Greene and his estate opened new antagonisms between company members, their families and their constituent community which once again landed them in court. Greene, who was buried at St. James’ on 7 August 1612, was a long standing Clerkenwell resident and his will enumerates a number of close contacts and friendships among local clergy and businessmen. His popularity as a clown, attested by the enormously successful *Greene’s Tu Quoque* (1611), written expressly for the troupe’s leading comic actor (see figure 5.2), was largely responsible for the rapid growth of the Queen Anne’s Men during its tenure in Clerkenwell. In his will, Greene shows a clear interest in the continued success of the company, bequeathing money to many of its members. But Greene’s financial support seems contingent on the troupe remaining in Clerkenwell. He gives “to the fellows of the house of the Red Bull forty shillings to buy gloves” and other gifts to members of the company, but only to those who are also St. James’ parishioners (P.W. 91). But Beeston was unable to make arrangements for a lump-sum purchase of Greene’s former share from his wife Susan, and after negotiations in June 1615, agreed on a large amortized payment to Greene’s widow (now remarried
Figure 5.2 Thomas Greene in the tile role of the play that was eventually named after Queen Anne’s Men’s famous clown.


to James Baskerville) of 1s 8d a day, six days a week, as long as the company was playing and Susan and James lived. The company did not, and probably could not afford to live up to its end of the bargain, and a further arrangement was made whereby in exchange for a further investment of £38, Queen Anne’s Men would pay a pension of 2s to either Susan or her son from a former marriage, Francis Browne. The company again defaulted, and
was also behind in payment of wages to several of its hired actors, including William Browne, another of Susan’s sons. By this point the company was playing at the Cockpit and appeared to be ignoring its obligations and debts in Clerkenwell. When the Cockpit was sacked, though, they had to return to the Red Bull and renegotiate with the Baskervilles. A third settlement was reached in Chancery by which the pensions were reassigned to William in the event of Susan’s death. Once more, Beeston and his company were unable or chose not to honour their agreement, and they returned to the Cockpit (J.C.S.: 1:158-60). It’s not surprising, then, that Susan, who now controlled her husband’s stake in the company, felt betrayed upon realizing that Beeston’s chronic borrowing was being used to build the Cockpit and move the troupe to Drury Lane, against the apparent wishes of her dead husband, and at a venue at which she may no longer have had a claim on the company’s earnings, according to the (probably mistaken) testimony of Thomas Basse and Richard Perkins.

William Browne also had a claim on the company for their arrears on wages payable to him as a hired man. Other non-sharing actors suffered a similar fate through what C.J. Sisson describes as Beeston’s “heads we win, tails you lose” policy towards the payment of wages (1954: 61). According to this system, these actors were paid a fixed rate of 10 shillings a week when the troupe was prosperous, but forced to accept a reduction in wages adjusted to the company’s earnings:

if at any time it should happen the gettings of the company to be but small and to decrease, that then I should not have my whole wages agreed to be paid unto me
but to bear my part of the loss thereof as well as the company and to have a part proportionable only to those gettings (C/24/500).  

In a further Chancery Suit of 1623, an action which finally broke the company, Susan again sued Beeston and two other remaining sharers from the 1617 settlement for arrears in the various loan payments and the pensions to be paid according to the terms of the will (E.S. 2: 238).

Andrew Gurr interprets the company’s financial difficulties during this period and the ensuing suits brought against it by its creditors as the story of a company chronically short of cash and as one of mismanagement as the concern moved from the communal management of the sharer system, to the impresario-led control of Beeston (1996: 324-25). Beeston, through loans secured from his fellow sharers, raised the funds to build the new theater but he did not have the capital to finance the company’s daily operations, like Henslowe with Henry’s and Elizabeth’s Men, nor was he successful in consolidating individual shares, like Hemmings and Condell with the King’s Men. Although Gurr’s analysis astutely interrogates the internal dynamics of the company’s governance, he fails to consider their policies within the larger moral economy of their home community. The personal affronts to Greene and his family, compounded with the loss of their local theater, were likely a contributing factor in the collective decision to destroy the Phoenix. The Greene family was well-liked and well-established in Clerkenwell. The actor’s ancestors had resided in Clerkenwell for over a century and were descended from Sir

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13. Even Henslowe’s system was less duplicitous. His hired men were paid 10s. weekly at all times except when, for whatever reason, the company did not perform in London at all.
Thomas Dacra, a grand prior of St. John of Jerusalem and, in 1504, the grand prior of England (Pinks 213). Greene’s associations with important Clerkenwell business interests made him and his consortium a welcomed part of neighborhood commerce. His acting style was especially appealing to the local audience; as Heywood notes in his preface to The City Gallant (1614), there was never an actor “more applauded by the audience...or of more general love for the city” than the late Greene (A2r). Clearly Greene was sorely missed both by Anne’s Men who had difficulty replacing his superior talents, and by local playgoers who reveled in his performance and community-oriented approach to his craft. Although none of these factors alone would be enough to precipitate such a violent reaction, the compounded violations of the company against such a well respected community member were likely contributing factors in the altercation. It is this sense of personal disservice against the Greene family that leads C.J. Sisson to contend that Queen Anne’s Men’s violation of their contract with Susan Baskerville, former wife of the company’s most popular player, animated grievances in the neighbourhood against Christopher Beeston and his projects and that the Shrove Tuesday riot was a calculated “gesture of resentment by Clerkenwell for...the injustice done to Susan in a matter of local notoriety” (1954: 68). The same might be said for the disservice done to Aaron Holland, the landlord of the Red Bull who found himself without tenants and without prospects of finding resident players to replace them due to the restrictions placed on patents granted to acting companies under James. Holland too was well respected in the community and, in 1613, was appointed constable for Clerkenwell, placing him in the ambivalent position of having to prosecute those who, at least to some degree, were
protesting on his behalf (M.S.R 249). Holland, earning only £48 in annual revenues on the Red Bull, could not hope to recoup the original cost of the building.\textsuperscript{14}

