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The Red Bull as Community Theatre in Clerkenwell

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Table of Contents

Abstract

Recent criticism has cast the suburban playhouses of Early Modern London as marginalised institutions, in at least a topographic if not a symbolic sense. This thesis will contend that marginality is a relative term, and that for the inhabitants of the suburb of Clerkenwell, the salient social function of the Red Bull theatre was not to serve the City as a site for licence, but to provide a neighbourhood space in which bonds of community could be formed. Arguing that theatres were built in particular locations not just to escape City prohibitions, but to draw on proximate audiences, I provide a brief history of Clerkenwell and place the Red Bull in its local context. By figuring the Red Bull, both in terms of its standard repertoire and its audience, as a prototypical "community theatre," I develop a sociology of dramatic production which understands this Early Modern theatre as a crucial nexus of local solidarity.

Résumé

Dernièrement, la critique a représenté les théâtres des banlieues de Londres à l'époque d'Élisabeth et de Jacques I[er] comme des institutions marginalisées, au sens topographique sinon symbolique. Cette dissertation propose que la marginalité est un terme relatif, et que pour les résidents de la banlieue de Clerkenwell la fonction sociale saillante du théâtre Red Bull n'était pas de servir comme un champ de licence pour la Ville, mais de fournir un lieu dans le quartier où des liens communautaires pouvaient être formés. En soutenant que les emplacements des théâtres furent choisis non seulement pour éviter les interdictions de la Ville, mais aussi pour profiter des spectateurs locaux, je présente une brève histoire de Clerkenwell afin de remettre le Red Bull dans son contexte. En figurant le Red Bull en fonction de son répertoire ainsi que ses spectateurs comme un prototype de théâtre communautaire, je développe une sociologie de la production dramatique qui envisage ce théâtre comme un point de convergence qui contribua à la solidarité du quartier.

Figures and Abbreviations

Figures

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in the thesis:

E.S.	Chambers, E.K. (1923) *The Elizabethan Stage*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 4 vols.
J.C.S.	Bentley, G.E. (1968) *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 7 vols.
M.C.R.	*Middlesex County Records*, J.C. Jeaffreson (ed). London: Middlesex County Records Society, 3 vols.

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First thanks are due to my thesis supervisor, Michael Bristol. The interdisciplinary approach which he has taken in his own work has provided a model of scholarship which I can only hope to emulate. Professor Kate Shaw's interested attention assured that my time spent at the Folger Shakespeare Library was as productive as could be; for my entire stay, it was my goal to be at work in the library before she arrived, although I am sad to say she always beat me there by a good minute. I'm also grateful for the good natured help of the librarians and staff at the Folger. In today's nomenclature, I really should be thanking Sandy Gornall as my partner rather than my girlfriend. I'm uncomfortable with the valences of that word--I feel I must stress that she is a *limited liability* partner. Her contributions, though, are many, not the least of which has been her repeated insistence (much to my dismay) that puffing up the font size is *not* in fact the best way to speed a thesis to conclusion. Chris Holmes read portions of Chapter 1 and provided many useful suggestions; Mark Bayer had the gall to finish his thesis well in advance of mine, ensuring that the thought of him relaxing for the remainder of the summer would spur me on to completion.

Introduction

Thomas Nashe, writing in 1592, disparaged "your lay chronographers, that write of nothing but mayors and sheriffs, and the dear year, and the great frost." Nashe's negative evaluation was directed specifically toward writers such as Stow who, in Nashe's estimation, were unable to endow their patrons' names with "never dated glory" (92). A similar complaint can be made, some four hundred years after the fact, of professional chroniclers' recent writing on the Early Modern Period, although not for the reasons which Nashe gives. The turn from formalism toward a renewed interest in the historical situatedness of literary texts has been salutary in Renaissance studies. However, the New Historicism (after Foucault) has often obsessively focussed on the operations of power, understood as a ubiquitous presence which permeates every aspect of social life, as the critical determinant of history--a power wielded by mayors and sheriffs, and even more importantly by the monarchy and aristocracy.

Many of these analyses, through their rhetoric of "subversion and containment" and "marginality," focus the operations of power into a monolithic entity, and in doing so frame the constituency of this power as spatially contained and delimited. Steven Mullaney argues the strong form of this case in *The Place of the Stage*, writing that "the popular drama situated itself neither at the heart of *the community* nor even within it" and that "the margins of the city served as a more ambivalent staging ground [than the city itself]; as a place where the contradictions of *the community*, its incontinent hopes and fears, were prominently and dramatically set on stage" (1988: 8,22; emphasis added). By

Mullaney's reckoning, the salient community is bounded by the walls of the City of London and the Thames; any act undertaken outside of those boundary markers is marginal to the community, in a topographic if not necessarily a symbolic sense. This account has become widely accepted and influential, anthologized in the most popular overview of the Elizabethan and Jacobean stages (exclusive of Shakespeare) which takes into account the impact of the New Historicism and Cultural Materialism on Early Modern Drama studies (Kastan and Stallybrass 1991). It is now a critical commonplace to remark on the physical context in which the drama was received, and rightly so: by paying heed to the place of the stage, we are much better able to understand the conditions of that drama's production. Certainly Mullaney is correct in his assertion that the drama was not understood by its contemporaries as of such signal import to its society as has often been the case in later apprehensions of it, and the inclusion in his analysis of documentary evidence drawn from diverse sources enables a more nuanced understanding of dramatic production than a hermetic formalist account of "the text itself." Yet by giving pride of place to certain types of extratextual evidence, Mullaney and other New Historicists articulate a master discourse of homogeneous power and replicate in different terms traditional understandings of Early Modern society (Dutton 1992: 222). Thick description provides a substantial account of domination and subordination, as the tropes deployed in multiform texts relate to and confirm each other.

Central to Mullaney's argument is the fact that the Elizabethan and Jacobean public theatre was forced to take up institutional residence outside the City of London

proper. Unquestionable as this fact may be, it does not necessarily support the claim that the theatre was "marginal" in any sense other than topographic, and even then only as looked at from the position of London as the privileged vantage point. Quite simply, one person's margin is another's centre, and the location of the theatres need only be read as marginal from a certain point of view. Indeed, as Simon Shepherd has pointed out, Mullaney substitutes allegory for argument in order to extrapolate from geographical to cultural marginality: "[t]he supposedly ritual and symbolic character of the early modern city licenses a move whereby every fragment of its social history may be read as a poetic image" (1996: 109). This thesis will ask whether the most salient social function of the suburban playhouses was their capacity to serve the (conflicting) interests of the City in a handmaiden role (as either an "ambivalent staging ground" or "safety valve"), or if they could instead function as prototypical "community theatres," responding to issues of local importance in the extramural neighbourhoods in which they were placed, or providing a social space in which bonds of community could be formed. I will argue that suburban popular theatres could serve, as a significant part of an ensemble of cultural practices (including the guild system and labour relations, religious institutions, and legal/juridical procedures), to maintain or create a sense of community in their audiences and, with this communal solidarity, a possible source of political power. Through a close focus on the immediate physical and social context of the Red Bull theatre, I will attempt to articulate a sociology of that theatre's audience as a means of developing a sociology of dramatic production.

Before moving to a detailed consideration of the Red Bull theatre and what I take to be its community, in the sense of a spatially delimited area, it is necessary to look at some influential applications of the concept of "community" in recent studies of Early Modern drama. The first chapter engages with apprehensions of community in the criticism of F.R. Leavis, C.L. Barber, and Steven Mullaney, among others. Chapter Two, "These Are the People In Your Neighbourhood," examines structures of geographic loyalties in Early Modern London and posits a connection between residential areas and theatre audiences. Arguing that theatres were built in particular locations not just to escape City prohibitions, but to draw on ready made local audiences, I provide a brief history of the suburb of Clerkenwell where the Red Bull theatre was located, and place the history of that institution in its local context. The third chapter will explore the politics of two important genres on the Early Modern stage, satire and what I will call sentimentalism. Horace argues in the *Ars Poetica* that the satirist should be "useful to the city" (*utilis urbi*). While the satiric vision of the private theatre is often valued as providing an avant-garde drama and critique of society, I will argue that on the Jacobean stage satire usually manifested itself as an exclusionary genre. The attitude towards the malfeasant in satire is diametrically opposed to the approach taken in sentimental drama. The positive normative statement of satire is expulsion (the "bad guys" are vanquished or ridiculed), whereas in sentimentalism wrong-doers are reintegrated into a community which finds strength in numbers. By contrasting the different visions of community formation offered by satiric and sentimental humour, the private stage's pessimistic

estimate of the viability of social redemption will be juxtaposed with the optimism of the public stage. The conclusion, "An Audience of Actors," considers the possible ways in which the audience of The Red Bull used the theatrical event as an occasion to engage in popular sociability. I first consider some examples of how the audience of the Red Bull was figured in contemporary prologues, epilogues, and addresses to the reader. By making reference to the audience and their particular habits, playwrights engaged in community fashioning. By way of an engagement with the larger debate over agency versus structuration, I draw on the work in social psychology of the Symbolic Interactionist school and consider the ways in which the audience of the Red Bull could themselves use the theatrical event as an occasion to engage in popular sociability and to forge identities within the context of a larger group, a concretized community mediating between the "individual" and "society."