From the company's perspective, the fierce reaction of the Clerkenwell populace must have made it feel like a victim of its own success. The money they made in Clerkenwell afforded the funds and attracted the necessary financing needed to build the Cockpit, and it is likely the success of their plays at the Red Bull that led them to contemplate moving upmarket in the first place. The sacking of the Cockpit not only disrupted the scheduled playing cycle, but the burning of playbooks, props, and costumes, many of which were likely procured expressly for use in the new venue, represented a significant capital loss for the company. Chambers estimates that the total value of the contents of a company's tiring house at £500-£1,000 (1: 372). The value of Anne's Men's apparel and properties was probably near the upper end of this figure due to the elaborate stagecraft that characterized performances at the Red Bull and since the transition to the new venue necessitated maintaining extra stocks of material that could be used at both venues. The company's diminished earnings as a result of the riot also led to their subsequent insolvency as they, with no place to play and no revenues from production, were unable to pay their debts to actors and community members alike, compounding resentment upon the sharers.

\textsuperscript{14} The cost of erecting the Red Bull is not known. We might assume that, like other houses, the cost was anywhere from £500-£1,000.
ii - Crossover Plays

The uncomfortable circumstances attending the Queen Anne’s Men’s move from the Red Bull did not deter it from continuing their enterprise at the Cockpit. In the immediate aftermath of the riot, when one or both of their London houses were too damaged to play in, the troupe was forced to take the show on the road, an endeavor with which it had little experience. Although the company toured sporadically during the summer throughout its history, activity in the provinces increased substantially from 1616 to 1618. In 1616, the troupe appeared in Norwich in March and again in May, and throughout Sussex and Lancashire in October and November; the following year it again played in Norwich and Coventry in the summer and autumn (REED Norwich 145-51; REED Somerset 26; REED Lancashire 186; REED Devon 49; REED Sussex 151; REED Coventry 399; Gurr 1996: 331-34). Although these records are not complete or conclusive enough to construct their touring pattern or generalize about their traveling habits, the players’ increased provincial appearances in the spring and fall during these years deviates from their regular summer tour and stable playing in London for the remainder of the year. From this evidence, it’s possible to infer that the company was forced to tour in order to recoup its losses and maintain financial stability at a time when it had no regular London venue. Despite the temporary financial protection afforded by the provincial tours, the company realized that their long-term success depended upon their popularity in London. It was forced, however, through a combination of its own

15. From the records it is not possible to discern whether or not the full troupe was, in fact, on tour. Payments are usually made to Thomas Swinnerton or Martin Slaughter, both of whom had been known to separate from the main group and receive permission to play, surreptitiously using a duplicate patent.
poor financial health and the damage to its theaters and stage property caused by the rioters to transfer plays and players between the Red Bull and the Cockpit. The company had every intention of playing Red Bull material at the new venue and it is likely, since it was now deliberately targeting upscale clientele, that it intended to alter the productions significantly in order to appeal to this new market. By all accounts, they were quite successful, to the point that Beeston, like the King’s Men at the Globe and at Blackfriars, retained both theaters well into the next decade.\footnote{Unlike the King’s Men, however, Beeston did not have the luxury of using the two theaters and kept both houses in operation throughout the year under the aegis of two different companies with considerable overlap of personnel, properties, and playbooks.}

In what follows, I will offer dual performance analyses of three plays in order to demonstrate their potential and simultaneous appeal for two very diverse audiences. It is, of course, a credit to the actors that they were able to modify their usual bombastic style to appeal to an audience that had previously reveled in productions in which their performances were regularly satirized. But credit is also due to the plays produced at the new venue. Dekker’s \textit{Match Me in London} (c.1611) had become part of the Red Bull repertory earlier in the decade but was transferred to the Cockpit, most likely in an attempt to capitalize on numerous references to an impending royal marriage between Prince Charles and a Spanish Infanta, a context that might have been lost on an audience of apprentices who would have viewed the play as an exoneration of their working-class values. Massinger’s \textit{New Way to Pay Old Debts} (c. 1621) was likely played at both theaters simultaneously during the period from 1621-1625 when Christopher Beeston transferred plays and players between the Revel’s Company at the Red Bull and the
Queen’s Men at the Cockpit. The advantage of this play from the impresario’s perspective is that, unlike most satiric productions that either represent the sentiments of “city” elites or, alternatively, champion “citizen” values, its satire and aspersion excludes neither of the two divergent audience segments before which it was played. Webster’s tragicomedy, *The Devil’s Law Case*, on the other hand, entered the company’s repertory in 1617, and was likely commissioned expressly for performance at the new venue. The courtly intrigue and complicated dialogue in this play seems explicitly designed to appeal to the tastes of a more elite clientele. With this play, the company signaled an intent to maneuver themselves in direct competition with the King’s Men’s prosperous operation at the Blackfriars where tragicomodies by Shakespeare and Beaumont and Fletcher had proved intensely successful among this upscale market segment.