While throughout I have tried to keep my own opinions as little to myself as is possible or perhaps even prudent, the overarching purpose of my engagements which previous theorists of community and the early modern stage has not been to initiate the kind of critical head-butting suggested by the false etymology of "satire" as deriving from "satyr." Without exception I have found that the critics discussed in Chapter One have had valuable and suggestive contributions to make to a continuing project of apprehending the social context of Early Modern drama at its most immediate level, in terms of its reception by its initial audiences. If in fact this thesis tries to act as a corrective (as the tradition of satire does) to certain influential accounts of community and the Early Modern

stage, the chapters should rather be understood as Horace conceived his early works: as *sermones*--conversations or "little chats" which attempt to enter into dialogue with other voices in what is an important debate. Or, as I think it necessary to my aims to pursue a strategy which does not rely on close readings of dramatic texts to make its points--the usual "meat" of literary scholarship--but instead creates an imaginative framework by which to rethink Early Modern theatre in terms of its communal functions, the thesis offers satire in the sense of a *lanx satura*, a "full platter" of mixed fruit and nuts (or, in this case, demographics, social psychology, philosophies of humour, and traditional genre criticism, among other dainties) which I hope can be every bit as filling, and perhaps even easier to digest.

Chapter One: Apprehensions of Community in Early Modern Drama

"Community" as an interpretive category has been most forcefully deployed among the adherents of what I will call the "Merry Olde England" thesis, in particular E.M.W. Tillyard and T.S. Eliot, in their fantasy projection of a lost Elizabethan utopia where an almost universal consensus existed which recognized the necessity of submission to hierarchical authority, both human and divine. F.R. Leavis, the most influential progenitor of this thesis, decried the loss of such an "organic community" in modern times: ". . . what we have to consider is the fact that the organic community is gone; it has so nearly disappeared from memory that to make anyone, however educated, realize what it was is commonly a difficult undertaking" (1933: 87). The positions of Eliot, Leavis and Tillyard have been roundly criticized as examples of both bad historiography and bad politics (the two go hand in hand in many accounts); for several years during the early 90s I was convinced that landing blows to their prognathous theory was the most valuable skill to cultivate in landing myself a job--became quite good at it too. Going after the bad old boys has become a stock gesture amounting to a ritual thrashing, and as is often the case with rituals, we may have forgotten what was originally at stake. Many of the critiques levelled against the concept of the Elizabethan World Picture or the "organic community" are correct in their apprehension that inculcating a sense of deference to hierarchical authority as a governing principle of social life tends to serve the best interests of those at the upper reaches of society. Raymond Williams launched the first comprehensive critique of this type of intellectual revanchism in *The Country and the City* (1973: esp. 9-45),

arguing that constructions of a lost Elizabethan golden age are seriously flawed by historical inaccuracy (as documentary evidence is adduced which demonstrates that in the understanding of Elizabethan authors the golden age had already passed, and so on in an almost infinite regress) and naïve in their nostalgic longing for a lost utopia, "a well known habit of using the past, the 'good old days,' as a stick to beat the present" (12), in contrast with Williams' future-oriented politics. It is unquestionable that such positions are nostalgic, but it is less clear why nostalgia is figured as an incompetent mode of understanding the present. Nostalgia represents a longing for an instauration of real or perceived goods from the past into the present, and as such provides an avenue for a discourse of the future which uses easily apprehensible and efficacious terms. It is more productive to recognize the real force of the old historicist argument as a 'critical theory,' aiming at the reconstruction of the present according to a selective model of history (Bristol 1990: 146).

By arguing that at least one suburban amphitheatre could have function as a prototypical community theatre, I do not mean to imply that it acted as a prop in the service or maintenance of Leavis's organic community, nor do I take as a starting point Mullaney's crucial use of the term in *The Place of the Stage*. Central to his argument is the contention that the suburban liberties of London functioned as liminal spaces or margins which were free to comment on the story which the City told to and about itself. Arguing with Foucault that in the Early Modern world power was what was *seen* or visibly manifested, Mullaney figures London as a "ceremonial city," defined and propelled

by rites of initiation, celebration and exclusion (10). In both royal and civic processions, authority theatrically staged itself to an eager audience or community. What was unwanted or perceived as threatening to the community was ceremoniously shoved aside, exiled to the outskirts of the City. London's streets and buildings concretize civic ideology and function as "commonplaces" both topographically and ideologically, and the signs inscribed by ritual progressions furnish a text or memory theatre which are read by their observers: "[t]he group that could read the emblematic or ceremonial city--that was defined and maintained by a ritual play which took all the city for its stage--was, of course, the urban community itself" (14). The evident problem here is the idea that a community *was* formed and/or maintained by the ritual and symbolic actions of the progresses. Spectatorship--especially by nonpaying observers--does not necessarily imply consent to the values propagated by the performance, and the progresses are better understood as the celebrations of an empowered faction of society displaying visually their domination of economic life. Terrence Hawkes argues that theatrical comedy, alongside Carnival, is essentially a participatory form in that the audience's interaction brings to fruition the humour (or lack thereof) by proffering or withholding laughter, not "a given spectacle which we passively *watch*, but a "second life" which we *construct*, by actively taking part in it"; drama's oral mode provides "a model for, and emblem of, a 'good', participating, creating society, in the face of a 'bad', passive, inert society of consumer-spectators" (1991: 171-72). I do not entirely share the faith in the emancipatory potential of Carnival that Hawkes does in this particular essay, but his point regarding the opposed poles of

passive recipient and active participant is an important one. The extent to which the majority of London's population, excluded from playing a role in its political life, identified with or gave assent to the stories told about the City is very much debatable. Recent studies in cognitive mapping have demonstrated that the lower on the social scale one is, the less likely one is to have an apprehension of the "city" as a crucial point of identification. Varieties of experience differ within the city according to social status; because upper and middle class residents typically have a greater range of social contacts and better access to transportation, their composite understanding of the urban environment will tend to encompass a wider area, both topographically and ideologically, than that of lower income residents for whom the "city" may consist of only a few blocks immediately adjacent to their homes where everyday business is transacted (Hurm 1991: 67-69; Orleans 1973). Mullaney reifies the city and assumes that its symbolic representation is equivalent for all of its residents, taking the perceptions of one class as representative of the population at large.

By equating the suburban Liberties of London with textual as well as geographic margins, Mullaney positions the cultural activities of the Liberties at a privileged vantage point from which they can comment on the uniform text of the City which stands as synecdoche for the entire social order of Early Modern England: "popular drama in England emerged as a cultural institution only by materially embodying that contradiction [between Court license and City prohibition], dislocating itself from the strict confines of the social order and taking up a place on the margins of society" (8). Ultimately Mullaney

wants to conflate the intramural City with the entire social order in order to appropriate for the Early Modern stage the critical distance from ideology (understood as being produced through material practices such as royal and civic processions) which Althusser gives to literature--a product of ideology which nonetheless is able to reveal its contradictions, in the world but not of it (Althusser 1971: 221-227). The task of the literary critic can then be to expose the limits of the social order or ideology. *The Place of the Stage* reveals a powerful wish for the academic to act in the way in which Mullaney sees the Early Modern stage as acting. During the Reagan and Bush years academia found itself continually on the defensive (a situation from which it has yet to recover), but Mullaney wants to reassure his readers that if disciplines such as his own are on the outside looking in then so much the better for them; like the exiled Early Modern theatre, they can remain "ideologically mobile . . . a marginal but by no means superfluous form of theatre" (30).