There is no doubt that Dekker’s *Match Me in London* was such a “crossover” play. The first printed quarto of 1631 advertises that “it hath often been presented; first at the Bull in St. John’s Street; and lately, at the private-house in Drury Lane, called the Phoenix” (Aⅰr). Determining when, exactly, the play was performed at these venues is subject to debate. No original license from the Master of the Revels exists, but it was re-licensed for performance by the Lady Elizabeth’s Men in 1623 where it is described as “an old play.” Relying on internal evidence and the “quasi-historical notion of topicality” (Barroll 134), many scholars believe that the play was not much older and date its first performance between 1619 and 1621 (Gasper 1990: 166-67). The play’s obvious engagement with the question of a Spanish Match for Charles, oblique references to the admiralty, and to James’ increasingly unpopular granting of monopolies are the usual
reasons given for this late date. But there is no reason to assume that any of these factors preclude an earlier performance date. The Spanish Match was a highly visible and keenly contested topic as early as 1605 when that possibility was first tabled with reference to Henry; dramatic works make references to James’ abuse of monopoly power as early as the first quarto of *King Lear* (1608), and by Dekker himself in *The Seven Deadly Sins* (1606). These commentators tend to privilege internal references over the facts stated in the quarto and provided by the Master of Revels. The fact that the play was “first” staged at the Red Bull suggests that it may predate the period after 1616 when plays were transferred between the two theaters and any newer plays were designed for the new house where Beeston’s primary interests lay. There is no reason, therefore, to dismiss Harbage’s case for a first performance at the Red Bull as early as 1611.17 Throughout this period, Dekker was a parishioner at St James’, Clerkenwell and, after a falling out with the Henslowe and the Prince’s Men at the Fortune, was a frequent provider of plays at the Red Bull, both for Anne’s Men and the transplanted Red Bull company after the queen consort’s death (Price 30-32).

I suspect that those scholars who advance a later date for *Match Me in London* participate in an allied critical agenda when interpreting the play. Assuming a later performance at a private playhouse, they are guided by contemporaneous dramatic fashions, and read the play as a botched attempt to emulate Fletcher’s successful tragicomedies at the Blackfriars. On these grounds, the play is considered a “gallant

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17. It is unlikely that the play was written between 1613-1619 while Dekker was interred in The King’s Bench prison for debt. The exact dating of the play does not effect my interpretation of it which relies only on the play’s performance at both the Red Bull and Cockpit.
attempt to grapple with the new style in playmaking” (Hoy 3: 144) and Dekker as striving to capitalize on “opportunities offered by a changing theatrical environment” (McLuskie 175). Given the play’s apparent generic shortcomings as tragicomedy, others assume the play must be understood metaphorically, as political commentary on James’ reign and especially on the Spanish Match (Gasper Chapter 6). The play’s subplot deals with the intramural disputes among various malcontented courtiers and members of the royal family, with frequent, and often plausible, allusions to political figures and events throughout James’ reign. Topical commentary is also replete, for instance, in the king’s fable in which political power originally dispersed to all members of a community inhabited by a “lion, fox, and silly ass” is gradually usurped by the lion (1.4.28). Drawing on Aesop as well as Sidney’s “Ister Bank” in The Arcadia, this fable could readily be apprehended as a portrait of royal tyranny (Gasper 174-76). Assimilating the main plot to a larger political context is more problematic and requires a more sophisticated understanding of Jacobean politics and English common law. In addition to familiarity with Basilicon Doron and James’ frequent and well-known statements concerning royal versus parliamentary prerogative, such a metaphorical reading, according to Gasper, also relies on distinctions between private and public tyranny contained in Dekker’s Satiriomastix (1601) and publically debated throughout Jacobean literary and legal culture (178-83). The law students who regularly attended performances at the Cockpit would appreciate the play’s implicit legal contest and could easily understand this metaphorical dimension of the play. These aspects of the play enhance its appeal for the private theater
elites and it is likely that, as the title page advertises, the play was popular with the audience at the Cockpit.

But these elements are hardly integral to an interpretation of the play and are easily beyond the grasp of a Red Bull audience. As with several of the plays I discussed in previous chapters, it took something more to attentively engage and earn the approbation of the audience at the Red Bull. Although McLuskie does note the “conflict between citizen and aristocratic values,” little critical attention is given to the foregrounded representations of tradesmen and apprentices, the context of greatest interest to a Red Bull audience. Studies that concentrate on the play’s tragicomic aspects and geopolitical allusions—to the point of privileging the subplot over the main plot—treat the presence of the numerous “lower” characters as of incidental importance since they seemingly have no place in a critical agenda focused around the tastes and concerns of a Cockpit audience. Doing this, however, tends to disassociate this play from Dekker’s ouvre and anaesthetizes the social and political importance of citizens and their values, a frequent concern of the playwright.

When read from the perspective of the audience at the Red Bull, the play provides a coherent expression of the grievances of tradesmen and apprentices against their exploitation by those of higher social station.18 The main plot concentrates on the personal anxieties of a shoemaker, Cordolente, whose marriage to Tormiella is threatened by the efforts of her father, Malevento, to block the union in favor of his choice, Luke

18. The play asks to be understood in the tradition of earlier citizen favorites by Dekker and performed at the Fortune. Dekker evokes The Shoemaker’s Holiday (1598) through the occupation of the protagonist and frequent punning on “soles” as “soul.” The Roaring Girl (1611) is alluded to at 1.2.85.
Gazetto, a gallant clearly distinguished from the “commons,” as well as the King of Spain who would have Tormeilla for himself. Throughout this process, those characters of a higher station adopt an ensemble of allied strategies to exploit and possess their social inferiors. Both Tormiella and tradesmen like Cordolente are commodified by their betters who are less concerned with their expressed desires than their malleability as human property due to their relative positioning in the social hierarchy. Malevento’s servant, Bilbo, explains to his master that Cordolente has “stolen her,” words which initiate the plot to end Tormiella’s unsanctioned marriage and restore her to her rightful suitor Gazetto against her clearly expressed desires (1.2.101). The emergence of the King of Spain as a competitor for Tormiella entails a realignment in the terms of the exploitation as Gazetto and Malevento, who had previously conspired against Cordelente, are themselves relegated to a subordinate position. In words which address the marriage suits of both Cordelente and Gazetto, the King’s lady believes that “tis a pity / A citizen should have so fair a tree / Grow in his garden” (2.2.9-11). Both the King and his entourage, and Malevento and Gazetto, at different times, suggest that Tormiella’s emotions ought to be dictated by the fiscal economy. It is the province of social superiors to adjudicate the value of these “trees” and to use this valuation to apportion them accordingly. It’s not just Tormiella who is commodified here but Cordelente and his fellow tradesmen who are forced to recognize that their lack of wealth determines the relative value accorded to their marriage suits and other social prospects. Both also are able to accurately perceive their position in this economy. Speaking both for herself and for her husband who, by this time, “is [far] from home,” Tormiella recognizes that their lack of wealth effectively excludes
them from the debate concerning their own marriage: “I want skill / To trade in such commodities” (2.1.222-25).

The negotiations and elaborate orchestrations of the King, Malevento, and Gazetto to lay claim to Tormiella consistently and persuasively demystify the operation of justice in the interests of dominant social factions at the expense of common citizens. Without regard to the actual dynamics of the situation, those of higher station appropriate the terminology of juridical discourse in order to advance their interests, allowing Malevento to label Cordolente “a civil thief” (2.1.55), and the King to “spoil the spoiler” and claim Tormiella as “a lawful prize / That’s taken from pirates” (3.3.81-82). The audience soon realizes, however, that justice is a useful term applied randomly to various situations by powerful characters to protect their interests. Gazetto’s insistence that Tormiellia is rightly his and that his suit for her and plot against Cordelente is “justice” becomes a parody of the ethical imperatives that the law supposedly upholds when Gazetto “thanks vengeance” after persuading an officer to assist him in finding Cordolente (2.1.114, 131). The King utilizes similar tactics when he uses his role as the state sanctioned provider of justice to blatantly further his interests. Assured that he has full control of the judicial mechanisms of the state and that his “hand / . . .Can shake kingdoms down” (2.2.72-73), the King, as a matter of royal fiat, considers any affront to this authority bound to fail. His words to Tormellia display his single-mindedness:

    Thou beat’st thy self in pieces on a rock
    That shall forever ruin thee and thine,
    Thy husband and all opposites that dare
With us to cope, it shall not serve your turn

With your dim eyes to judge our beams (2.2.75-79).

Nor does the King need to fashion his aggression as the vengeance of a selfish monarch. He assures Tormellia that “I will not force thee against thy blood,” realizing that the mechanisms at his disposal allow him to achieve this prize through the legal system and other more covert and outwardly palatable means of persuasion. Tormellia, however, is not fooled and unmasks “the court [as] an enchanted tower / Wherein I am locked by force, and bound by spells” concocted by the king. Through this disparaging representation of the abuses of aristocratic and royal prerogative, a Red Bull audience of tradesmen and apprentices recognizes their disenfranchised place in the social hierarchy and their proscribed access to the judicial system that ostensibly works in the interest of all citizens.

But despite its bleak portrayal of the plight of the commons, the play’s ending is a site of emancipatory potential for Cordolente, Tormellia, and the Red Bull audience. As many commentators have noticed, this ending thwarts the generic expectations of tragedy (McLuskie 173; Gasper 181). This has allowed them to comfortably classify the play as a tragi-comedy in the Fletcherian model. I would argue, however, that the play subtly throttles tragicomic expectations as well. The King’s plan to possess Tormellia is eventually frustrated along with the plot on his life initiated by Don Pacheo and other disillusioned courtiers and Cordolente is happily reunited with his bride. This turn of events is not solely a product of “divine intervention” (Gasper 182), but comes about through the agency of Tormellia and Cordolente who are able to shrewdly foil the King’s
wicked intentions. Gestures are made to certain “charms of divinity” (5.4.11), but we are offered several indications that this heavenly munificence is a product of human resourcefulness. Unlike Bianca and Beatrice in Middleton’s *Women Beware Women* and *The Changeling* respectively, Tormiella rejects her royal suitor and actively conspires with her estranged husband for her release. Cordolente, for his part, does not resign himself to his fate but is willing to confront the king. In a stunning series of actions which display to the Red Bull audience feats of working-class ingenuity, Cordolente puts his profession to good use, using his shoemaker’s credentials to bypass the elaborate security measures the king has implemented in his palace and gain admittance to Tormiella’s chamber.

Recognizing that “the ant, / On his poor mole-hill [cannot] brave the elephant,” our shoemaker does not actively use force to resist the king, but bides his time and, in an unusual dramatic move, invests his bride with the agency to manoeuvre out of their predicament (4.4.48-49). Playing her part, Tormiella feigns madness and intends to kill the king if he continues to pursue her, vowing “by heaven, that night’s [i.e. their wedding night] his last.” These nuptials are represented by a dumb show in which “Cordolente steals in, . . . steps in rudely, breaks them off [while] Tormiella flies to his bosom” (5.3). In response, the king, realizing that his prize is unattainable, banishes the couple from the court, but reserves the most severe punishment for Gazetto who had participated in the plot to kill the king. The play, therefore, does function as a tragicomedy but in a way uniquely attuned to the sentiments of a Red Bull audience. These plebeians are encouraged to leave the play heartened, that despite the structural biases inherent in the
social and economic spheres, the system might indeed be manipulated to serve their interests.