"Community" as understood in *The Place of the Stage* stands, in the end, for the constituency of hegemonic ideology. Mullaney posits a crisis in the ability of civic ideology to control its wards (in both relevant senses) as immigrants streamed into the City and its suburbs "to take advantage of the anonymity the city offered and to escape from the rigid traditional structures which the city itself had once served to embody" (19). There are some serious problems with this formulation, not the least of which is the idea that the urban environment either offered or was desired as an anonymous refuge for its immigrants. Such a view betrays a certain perspective on the city which is by no means

universal; rather, it springs from an interested viewpoint whose origins can be located in the outlook of a particular class: anonymity, reserve and indifference are most likely to be poses affected by those who, from a relatively secure social position, can afford to adopt this response (Hurm 1991: 57). Aside from a few isolated cases, immigrants to the City and its rapidly expanding suburbs were seeking to secure a livelihood in an expanding economy and fleeing dearth at home rather than forming an emergent counterculture of conscientious objectors rejecting their small town upbringing and congregating in an Early Modern Haight-Ashbury. Mullaney understands the inhabitants of the Liberties in the same terms which were often deployed by critics of London's growth--moral misfits, rogues and sturdy beggars indulging in license and the free play of signifiers. The signal role of the Liberties in his account was to provide a safe haven within striking distance of the property and ideology of the city's good burghers, "places of sanctuary and incontinent pleasure, of license and extravagant liberty" (41) which he situates within "the larger symbolic economy of Elizabethan and Jacobean England" (x).

Rather than subsuming the Liberties of London into an overall symbolic economy, I want to examine the way that the Red Bull functioned within the actual economy of its extramural locale. The Liberties *did*, of course, provide sites of relative safety from prosecution by civic authorities (although they fell under other jurisdictions), and brothels, bear-baiting arenas, bowling lanes and playhouses obtained to a much greater extent than within the City proper. More importantly though, for my purposes, the Liberties were composed of working men and women who were unlikely to comprehend their daily lives

or their immediate physical surroundings in the terms in which Mullaney understands them. The manorial Liberties which comprised Southwark (which, as the location of the Globe, is central to Mullaney's account) contained one-tenth of the overall population of London by 1600, and was the second largest urban centre in England (after intramural London), its population exceeding that of Norwich by some four thousand (Boulton 1987: 20-21). One in ten could hardly be rogues and sturdy beggars, even if they were understood in these terms by anxious civic authorities; for the majority of the inhabitants of London's Liberties, their extramural parishes and neighbourhoods provided not places of incontinent pleasure, but rather the context for daily life.

C.L. Barber understands "community" in terms quite different than Mullaney: in *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* the community is a group of people representing a cross-section of society who voluntarily gather together in face-to-face symbolic interchanges, most importantly holidays. While there is a degree of final coerciveness in this sense of community, the exchanges are undertaken freely as means to a social good. At times "community" appears to stand for the entire social order, but it is in fact only one possible way of being-in-the-world; in contrast to the celebratory communal pursuits stands the atomistic individual (or the 'bourgeois subject' in more recent terms) who is the building block of the larger abstraction of "society." During holiday games (such as festivals of Misrule), the participants critique or step outside of social structures for a bounded period of time. The reintegration which ideally occurs after the rules of the game have been broken does not have to be understood as a manipulative gesture by a community set on

arbitrarily curtailing individual freedom--rather, such a drive towards reintegration can express a deeply felt collective desire to see the individual survive and thrive according to the best experience of the group (Williams 1961: 86). Barber anticipates Victor Turner's discussion of *communitas* as a ludic scene which negotiates social structures through face-to-face exchanges and stands in contrast, rather than active opposition, to the larger social order (1982: 50-51). My understanding of "community" differs substantially from both Barber's and Turner's, although it is indebted to both. Crucial to their accounts is the idea that community acts as a mediator between the individual and a larger disciplinary order, providing a means to recognize oneself as part of the social structure, but also as having local and not necessarily congruous needs and affiliations. What is ultimately encompassed by Turner's notion of *communitas* is more difficult to grasp; his most privileged form, "spontaneous communitas," has an distinctive ring of the mystical to it and functions as a space demarcated from daily life.

In the terms of this thesis, "community" is understood as a crucial context in which everyday transactions, economic as well as symbolic, take place. The social order is an abstract totality, while community is more easily apprehensible as the nexus in which social life is shaped. Understanding the social order as the product of a hegemonic ideology leads to the debilitating dichotomy of the individual and society, or rather the desiring individual versus a society whose will to power places strong fetters on its subject's wants. Resistance then devolves into a series of anarchic gestures by non-subscribers to what is figured as an almost universal normative consensus. Community,

though, implies membership rather than subjection--or to use the older sense of the term *individual* as detailed by Williams in *Keywords*, the individual is inseparable from a larger group in which she has her social being. As one's sense of belonging to a coherent group increases, so to does her ability to recognize that group's collective desires as in a profound sense her own. In its simplest sense, a community means a group that has something in common. This definition does tend to water down the sense of the word so that it is practically meaningless and we're back to the community as the larger social order, facing the same problems encountered by many critics with the use of "ideology"--if it means everything, it means nothing at all (Pechter 1991: esp.89-94). Some communities are spuriously formed and represent particular interests as universal goods within the group, although the degree to which imposed ideas of community are actually subscribed to is debatable. An individual has to be able to participate in the institutions of collective life to be a member of a community in any real sense. A freeman of London, or a male property holder, would be able to see himself as part of a civic or national community in a way that a domestic servant or an itinerant labourer would not intuit (although they could be persuaded that such a community does in fact represent them). Communities can be composed of individuals brought together through different means--ties of kinship, place, or interest can shape constituencies whose member's interests coincide to some extent. Communities of interest represent those who are united by a common activity or pursuit (train-spotting, birdwatching or goaltending) and who are able to understand each other through the terms of their interests, although they may and often do conflict on many

other issues. They are not necessarily confined spatially--access to communication technologies enables communities of interest to form over a wide geographic area.

Assuming that one's place of residence is not arrived at accidentally, but that there is a certain amount of choice involved, geographic communities (delimitable, local environments) can furnish a context for collective participation and an understanding of one's role in a transitional space between the individual and larger society. Even when the physical environment is not determined by choice, a sense of community in one's local surroundings can be strongly felt; in fact, those too poor, too young or too elderly to undertake a move will often feel the strongest set of attachments to their immediate environs, as economic constraints limit their day-to-day sphere of action to a circumscribed area. The terms in which we describe the relative merits of different types of social living ("small town values" as opposed to "big city life") refer to ideal ways of communal living and articulate deeply held beliefs about social goods (Hummon 1990: esp.167-183). Geographic communities have to share features of communities of interest to function in any meaningful sense--near neighbours must recognize common interests based on location among each other which may differ from the interests of larger society (either the city, regional territory or country). The concept of the geographic community as a community of interest has been most fully articulated over the last thirty years in the context of a urban based left-wing politics, particularly in the United States. Rhetoric to the contrary aside, America is not a classless society, although this idea has been widely subscribed to among groups whose best interests as I understand them are undermined by

such obfuscation. An ideal of subscription to larger communities of interest, drawn along geographic lines such as the nation state, is fostered in a spurious attempt to gloss over real social divisions and homogenize political life. In the case of the United States during the Cold War years such policies, expressed in the levelling rhetoric of the "melting pot" society, proved quite effective in discrediting class as an operative term in American political and cultural life. The carrot of theoretically unlimited social mobility within the *true* classless society (the United States as opposed to the Soviet Union) is held out as representing the zenith of personal freedom--the exceptional individual can always transcend the circumstances of his or her birth. Facing seemingly insurmountable odds in bringing the working class together as a force on the national level, the left strategically exploited the incongruity between an ideally homogeneous society and the heterogeneity of living conditions in the urban environment. The spatial discipline enforced in the segregated city, which concretely manifests the fact of capitalist inequality, provided an expedient means to bring class back onto the table, reformulating it in terms of neighbourhood or community. Marx, too, often struggled with the problems posed by urbanization. While in one sense he felt that the concentration of manufacturing in urban centres was an advancement in "rescuing" the bulk of the population from the parochialism of rural life, the conditions fostered in working-class slums were to be deplored. Nonetheless, the argument could plausibly be made that the concentration of capital and its attendant concentration of productive forces was necessary for the

proletariat to recognize itself as a class (1846: 185-86; 1848: 11-12). Thus urbanization, and capitalism more generally, could be affirmed historically as it was decried morally.

I do not mean to suggest that the Early Modern drama performed at the Red Bull fostered a sense of class-consciousness in the modern sense among its audience; most historians argue that this concept is anachronous to the period (Sharpe 1985: 120-3; Wrightson 1986). However, in my formulation, community-consciousness is prerequisite to class-consciousness. Understanding that one's social life is imbricated in larger structures need not be reason for despair--what is at issue is the degree to which one's community really does represent the best interests of its constituents. Locally defined, "parochial" neighbourhoods may provide more fruitful opportunities for membership and participation in collective life than subscription to a broader corporate base. Of course, we should be given pause by the apparent similarity of the previous statement to much of the rhetoric being espoused by a right-wing neoconservative agenda. I am emphatically not arguing the desirability of a radically reduced role for federal governments by nostalgically positing a happy band of Clerkenwellers independent of all larger structures of authority. Such a rhetoric of communities of location has been forcefully mobilized by the right in Canada, particularly the Reform Party, which has been singularly effective in persuading their power base that the Western provinces have distinct interests which are not represented in Ottawa. By their account, the West's best interests are served by a decentralization of power and an allocation of communal goods at the provincial rather than the federal level. However, behind their strong talk of community and common

purpose lies their real agenda--devolving responsibility for economic survival upon the individual alone (or to the traditionally understood nuclear family). The distinction is between what Ferdinand Tönnies understood as the dichotomy of *Gemeinschaft* or community (which stresses a high degree of economic and social interdependence) and *Gesellschaft* or atomistic society in which individuals relate to each other as such, primarily to advance their own economic interests. While I won't say that this isn't an appropriate context to argue the fundamental mean-spiritedness of the neoconservative agenda, I don't want to belabour the point much further. Simply put, I draw a strong distinction between genuine communities which recognize the value of an equitable distribution of common goods (whether on a local or national level) and bogus communities and their political representatives which present the self-serving interests of a powerful minority as good for all. By encouraging strictly individual initiative as the bedrock of society, the right serves the interest of capital, or those who benefit from interest--creditors rather than debtors. Dismantling collective means of support for the unemployed or underemployed benefits those who purchase labour power to produce surplus value for their own pockets by driving down the cost of labour.

I've put the moral before the story to indicate what is at stake in contemporary debates about community. To what degree, though, is the concept applicable to the Early Modern world, and is there any present application of community that does not use the rhetoric of shared social good to put the interests of the few before those of the many? After all, the "communities" most reported in the media are what are called the business

and financial communities. In a sense, these communities function in much the same way as Mullaney's idea of community--as propagators of ideologies of self-interest which come to be recognized as commonplaces. Michael Keefer argues that the terms through which the encroachment of corporate agendas masquerading as disinterested interventions into the public sphere are articulated have been precisely reversed:

> We now speak of a "business community," as though to suggest that the working lives of corporate executives are a ceaseless round of social club meetings, minor league baseball games, and bake sales. . . . On the other hand, insofar as the people who used to make up the larger community are in any way organized, they are now labelled "special interest groups". . . . In this manner the valences have been reversed, and the positive value of "community" has been transferred to corporate cultures that in many ways represent a negation of established community practices and values. (1996: 81)

Whatever kind of local, face-to-face empathetic interchanges undertaken outside a nexus of pure profit may have obtained at some point in the past, it is often argued they have no correlative in the present. Ian R. Stewart, a professor in the Department of City and Regional Planning at Cornell, argues strongly that the local urban community (or neighbourhood), understood as "a social group with shared objectives, common attitudes, a high degree of political consensus, and presumably a high happiness quotient" is a myth rather than reality (1976: 6). Perhaps Stewart is setting the bar a little high, but his

essential point that such communities are no longer a part of daily life seems plausible enough. He argues that what come to be called communities are better understood as issue sets in which people coalesce in episodic, temporary groups organized around a particular concern of interest to the group. Geographic mobility, facilitated by successive innovations in transportation technology, has made it impossible for long-term groups to cohere for long enough periods to form a sense of true community as he understands it. Thus Stewart pushes back the moment of community to an earlier date, although he does not specify when its golden years were. Recent commentators on Early Modern history have shown the same tendency to push back into an unspecified past the ideal moment of integrated communities. In large part, the arguments over the merits or shortcomings of "community" as an appropriate conceptual term to theorize past societies is tied into the debate over the historic moment when the modern individual, understood not as in-dividable from a larger group but as the unique and irreducible building block of society, heroically stepped onto the stage. The emergence of this solitary figure is often understood as concomitant with the development of capitalist means of production, and while many accounts are correct in stressing the importance of the transition from feudalism to capitalism as an epochal shift in the way that economic and social life was ordered, the eagerness of specialists in specific historical periods to stake out their claim to have this transition definitively take place within their parameters leads to certain types of evidence being ignored to prove a larger point--communal interactions are subsumed to the larger society of individuals. The shift from communal relations--which can be

hierarchical and deferential (as in feudalism)--to a society of individuals free to sell their labour power is presented as *fait accompli*, whether understood as resulting from a radical break or a long and protracted process. Alan MacFarlane presents the case for a drawn-out transition from feudalism to capitalism, arguing that by the thirteenth century geographic mobility in England had so disrupted traditional tight-knit local communities as to make the concept essentially anachronistic, even at such an early date (1987: 13). As subsistence farmers left exhausted or unfruitful communal ground, they soon found that the only thing they had to survive on was putting their labour power to work for someone else. Thus, an emergent capitalism created the conditions for its own flourishing by uprooting the peasantry (although MacFarlane argues the inappropriateness of that term), leaving people nothing to survive upon but the beneficence of a newly formed employer class. MacFarlane further warns that while evidence of local, tight-knit communities may be found in the past, they are essentially the construction of a particular methodology on the part of the researcher who treats them *a priori* as the foundational locus of social life by ignoring contradictory evidence of allegiances on the part of their members to overlapping spheres of interest (1977a).

I will return to MacFarlane's persuasive critique of the community studies approach; of more particular concern, though, is Michael Bristol's account of Shakespeare's stage in *Big Time Shakespeare*. It is the great merit of Bristol's work to place the Early Modern drama firmly within the practical rather than the symbolic economy of London. By placing the theatre at the centre of a newly emerging cultural

industry, which has important continuities with our own, Bristol neatly adjudicates the debate between more traditionally formalist accounts of the drama which tended to stress cultural unity as enabling artistic unity, and recent oppositional critiques which insist on the persistence of irreconcilable contradictions evident in Early Modern society and reflected in its texts. The commercial theatre of London was a product of a larger historic process in which cultural events were being divorced from their place within the "ritual year" (Hutton 1994: esp. 49-68) and forced to find a place in a less certain market economy. Bristol notes that in this emergent market-oriented culture industry, a certain amount of disposable income replaces membership in or affiliation with some type of community (whether the village, guild or religious organization) as the prerequisite to participation in cultural life (1996: 37). Making the theatre a desirable commodity, then, which could provide a repository for the disposable income and leisure time of Londoners provides a far more plausible motive for shareholders and actors in the theatrical companies than do any aspirations towards creating self-consciously artistic products or pursuing defined political agendas (33). Bristol's hard-headed practicality is refreshing, and I am clearly in sympathy with his argument in the main, but I would not draw such a clear line between the three motives for playing--they can relate without mutual contradiction. The conservative values expressed in Hollywood pictures such as those of Arnold Schwartzenegger or Chuck Norris fulfill the principals' expectations of earning a living, quite possibly represent artistic achievements in their terms and in the terms of the audience (who will vociferously deny, and quite rightly so, that such films do not fulfill the

criteria of art--they do, after all, teach, move and delight), and advance a political agenda. To a certain degree, of course, advancing a specific agenda or meeting expectations of artistic achievement may be what could be clumsily termed "buy-products" of the driving motive for theatrical practitioners of securing a living. In other words, meeting criteria other than that of achieving financial success may be entirely accidental or a happy result--in that the audiences' demands are fulfilled--rather than an aim. Thus, Bristol admirably relates the superstructure to the base--although I don't think he'd put it quite that way--and in a sense, arguments which insist on a particular market as the driving force behind artistic production are often treated as base, inappropriate in their reduction of high artistic seriousness to the quotidian intent of earning a living. However, the "supply-side" of culture, which comprises the first frame of *Big Time Shakespeare's* diptych, needs to be related more fully to the "demand-side" of the audience.