The title page of Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* declares that, by its printing in 1632, the play "hath beene often acted at the Phoenix in Drury Lane, by the Queene's Majestie's Servants." Its rich satirical content and its generic resemblances to Fletcherian tragicomedy assure its private theater pedigree. Contemporaries, in fact, were so inclined to associate the two collaborative playwrights that they were buried in the same grave at St. Mary Ovary's in Southwark, as confirmed in a 1658 epitaph penned by Sir Aston Cockaigne: "In the same grave Fletcher was buried here / Lies the stage-poet Philip Massinger... So whom on earth nothing did part, beneath / Here (in their Fames) they lie" (Garrett 72). But additional evidence suggests that Massinger was equally at home with the parlance of citizens and apprentices, and that the play was also performed at the Red Bull. Although the original performance date is disputed and the lack of positive external evidence suggests that it is unlikely that it will ever be determined with any certainty, most commentators propose a date between 1621 and 1625 (Harbage 1964: 112-1319; Craik xi). During this period the Queen Anne's Men were in transition. Anna had died in 1619, and the exceptional circumstances attending the transfer of patronage, debt restructuring, lawsuits, and the move to the Cockpit, had split the troupe into what was essentially two allied companies, both under Beeston's management. Beeston now controlled Prince Charles' Men who he allocated to the Cockpit, as well as the Revels

19. Harbage speculates that the play was first performed by the Red Bull Company and only later played at the Phoenix by Queen Henrietta's Men, another Beeston concern.
Company (also known as the Red Bull company) who stayed on in Clerkenwell. There was significant overlap between the two companies. Perkins, Worth, and Cumber stayed behind at the Red Bull while the remaining sharer’s continued with Charles’ and later Queen Henrietta’s Men at the Cockpit in 1625. Perkins, in 1625, after a very brief stint with the King’s Men, appears on the lists of Queen Henrietta’s company along with other erstwhile members of Queen Anne’s Men (Gurr 326-27). Early comments on the play also indicate that some elites perceived the play as too pedestrian for the sensibilities of the Cockpit’s clientele. Abraham Wright’s manuscript preserves observations on and quotations from a number of plays staged at private theaters throughout the 1620s and 1630s. This collection, entitled Excerpta Quaedam (c. 1637) tends to evaluate these plays according to gentrified principles of structural unity, economy of character development, and linguistic artistry which were to become associated with restoration and neoclassical authors. Given these criteria, A New Way fares relatively poorly:

A silly play. The plot but ordinary which is the cheating of a usurer being the plot of a great many plays, at least a main passage in them. But for the lines they are very poor, no expressions, but only plain, downright relating of the matter; without any new dress either of language or fancy.

20. James McManaway surmises that the Excerpta may have been used for purposes of literary and dramatic instruction for his son, James, who became a restoration critic and satirist whose publications included The Humours and Conversations of the Town (1693), Country Conversations (1694) and Historia Histrionica (1699). According to McManaway, James was to use the assembled quotations and commentary for the purposes of imitation, and to familiarize him with the dramatic tastes of the days elite. The Excerpta is an important document because it is the only source of commentary, however biased, on a number of early modern plays themselves (as opposed to the theater more generally). It is preserved as British Library Mss. 22608.
That the play does not measure up to the strict demands of elite theatergoers may indicate that the play was not expressly designed for this audience at all. Wright's quibbles on its "silliness" and "downright relating of the matter...without dress" are the same features which would popularize the play and render it intelligible before a broader audience. Massinger's connections and collaborations indicate that he was certainly familiar with and adept at producing "refined" plays for private theater elites; that he chose not to utilize them in this play suggests that he may have had more than one audience in mind.

Massinger's satire then, if not a runaway success at either the Cockpit or the Red Bull, at least managed the protean appeal necessary to make it part of a solid, revenue-generating repertory at both theaters. Beaumont's *Knight of the Burning Pestle* demonstrated the dangers of satire, especially when one can't be certain that the social group being ridiculed doesn't make up a large portion of the audience. The possibilities for satirical representation, then, would seem to be rendered even more troublesome in a play presented before two widely different audiences where what's taken as uproarious satire at one house might be seen as an odious and insensitive attack on one's social identity at the other. *A New Way To Pay Old Debts* circumvents this impediment by singling out a target of nearly universal opprobrium: the money-lender. Sir Giles Overreach, even more than Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* whose vilification is partially dependent on his religious identity, is the quintessential usurer, who, like "Mammon" himself, professes "the art of undoing men"(3.1.33; 2.3.5-56), revels in foreclosure (2.3.4), and covets monopoly power whereby he will "have all men sellers, / and I the only purchaser" (2.2.32-33). Because of his wealth, Overreach can effectively
manipulate the flow of credit among the other characters in the play, and in this way, he exercises significant control over domestic and social relations. He abuses his capacity to lend money and enlists both the legal (Justice Greedy) and social (Marrall and Tapwell) apparatuses of communal authority to aid in the extortion of even more wealth and cultural capital, which, in turn, further solidifies his usurious position and perpetuates the indebtedness of those to whom he has lent. It is only when the rest of the play’s dramatis personae—of all social classes—triangulate around the usurer that they are able to bypass the credit crunch and exact their revenge on Overreach, who has heretofore blocked all attempts at social advancement and fiscal solvency. In the same way, audiences of all sorts identify with the financial exigencies that govern the character’s fortunes and become comfortably allied in maligning Overreach.

Reliance on credit and its manifold affects on interpersonal relations permeated all aspects of Jacobean society. From the plebeians frequenting an alehouse like Tapwell’s whose debts were recorded “in chalk” on a board (1.1.24), to landowners forced to mortgage their property at usurious rates at great risk of foreclosure whose economic and social status was effectively reduced to that of “the common borrower” (1.1.55), reliance on credit acted as the common denominator among rich and poor alike. Of course the expanded capital fluidity made possible by the open availability of credit when lending rates were fixed at 10% by the parliamentary debates of 1571 did contribute to a period of unprecedented economic expansion and democratization of wealth. Many Elizabethans of this era became caught up in a “mood of high aspiration” and, some argue, the expansion of credit made possible theatrical enterprise in the first place (Esler 79; Ingram 1999: 316).
But the pervasiveness of credit relations and the inevitability of indebtedness had profoundly negative social and psychological consequences as well. Theodore Leinwand suggests that, throughout the period, credit relations elicited an ensemble of affective responses to indebtedness, not least of which was fear and subsequent abhorrence toward creditors. For the poor, purchases made on credit increased their inveterate instability, especially amid periods of high price inflation. Similarly, many landowners sought to mortgage their property for reasons that ranged from making capital improvements (such as drainage or new buildings) to increase the value of their land to the necessity of providing sufficient dowries for their daughters. For them, forfeiture on these loans, recoverable at Chancery and usually due after a mere six months, meant losing property valued at several times that of the original amount of the advance (Leinwand 79-82).