Bristol figures this audience as a tough sell, neither united in their aims or purposes nor in agreement as to what kind of theatrical commodity they would expect for their money. Composed of a wide variety of deracinated individuals, many of whom had recently migrated to London and left more traditional communities behind in the countryside, the audience of the popular theatres comprised "a shifting and anonymous public rather than a community" (50), and could be most profitably addressed by a drama which played its cards close to its chest and recognized the heterogeneity of its spectators. Thus, the alleged universality of Shakespeare's plays, their polysemantic and multivocal character, can be best understood neither in terms of a self-conscious artistic decision on

their author's behalf nor as evidencing proto-poststructuralist plurality, but as a product of the competing demands of a wide variety of conflicting public tastes. Bristol's argument carries a good deal of force, and the assertion that economic motives and the need to please a broad cross-section of the theatre-going public played a substantial role in shaping the work of the King's Men is a salutary corrective to accounts which downplay or altogether ignore practical economies in favour of symbolic interchanges. However, while I agree that the audience of the popular theatre *in general* did not represent a meaningful community, obviously I am at pains to argue that the audience of a *particular* theatre did. As a way of making the transition between the previous conceptions of Early Modern community and the particular sense that I give it in this thesis, I would like to indulge in a slight breach of decorum and bring a later argument in *Big Time Shakespeare* which I find particularly fruitful to my approach to bear on Bristol's earlier discussion of the theatrical audience. Bristol argues, *pace* Seyla Benhabib and Charles Taylor, that communal contexts are crucial to subject formation, and that membership in some form of collective association is the *sine qua non* for making sense of cultural goods (144). This argument is not deployed in a context directly related to my own point about community identification, but it is certainly worth considering here. The audience of the Red Bull theatre was not homogeneous (certainly not as homogeneous as I would have *liked* it to be) but was composed of a wide variety of individuals from varying backgrounds: some were born in London, some were first generation immigrants; religious affiliations varied; and a gap in occupational status and income obtained among its members. They were, in a sense,

members of divergent subcultures, and thus perhaps a more heterogeneous auditory than would be expected of an audience for what I want to call community theatre, which suggests a certain degree of unity. Returning to Bristol's point about the opportunistic character of Shakespeare's plays and their strategies of forestalling ideological closure as a means of pleasing a broad and disunited audience, would it be fair to argue that a different type of play which articulates a much greater sense of the existence of absolute values and strongly denies relativism might also indicate an audience more united in convictions? It's a small beer argument, to be sure, although I think that it hints at the kind of potential evidence which can be adduced to support the contention that the audience of the Red Bull constituted a community in a profound and important sense. The strong didacticism and unambiguity of many of that theatre's plays show a dramatic practice which aimed both to teach the audience moral standards, and to delight the already schooled by showing the triumph of a certain way of conducting oneself in society. As Chapter Three will argue, however, sententiousness on the Red Bull stage did not manifest itself in the form of satire, but rather in the genre of what I will call sentimentality. Before considering idealized representations of community in the opposed genres of satire and sentiment, I will develop an account of the concretized community which surrounded the Red Bull theatre.

Chapter Two: "These Are the People in Your Neighbourhood"

The advertising technologies of modern capitalism have proven singularly effective, both in persuading consumers to grant their products an audience and in creating a desire among consumers to be a part of a specific audience. Material goods such as running shoes are obviously valued for more than their purported use; the sense of belonging to something larger than oneself is actively promoted in advertising as a desired "buy-product." Personal identities are fashioned by the choices of material goods made and the way in which those goods are coded and read by their spectators. Blue jeans, for example, are *still* valued as a marker of individuality, although their ubiquitousness would strongly argue that such coding is inappropriate. Nonetheless, individuality is for the most part signalled by membership in a larger collective ("*we* are individuals") rather than by unique gestures of dissent (walking down a New York street in one's pyjamas, say) which are commonly read as a threatening individuality if not madness. Enjoyment of cultural goods can be understood along the same general lines. While individual, inarticulable pleasures derived from cultural products undeniably account for a good deal of their appeal, much of the meaning and value of live theatrical or cinematic experiences specifically (and in a different manner the ostensibly private pleasures of solitary reading) are educed by the social act of attending a certain type of performance or film in a certain context. Why do we choose certain cultural products over others? In large part, such choices are made irrespective of the semantic content of the text; we go because people with whom we wish to identify are also attending (or plan to, or already have) or because

we wish to identify ourselves as a certain type of person. Thus we can accumulate cultural capital which we can then invest in social relationships. While the markets for cinema addressed by intensive media saturation may be geographically diverse in a broad sense (in that a target sector is identified which is more or less equally distributed across a continent or indeed the planet), locally contingent strategies remain essential tools to reach a desired audience. John Ellis remarks that cinema in suburban or rural areas "tends to perform a different function [from that in urban areas] where most of the audience is acquainted with each other. Here the entertainment is related to particular characteristics of individuals or the place itself. The film comes from the outside, the cinema belongs to the particular place" (1982: 27). While the individual audience members of theatres in the geographically extensive suburbs of North America are unlikely to know each and every one of their fellow cinema goers either intimately or casually, a high degree of homogeneity in taste is often correctly assumed by marketers. Which is as much as to say that place is not value neutral, and is in fact a crucial context for self-formation through daily practices, material and cultural. We are situated selves not only by means of our lives lived through our subject position in discourses of race, class, gender or sexuality, but by virtue of where we *actually* live and our attitudes towards our locality.

The immediate physical surroundings of dramatic performances can, by the meanings coded in them, impact on interpretive strategies in ways that were not necessarily foreseen by their authors, but which can be shrewdly mobilized by specific productions. A staging of *King Lear* in a decaying inner-city area might choose to stress

certain thematic concerns such as the "loop'd and windowed raggedness" of "houseless poverty," while a production performed in a walled retirement community may offer filial ingratitude as its most salient motif. Even when the company does not specifically try to integrate the contingent built environment of the theatre into an overall artistic plan, the meanings articulated through the text cannot be entirely exhausted on the confines of a placeless stage. The performance event encapsulates more than the "two hours traffic" of the stage; it spills out into the traffic of the street following the production, by which it was also framed before the performance proper was underway. Two of the most influential theoreticians and practitioners of modern "community theatre" have stressed the dialectic between context and performance: John McGrath highlights the way in which the performance text is but one aspect of the overall theatrical production, dependent on "elements of the language of the theatre beyond the text . . . notably the choice of venue, audience, performers, and the relation between audience and performer" (1981: 7); Richard Schechner takes this idea a step further and collapses the inside/outside dialectic of the performance event into a larger idea of performance understood as "the whole constellation of events . . . that take place in/among performers and audience from the time the first spectator enters the *field* of performance--the *precinct* where the theatre takes place--to the time the last spectator leaves" (1988: 39; emphasis added). Schechner wants to leave "field" and "precinct" indeterminate; the theatrical event is about more than what transpires on the stage. Central to both their theatrical practices, and indeed to practitioners of what has widely become known under the rubric of "community theatre,"

is an ideal of orchestrating performance events which direct their energies towards "tailor making performances for *known* communities [with hopes to] change those audiences in some way, however marginal" (Kershaw 1992: 3). Baz Kershaw's *The Politics of Performance: Radical Theatre as Cultural Intervention* provides the most lucid account of modern community theatre practices; as the title indicates, he is primarily concerned with productions which attempt to move the politics of their audience in a progressive direction. I do not think that revolutionizing the politics of their audience was a prime consideration for the players at the Red Bull. Instead of wanting to *change* their audience, the company would much rather *charge* them (as we shall see, the impresario Christopher Beeston was motivated by financial considerations to uproot his company from the Red Bull to the newly built Cockpit playhouse, to the great consternation of the Red Bull's *habitues*). At any rate, too close of an analogy between what I consider the proto-community theatre of the Red Bull and community theatre practices today (widely varied in themselves) is bound to break down under the pressures of historical difference. However, if the purpose of radicalizing the audience was superseded by the more pressing need on behalf of the players of making a living, the second concern could not be realized without taking into account the needs and desires of the theatre's constituency. By arguing the case that the Red Bull functioned as an Early Modern type of community theatre, I will to some extent bracket off conscious intent on behalf of the players and focus more closely on possible audience use.

John Cocke, in a Theophrastan character sketch of "The Common Player" (1615), highlights the reliance of actors upon their audience: ". . . howsoever hee pretends to have a royall Master or Mistress, his wages and dependance prove him to be the servant of the people" (qtd. in Gurr 1980: 80). Yet who were the people who acted as the functioning patrons of the drama? Were they a homogeneous mass of spectators interchangeable among the theatres, or did they make distinctions as to the type of drama they were willing to support? Obviously a division obtained between the types of audiences present at the costly indoor theatres and those who habitually attended the public theatres. Were the public theatres, though, indiscriminately chosen among, or did individual theatres cater to known audiences? Where did these audiences come from, and what made them choose one theatre over another? McGrath comments on modern community theatre that "it can contribute to a definition, a revaluation of a people or section of society, can add to the richness and diversity of that identity" (qtd. in Kershaw 1992: 7). The proposed identity of the Red Bull theatre audience is the topic of the following section.

Eliot, Leavis and Tillyard, apologists for Early Modern community discussed in the Introduction, posited stable, tight-knit local settlements as constitutive of overall societal unity. The loss of such communities in the modern world, by their account, was to be deplored as indicative of a fragmented society divided against itself. As I argued in the Introduction, this view is an interpretation coloured by a certain class perspective, and by no means a value-neutral fact. A broad consensus has developed in urban studies which highlights the crucial uses that communities of locality are put to in fulfilling material and

cultural needs (Davis and Herbert 1993: esp. 8-27; Ahlbrandt 1984; Wireman 1984). In Early Modern London, units smaller than the city provided the crucial nexus for social life and self identification. In 1712, Joseph Addison argued the social heterogeneity of the capital: London was more like "an Aggregate of various Nations distinguished from each other by their respective customs, Manners & Interests" (qtd. in Burke 1985: 33) than a unified city sharing a common culture. The evidentiary probity of an "if so then, how much more so before" argument is, of course, limited; perhaps Addison was identifying a relatively recent break-up of urban consensus. However, in the period under consideration in this thesis, there is good evidence to support the contention that people were much more likely to identify themselves as belonging to a particular neighbourhood or parish rather than with the City understood in its totality. Early Modern London was a socially and spatially heterogeneous city: structural economic inequality manifested itself in built urban forms and neighbourhoods, though not by any means to the extent found in the modern North American segregated "ring cities" of Baltimore and Chicago, for example. Pageants, civic holidays and processions stressed an ideal of urban integration, but the reality of daily life for most inhabitants of Early Modern London was lived locally. No urban neighbourhoods could claim economic self sufficiency, but most consumer goods were manufactured, sold and purchased in one's immediate environs. While the wealthier members of society may have affiliated themselves with larger corporate bodies as Aldermen of the City or Justices of the Peace in the suburban counties, the locus of identification with a geographic community which is sustained by membership in its

institutions for most Londoners (both intra and extra mural) was in neighbourhood communities or parishes. MacFarlane (1977a) argues that increased geographic mobility, starting around the thirteenth century, had disrupted ties to particular localities; this is also the view of Mullaney, who wants to posit an ideology of the city imposed upon a shifting and anonymous public, and the negotiation and disruption of that ideology in the extramural suburbs. Recent studies, though, have persuasively critiqued the characterization of Early Modern London as marked by extreme local mobility. Jeremy Boulton has provided the two of the finest studies of neighbourhood cohesion in the period. He argues that while *residential* mobility was a common experience (as householders moved up or down the economic ladder), for the most part this mobility was restricted to movement within a parish or to one adjacent (1987a). Work was generally carried out in one's neighbourhood, reputations for craftsmanship or good service were hard earned local gains, and credit was generally extended on a personal rather than an institutional basis.

The middling and substantial residents of a parish could identify with the institutions of local government as functioning members (as vestry clerks, churchwardens, or rate assessors); economic ties to a particular neighbourhood would encourage sets of strong local attachments. The poor, for their part, would identify with local communities for economic reasons as well. Relief for the poor in Early Modern England was allocated at the level of the parish (Slack 1988: 113-37), with certain provisoes. One's birth parish was obliged in theory to provide support; however, many parishes fell short of this ideal in

practice, especially in rural areas. Migration to London seemed the only option left to the indigent, but when they arrived in the city they were often to find conditions every bit as hard as those that they had fled. No city wide system of poor relief was available to them, and aside from begging in the streets if work could not be found, the best option was to reside in one parish for a period of three years' time to qualify for relief. Such a system did provoke tensions between the pensioner poor of the parish and new arrivals (Archer 1991: 87) which could tend to erode a sense of harmonious community; at the same time, however, administration of the poor law at the parochial level aided a level of local identification by providing a set of tropes with which the poor could negotiate relief (Knowles 1993: 160). As the structures and institutions of church government provided a set of resources for their community, so too did ideals of Christian practice: the parish church was to provide the context for a community united by prayer. This ideal could be easily realized in theory if not practice in the much smaller intramural parishes, although the small size of many of the parishes would also work against the formation of strong parochial loyalties as people would be much less likely to maintain all of their contacts within such a small area. Guild organizations, looser occupational subcultures and religious fraternities would offer alternative communities of interest, although in many cases occupational groups would coalesce in particular neighbourhoods (Clark and Slack 1976: 142). Much popular sociability took place on the street and through shop windows, reputations were common property, and gossip was strong. Behaviour was constantly being evaluated within the neighbourhood, and the distinction between public and private

spaces was much less pronounced (Archer 1991: 77-78). While material property in private dwellings was protected by law, reputations for upright or unseemly conduct in one's own house were given by the neighbourhood; the community of location functioned as a community of interested parties. Print advertising was for the most part non-existent and denied to the illiterate, and no useful street map of the capital was produced until 1676 (Boulton 1987b: 231). The effects of restricted availability of transportation, a city for the most part unfamiliar in its entirety to its inhabitants, occupational solidarity, and the structural encouragements of the Poor Law to remain resident in a particular parish combined to produce strong sets of attachments to local communities.

What kind of community of location was the Red Bull theatre located in? Was there a high degree of neighbourhood solidarity, or was Clerkenwell marked by a greater sense of (sub)urban anomie due to the pressures of expansion? One gambit in writing community studies is falling prey to the temptation of reducing the size of the sample to furnish more conclusive proof of group cohesion (Hatt 1946: 423-27); for what it's worth, my examples have been drawn from within the arbitrary bounds of the parish encircling the theatre, St. James Clerkenwell. Alan MacFarlane writes that "community studies tend to be more like novels or works of art than objective works of a supposedly rigorous 'social science' (1977b: 21); his point is well taken. In what follows, I sketch a brief portrait of the suburban context of the theatre drawn from diverse sources. The view of the Swan's stage by DeWitt remains our only available contemporary glimpse of the inside of an Early Modern theatre, providing valuable detail although ultimately raising more questions than

it answers. Nonetheless, it remains an important piece of evidence for the immediate physical context of the drama. What follows is more suggestive than conclusive of the neighbourhood context of Early Modern theatre, a sketch with many of the details to be imaginatively supplied. Early Modern sources are either inaccessible or lost to time; London's suburbs, caught between the city and the country, tend (with the notable exception of Boulton's specialized work on the Bankside) to fall outside the purview of modern researchers.