Among the more serious social ramifications of widespread credit relations was the effect extensive borrowing and insolvency had on one’s reputation. Securing a loan, regardless of the amount, depended on the potential borrower’s trustworthiness as measured by lenders, friends, kin, and courts alike (Leinwand 43). Paradoxically, however, trustworthiness was generally predicated upon the ability to secure credit: insolvency meant the loss of one’s good name and, with this, the inability to secure the financial capital necessary to rehabilitate it. In *A New Way*, Wellborne’s deteriorating financial situation has cast him as a “son of infamy” and forced him to rely on “the fair fame” of Lady Alworth’s reputation to alleviate his financial straits (1.3.80, 93). When Tapwell berates Welborne because his “credit is not worth a token,” he refers both to his financial insolvency and to his diminished reputation that derived as the result of the
"foolish mortgages, statutes, and bonds" that were forfeit to Sir Giles (1.1.50, 54). Welborne, though well born with the triple-A credit rating that his title affords, has fallen victim to vice and poor money management and has lost his good name and, with it, access to the ready loans he had previously relied upon to support his prodigious habits.

Critics of the play have generally focused on the tension between the aristocracy and the nascent influence of the "new" monied classes not attached to inherited land; as Overreach himself puts it, "the strange antipathy / Between us, and true gentry (2.1.88-89). The play's resolution in favor of the "true gentry" illustrates Massinger's social conservatism and an affirmation of the traditional rights and privileges of a landed aristocracy over wealthy newcomers (P. Thompson 1956; Gross 1967; Neill 1979).

According to the prevailing narrative, it is a combination of Overreach's insatiable craving to join the ranks of the aristocracy and his subsequent exclusion due to the (justified) trickery of Welborne, Alworth, and Lovell that lead to his breakdown in the play's final act (Paster 1986: 171). But the imputation to Massinger of overriding aristocratic allegiances at the expense of the social pretensions of the middle class is only half the story. As Martin Butler points out, Overreach, and the ready cash he provides are as indispensable to the aristocracy as their land and gentility are to the fulfillment of his desire for social advancement (1995: 206-07). What really frustrates the play's titled aristocracy is the realization that they are as parasitical of Sir Giles' money as he is of their social

21. Later, Marrall uses the same logic in his attempts to persuade Welborne to commit suicide: "pray you hang yourself, / And presently, as you love your credit...If you not like hanging, drown yourself, take some course / For your reputation" (2.1.106-119, my emphasis).

22. Butler notes that Sir Giles' desire for inclusion in the traditional elite is so great that he demonstrates a clear propensity towards violence in achieving these goals (1994:125).
status; as Leinwand remarks, “there is no path around Overreach, only through him and his wealth” (1999: 88). This situation of mutual reliance and the recognized necessity of available credit would be especially resonant to an audience of social elites and pretenders at the Cockpit, all of whom were themselves intricately involved in the cash nexus.

The contempt for money lenders coupled with the forced recognition of their indispensability was by no means restricted to those of higher socio-economic stature. Poorer characters are no less immune from Overreach’s usury than Welborne and the Alworths. Tapwell, at the play’s outset, is on the make. From his humble beginnings as the “under-butler” at the Welborne estate, he has, with “some forty pounds or so, bought a small cottage, / . . .[and] gave entertainment” (1.1.60-62). Unlike Welborne, Tapwell has invested his money wisely:

The poor income

I glean’d from them [i.e. his customers], has made me in my parish,

Thought worthy to be a scavenger, and in time

May rise to be overseer of the poor (1.1.65-68).

To an audience of apprentices and common laborers, Tapwell’s modest social advancement would be regarded as a significant achievement, certainly worthy of emulation. Within the microcosm of society that existed within lowly parishes, the rank of overseer would be enough to command the respect and acclamation of one’s peers in the way that wealth and titles would in the larger kingdom. Tapwell’s success, however, is contingent upon Overreach and the £40 necessary to purchase the alehouse in the first place. This loan, moreover, entails an ongoing obligation to the creditor. We learn later
that it was not out of any particular malice to Welborne that he was “vomited out of
[Tapwell’s] alehouse,” but at the bidding of Sir Giles. Tapwell’s wife Froth asks


did not Master Marrall

(He has marr’d all I am sure) strictly command us

(On the pain of Sir Giles Overreach’ displeasure)

To turn the gentleman out of doors? (4.2.2-5)

Due their indebtedness, the prospects of the Tapwell family are made to follow closely
that of their financier; his fall leads to their undoing.

Similarly, the prospects of other lower characters are dictated by credit and their
positioning in the ebb and flow of capital. Furnace, Amble, Order, and Watchall are
servants in Lady Alworth’s household. Like Froth and Tapwell, these characters
recognize that all monetary transactions are subject to the oversight of Sir Giles. They are
implicated through their affiliation with the Alworths and realize that they too stand
indentured to Overreach:

Furnace: Of all the griping, extorting tyrants

I ever heard, or read of, I ne’er met

A match to Sir Giles Overreach.