Clerkenwell had a long history of theatrical performances before the Red Bull Inn at the upper end of St. John's street was converted into a full time theatre in 1604; it derived its name from the distinction it gained as the site of the annual mystery cycles organized by the parish clerks of London. These plays apparently attracted audiences from all over London and provided opportunities for participation by a broad section of the public. While the "point of view of the cycles was that of the lower and middle free peasants and the urban artisan" (Weimann 1978: 60), the event of the mystery cycle occasioned a coming together of a wide spectrum of London society. The broad public support which the mystery cycles received provoked controversy, however. A sermon preached in the adjacent parish of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields inveighed against the resources spent upon dramatic entertainments to the detriment of community charity:

> So this myraclis pleyinge is verie witnesse of mennus averice and coveytise byfore, that is maumetrie as seith the apostle, for that they shulden spendyn upon the nedis of ther neyeboris, thei spenden upon pleyis, and peyen ther

> rente and ther dette thei wolen gruchhe, and to spende two so myche upon ther pley thei wolen nothing gruchhe. (qtd. in Pinks 1880: 4)

The discretionary spending of money on plays when one's neighbours were in distress often provoked a reaction from the pulpit--this is perhaps the earliest example among many. (As we shall see, the parish of the Red Bull would find creative ways to reconcile the two). Clerkenwell was also integrated into the cultural life of the City proper through yearly wrestling matches sponsored by the Lord Mayor which took place around the time of Bartholomew Fair: the elite of the City repaired to the open spaces of Clerkenwell to watch several days worth of martial contests staged by "all men in the suburbs" (Stow 1598: 95). These wrestling matches continued until at least 1598, although in a truncated form: "the wrestling is only practised on Bartholomew's day in the afternoon." While little information of use is available regarding the early history of Clerkenwell, what there is suggests that it was largely a bucolic countryside retreat from the crowding of the city, a veritable verisimilitude of Merry Old England.

The neighbourhood was changing, though. While precise early figures are unavailable and no population history of the parish exists at present, by my calculations (Figure 1) Clerkenwell experienced a massive population growth *circa* 1570-1610. A word, first, on the means used to derive the numbers for Figure 1. By consulting the register of baptisms for St. James, tallying yearly totals and multiplying them by the estimated birth rate (of 40/1000) a very rough and ready estimate of population can

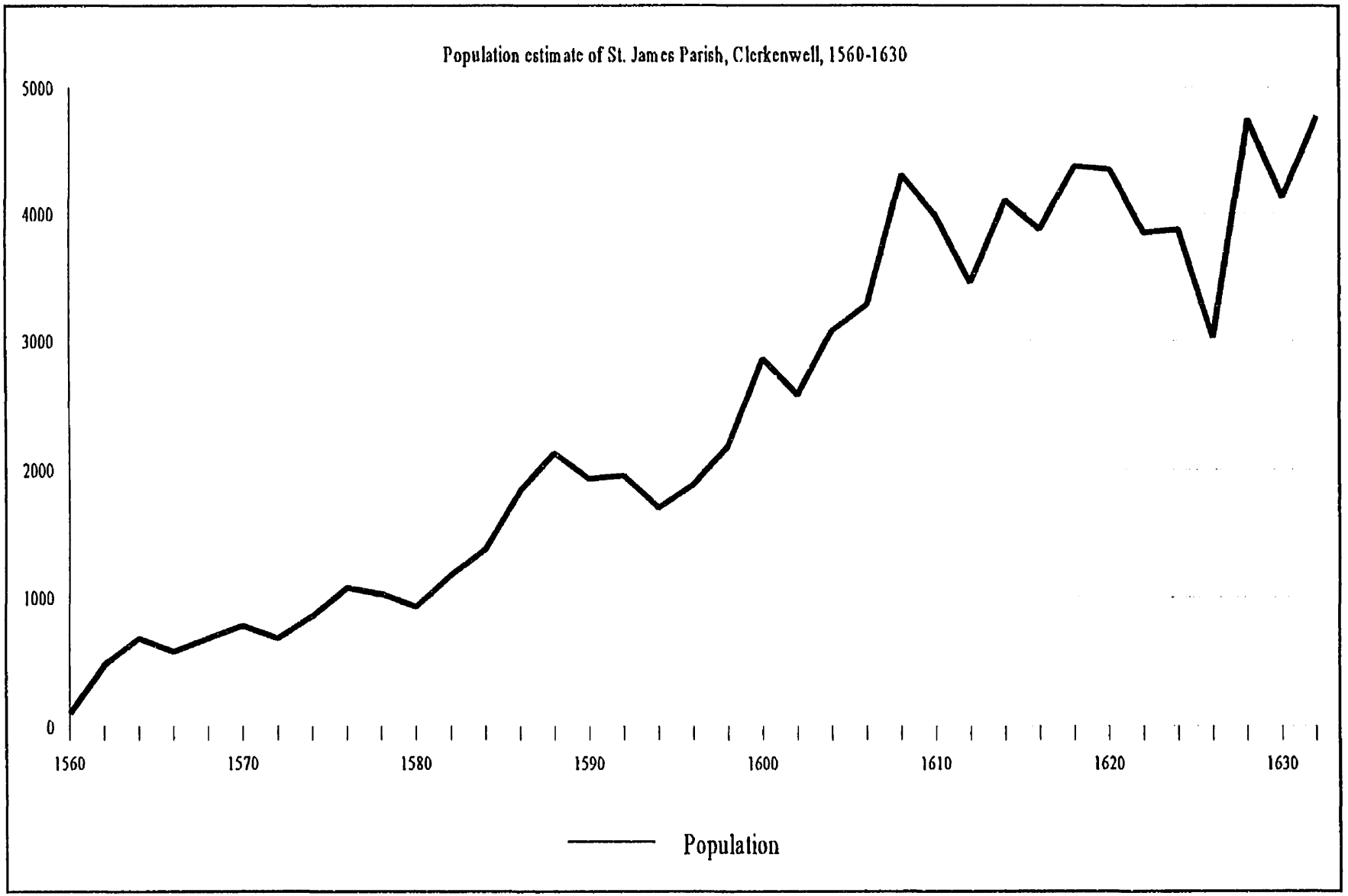
Population estimate of St. James Parish, Clerkenwell, 1560-1630
5000
4000
3000
2000
1000
0
1560
1570
1580
1590
1600
1610
1620
1630
Population

Figure 1

be established (the technique is described in detail in MacFarlane 1977a: 165). This figure should be taken as a low estimate, as it does not fully take into account the immigrants from around England who usually settled in suburban areas (usually the northern suburbs) and who may well have remained childless; the numbers may be a good deal higher. What is evident from Figure 1 is that the population of Clerkenwell more than tripled between 1560 and 1603, and had quadrupled by 1610, compared to the slower rate of growth enjoyed by the four parishes of Southwark, which increased by approximately 2.5x, from 8,055 to 19,173, in the period between 1547 and 1631 (Boulton 1987b: 19). What is important to keep in mind is the population base close at hand to the theatres of extramural London. Topographic representations such as Braun and Hogenberg's *Civitates Orbis Terrarum* (Figure 2), often reprinted as aids to spatializing the place of the stage in introductions to Early Modern drama, present a flawed picture of the residential density of Jacobean London. This is not surprising, as most of the maps reprinted date from the 1570s when population growth in the suburbs had not reached the explosive stage it later would. However, these views taken literally as representations of the local context of the stage prove misleading in that they suggest theatres surrounded by open fields with no contingent audience. The theatre would then appear literally marginal to the city, in a borderland space devoted to incontinent liberties. Douglas Bruster's *Drama and the Market in the Age of Shakespeare* provides a powerful account of how the theatres functioned in the material economy of London, arguing that the theatres took up residence in the suburbs for reasons of "economic exigency" due to the land available in the fields