Watchall: What will you take

To tell him so fellow Furnace?

Furnace: Just as much

As my throat is worth, for that would be the price on’t.

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. . . this Sir Giles feeds high, keeps many servants,

Who must at his command do any outrage;

Rich in his habit; vast in his expenses;

Yet he to admiration still increases

In wealth and lordships.

*Order:* He frightens men out of their estates,

And breaks through all law-nets, made to curb ill men,

As they were cobwebs. No man dares reprove him (2.2.101-16).

The mechanicals contemplate the bondage engendered by society's reliance on credit. Their conversation acutely reflects the anxiety of all those commoners whose financial circumstances are dependent on the shifting fortunes of their employers and their creditors. Such sentiments would resonate with a Red Bull audience, forced to partake in hardships resulting from asset mismanagement that they themselves have little or no control over. For them, the credit crunch had more serious—and more immediate—material consequences. Where a merchant or nobleman might be forced to surrender his reputation, property, or the ability to secure future loans, tradesmen and apprentices, reliant upon the financial stability of their employers and customers, stood to lose their livelihood and, with this, the ability to provide for themselves and their families. Given this play's presentation before financially stratified audiences, candid interchanges like this have strong possibilities for cross-fertilization among social classes. United in their disdain for the usurer, more affluent audiences at the Cockpit might sympathize with the plight of the
frequently exploited lower orders, while these plebeians, during honest and pitiable ruminations on fiscal duress by Welbome (1.1.176-85; 1.3.84-96), Alworth (3.1.58-98), and Lady Alworth (4.1.190-208), might come to recognize the humanity of their more affluent counterparts at the private houses.

The play’s resolution then, where all characters are extricated from their financial woes and all debts conveniently paid “in a new way,” might easily have been regarded as a fantasy by audiences at both the Cockpit and the Red Bull. The disengagement from the ongoing pressures of accreditation is made possible through the timely intervention of Lord Lovell. Lovell’s wealth and social status stand outside of the monetary circuit, engineered by Overreach, that dictates degrees of solvency and assigns reputation to the other characters: “that fair name, I in the wars have purchas’d / And all my actions [are] hitherto untainted” (3.1.38-39, my emphasis). As Leinwand notes, Lovell’s freedom from financial necessity could only be a longing phantasm for an audience burdened by debts of all sorts: “surely,” he argues, “it would have been more difficult to imagine an unfettered Jacobean nobleman than a creditor like Sir Giles Overreach” (88). Sir Giles becomes the scapegoat not only for the play’s financially burdened characters, but also for audiences who displace their latent aggressions onto this larger-than-life loanshark. Rather than a reification of aristocratic values, the play offers its auditors an escape from the pecuniary exigencies plaguing both the aristocratic and working classes. Repatriation of land and credit from the tyrannical adjudication of money lenders offers the key to new levels of social privilege and notoriety. Welbome claims that “I had a reputation, but ‘twas lost / In my loose courses remark; and ‘til I redeem it / Some noble way, I am only half made up”
(5.1.392-94). But despite the gesture towards an “honorable” reclamation of his “reputation,” he shrewdly concedes that this option is entirely predicated upon “repossession of my land / And payment of my debts” (5.1.390-91).

Unlike *Match Me in London*, the cross-demographic appeal of *A New Way* is not dependant upon a multilayered thematic structure, but on its ability to unify audiences on the basis of an admittedly meager set of shared circumstances. These two plays canvass the dramatic and generic mechanisms by which different plays achieve simultaneous appeal among socially divergent audiences. Of course, readings of the extant dramatic texts only go so far in demonstrating the protean nature of these plays. It’s likely that their staging at the two theaters augmented their appeal to particular audiences and that the actors, fully aware of their surroundings and the potential for increased revenue, played up the features that would work best at individual venues. Richard Perkins, for instance, became the leading man at the Cockpit, a feat which comments as much on his versatility as his acting abilities more generally (Gurr 1987: 177)

But while certain Red Bull plays have the ability to appeal to the Cockpit audience, the company made gestures to adjust their repertory to suit the tastes of their upmarket clientele. Webster’s *Devil’s Law-Case* (Q1623), “approvedly well acted by her majesty’s servants” in 1617, is a useful example (Brennan viii). Webster had a turbulent history with Queen Anne’s Men. *The White Devil* debuted at the Red Bull in 1612, but did not meet the widespread approbation the playwright desired. In the printed epistle to the reader, Webster blamed this failure on the fact that “it was acted in so dull a time of winter, presented in so open and black a theater, that it wanted a full and understanding
auditory” (ll.4-7). The weather may indeed have contributed to the play’s lackluster opening, but it’s difficult to imagine the elements regularly conspiring against a play that most certainly joined the company’s repertory and was performed on several occasions. A more pertinent clue is registered in the author’s disparagement of the Red Bull’s audience. His claim that the play lacked an “understanding auditory” suggests that Webster and the Queen’s Men overestimated the intelligence and attention span of the audience to understand and enjoy such a long play23 with an unusually intricate plot, dense courtly dialogue, and frequent use of Latin. From the tedious nature of the play itself and the author’s comments on it’s original staging, it should comes as no surprise that *The White Devil* is extremely anomalous in the company’s repertory during this period. These factors were clearly determinant in Webster’s decision to sell his next offering, *The Duchess of Malfi* (c.1614), to the King’s Men who performed it successfully at the Blackfriars (Gurr 1987: 177).

But by 1617 the theatrical landscape was changing. Queen Anne’s Men had abandoned the Red Bull for the Cockpit and wanted a new set of plays specifically designed for a private theater and more learned and sophisticated clientele. It would seem logical that the company would return to Webster to capitalize on his aptitude at writing for the hall playhouses and to pointedly differentiate their repertory from the standard Red Bull fare, as a gesture of allegiance to the Phoenix sophisticates. Reynolds argues that *The Devil’s Law-Case* had a place in the Red Bull repertory (21), but this does not

23. At 3,000 lines, the play is nearly as long as Q2 *Hamlet* and nearly 1,000 lines longer than typical Red Bull plays which average between 1,800-2,100 lines.
diminish the likelihood that it was commissioned for the Cockpit. Due to the Shrove Tuesday altercation, the company had no choice but to return to the Red Bull with plays in the Cockpit lineup, even if their chances for success at the old venue were not great.

That *The Devil's Law-Case* was perceived as private theater fare is confirmed by Abraham Wright's commentary in the *Excerpta*. That Webster's play is even mentioned in this compilation is significant since Wright tended to frequent only hall playhouses, displaying unqualified disdain for those presented outdoors in the amphitheaters, including Shakespeare's tragedies. Given this commentator's idiosyncratic and overly critical sensibilities, *The Devil's Law-Case* does passably well, outstripping *A New Way* as well as many works in the Beaumont and Fletcher canon. It's described as "but an indifferent play, the plot is intricate enough, but if scanned intricately enough will be found faulty, by reason many passages do either not hang together, or if they do it is so silly that no man can perceive them likely to be ever done" (fo. 69r). Wright disqualifies the play for its lack of adherence to the principles of mimetic realism that he prizes, but his strong valuation of the play's "intricate plot" places *The Devil's Law-Case* in an anomalous relation to both the traditional "drum and trumpet" plays at the Red Bull as well as the crossover plays that moved between the two venues. The play's detailed legal subject matter would clearly appeal to the upwardly mobile law students from nearby Lincoln's Inn who comprised a significant part of the new audience. The troupe was keen to capture this lucrative market segment away from the King's Men at the Blackfriars; explicitly staging the law and judicial discourse would seem an expedient way of attracting them.
AFTERWORD

i- History

The precipitous social consequences that attended the Queen Anne’s Men to Drury Lane aggravated the troupe’s recurring financial and legal difficulties. The queen consort’s death in 1619 left them without a patron, yet members of the company were present in the queen’s funeral procession as her servants and the company, largely intact, persevered as the Revel’s Company. The individual members of this troupe, however, fared significantly better than the corporate entity they previously served. Christopher Beeston, clearly more engaged with the business end of playing rather than its artistic aspects, moved on to Prince Charles’ Men and a successful career as an impresario, managing a number of troupes and overseeing the Cockpit on Drury Lane. Richard Perkins, with the death of Greene, became the leading actor in Charles’ Men, and proved one of the most popular performers of the 1620’s. Heywood, until his death in 1641, published a number of prose works and translations on extremely varied topics while, of course, contributing a “main finger” to over 220 plays. The Red Bull playhouse itself proved more resilient than its erstwhile occupants. The theater provided a venue for regular dramatic performances by the Revel’s company until its closure in 1640. Playing
returned to Clerkenwell during the restoration, however, and the Red Bull remained one of London’s only remaining outdoor playhouses until late in the century.¹

ii - Criticism

In tracing the reciprocal engagements of this company with greater London municipal authorities, their investors and other theatrical professionals, and their local Clerkenwell constituency, my investigation followed a no less byzantine course through a varied number of evidentiary contexts. Because of this, the project doesn’t fit comfortably within any of the scholarly genres currently in vogue for this type of study. Although I draw heavily on both approaches, my study is not, strictly speaking, theater history. Although I share the theater historian’s commitment to archival evidence, I was less reluctant to make substantive general claims about the theatrical economy and the plays themselves than many of that discipline’s current exemplars (see MacMillan and McLean 86-87). Nor is this project a cultural poetics of the London theater of the kind popular among new and neo-historicists of various stripes. Although I share these practitioners commitment to multiple levels of theoretical and historical analysis, I was more reticent than many to allow sometimes tenuous metaphorical connections between the plays and their cultural milieux to stand in for the actual market relations that conditioned this enterprise.²

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¹ The playhouse may have hosted the occasional illicit dramatic performance during the commonwealth (E.S. 2: 448)

² For examples of the latter, see Agnew 1986 who uses economic analogies to the theater to construct a “phenomenology of market experience” (1); Bruster 1992, where certain situations in various plays mirror different facets of early modern economic activity; and Leinwand 1999 who concentrates on the market’s ability to condition affective responses that are often embodied by characters in the plays.
My overriding consideration in merging these two methodologies has been a primary concentration on the material culture that pervaded both the supply side of cultural goods and services as well as the audience that consumed them. The plays, in this conception, are the material records of a cultural event within a specifically demarcated community comprised of individuals with a roughly coherent and homogeneous economic comportment and a correspondingly similar conceptual horizon. What matters, from this perspective, is not strictly the plays’ depictions of various characters and situations, but rather the ways in which these representations resonate with specific audiences. My readings of the plays, therefore, are registered not from a context provided by any single political, social, or ideological history of the period and its culture, but rather from the local perspective of a specific community, albeit one that is historically reconstructed from inconclusive and incomplete archival data, as well as from the interested perspective of a specific observer.

By synthesizing these two independently viable methodologies, I hope to have afforded a study of Queen Anne’s Men that satisfyingly merges their proceedings in the Jacobean theatrical marketplace with their dramaturgical style and the plays themselves. When these three salient aspects of the troupe’s life are considered together, the narrative that emerges from these mutually reinforcing levels of evidence suggests that this company’s relationship to its Clerkenwell community went beyond the economic habitation of ordinary firms to play a meaningful role in the social life of its inhabitants that engendered a cohesive and communal outlook on affairs as divergent as commercial ethics, Roman history, urban life, and religious politics.
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