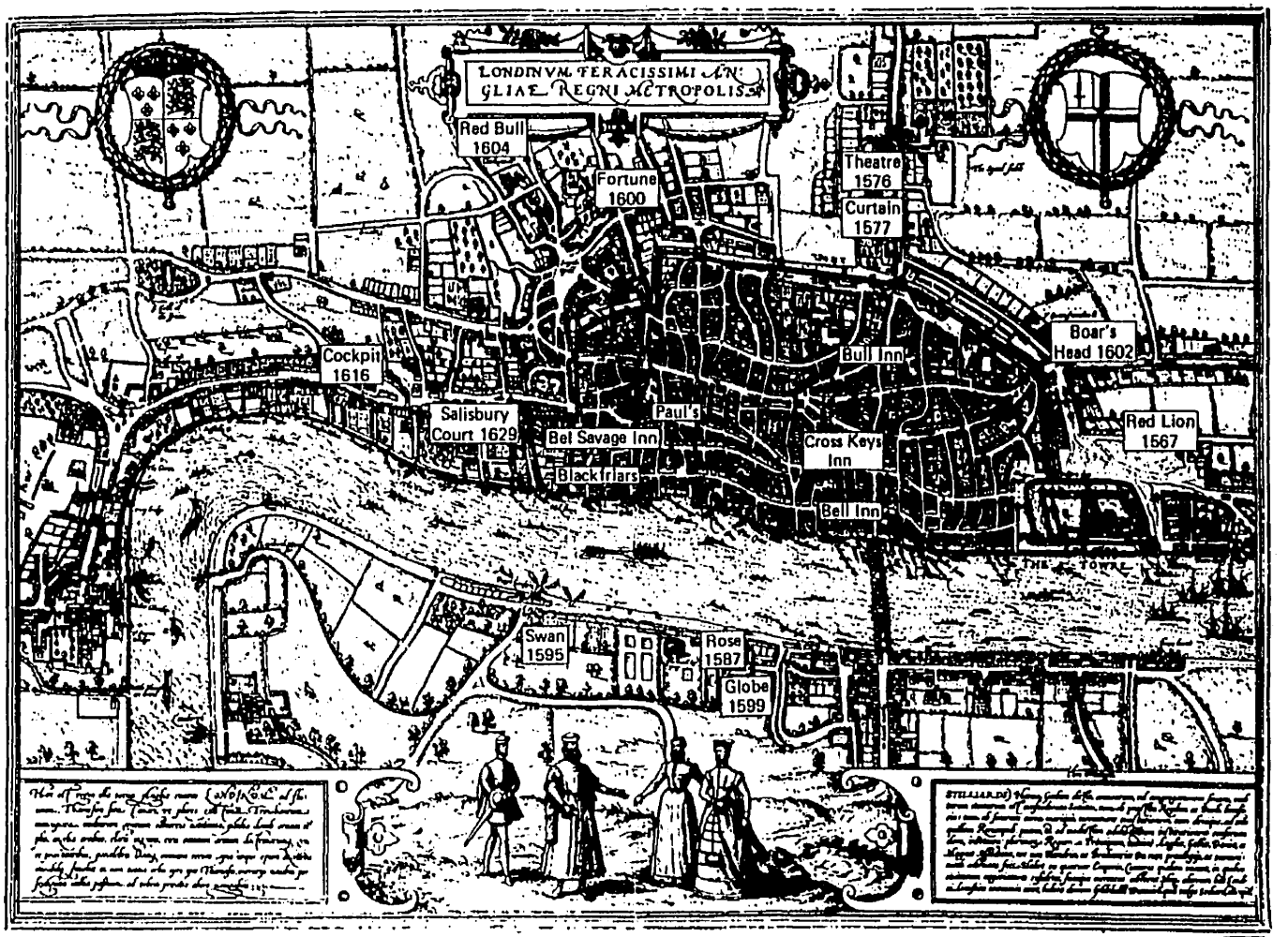

Figure 2: the locations of the playhouses of Early Modern London
Reprinted from Gurr 1989: 14

and Liberties which "many of the detail maps and engravings of Elizabethan London and its environs indicate" (1992: 27). Bruster, while concerned to investigate the role of London's material *contra* symbolic economies, and arguing against apprehensions of the Early Modern stage as marginal, to some degree perpetuates the "city/suburb" distinction which he tries to collapse elsewhere. He is correct in asserting that social and economic segregation was not necessarily mirrored by spatial segregation, yet he does not nuance his account with detailed information as to when or where such a process did occur, as it certainly did to a much greater extent in the northern suburbs than in those on the Southbank.

Clerkenwell, a booming suburb demographically, was not one of London's economic powerhouses. Again, figures are hard to come by, and what is available is suggestive of Clerkenwell's economic standing though not conclusive. The adjacent parishes of St. Giles Cripplegate and St. Sepulchre were among the poorer of London, unable to internally generate relief for the resident poor and in receipt of aid from other parishes (Archer 1991: 150-55). The ratio of tenement dwellers to householders in St. Giles Cripplegate, indicative in large part of financial well-being or its lack, was an astonishing one hundred and seventy to one (derived from figures in Finlay 1981: 171). Finlay's numbers are from 1638, and cannot be taken as firm evidence of the situation obtaining when the Red Bull was converted over from an inn into a full time theatre in 1604, although they do indicate the culmination of residential trends which originated years earlier. In 1615, the Justices of the Peace for Middlesex County convened for the

purpose of assessing contributions throughout the Hundred of Osulton towards the construction of a new House of Corrections. Rates appear to have been levied based on a combination of population base and economic well-being, wards with small populations but high financial solvency, such as Holborn to the west contributing £48 to Clerkenwell's £25 (*M.C.R.*: 2:103-104). Other wards, such as Shoreditch, contributed even less (£12), suggestive of a small population, economic scarcity, or a combination of the two.

I mention Shoreditch because it was there that the first purpose built theatres of Early Modern London found their home. Burbage's Theatre (1576-1599) was closely followed by the Curtain (1577-1610) in an area conducive to recreational uses. The Theatre, though, moved to Southwark, although its structure was in fine repair (its timbers being used to build the Globe); The Curtain fell into disuse and eventually closed. It was available to Queen Anne's company, as was the Boar's Head to the south-east, and these two theatres provided them with temporary homes; *circa* 1604 the Curtain was mentioned as "there now usuall Howsen," and they occasionally played there until 1610, when they abandoned that theatre altogether for the Red Bull (*E.S.* 2: 230-31). For one reason or another, Shoreditch no longer proved amenable to theatrical performances. The rate assessed to Shoreditch for the building of the House of Corrections may provide us with a hint as to why. New building was concentrating to the west, providing employment and accommodation for the local populations around the Fortune (1600) and the Red Bull (1604-5). Beginning in 1573 and continuing well into the reign of Charles I, royal proclamations continuously attempted to curtail the construction of new tenements in

Clerkenwell, although the frequency of their efforts suggests that they went largely unheeded (Pinks 1880: 11-12; James 1935: 69-104). The playhouses on the Southbank took advantage of a growing local population and the relatively short distance by water across the river from the Inns of Court and other concentrations of what Ann Jennalie Cook calls London's "privileged playgoers." Her article, "The Audience of Shakespeare's Plays: A Reconsideration" (1974), convincingly refutes Alfred Harbage's demographic evidence which concluded that the Globe served "predominantly a working class audience" because of "the great numerical superiority of the working classes in the London area and because theatrical tariffs had been designed largely for them" (1941: 90). Cook's demographic evidence is more compelling than Harbage's, to be sure, and much more detailed than mine. Yet in *The Privileged Playgoers of Shakespeare's London* she too readily translates evidence of the mixed audience of the Globe to the Red Bull, arguing that the "plebeian" reputation which it gained in the literature of the day derived from "a difference in the quality of the plays and the status of the players" which was wrongly "equated with a difference in the quality and the status of the audience" (1981: 266). An evident problem with her argument revolves around the assumption that Red Bull plays were of lower "quality" than those of the Globe; they were certainly different in *style*, and were commonly figured in contemporary literature as of limited artistic value. If, however, the plays of the Red Bull earned this dubious distinction, why did the theatre continue to be patronized, remaining in continuous use for a longer period of time than any other Early Modern playhouse? That the same audience who would attend the Globe

would also frequent the Red Bull seems unlikely, especially if that theatre's plays were widely acknowledged among London's educated elite to be qualitatively inferior. Accepting the terms of Cook's argument for the moment, if the same type of audience members, socially heterogeneous though mostly standing "firmly apart from the mass of society" (272) by the benefits of education or economic status, who went to the Globe also took in plays at The Red Bull, what factors would figure in their choice of one over the other? Geographic proximity is the most likely explanation, I think.

We know that some theatres attracted a geographically mobile clientele. The watermen of the Thames ferried well-off customers across the river to the Southbank playhouses, and Blackfriars drew an elite crowd from a wide area, evidenced by the novel problem of traffic jams (*J.C.S* 1: 4-5). But getting the word out about a performance was more than likely a local affair. Playbills could not have been uniformly distributed around the city, and the other advertising technologies available were restricted in their reach: the flags on the Southbank theatres signalling performance would be visible across the river, mitigating against the possibility of making the trip for naught, but the flag of the Red Bull would be obscured from all vantage points in London excepting perhaps the spire of St. Paul's; trumpets summoning people to the theatre would only be audible locally. For an audience of "privileged playgoers" to have provided the greater share of the Red Bull's business, assuming that theatre's plays were designed to appeal to this audience yet came up short in quality, The Red Bull would have had to be more conveniently located to the centres of London's economic elite than the Globe, the other Southbank playhouses, or

the private theatres of Blackfriars, Whitefriars, or Salisbury Court in south-west London. It was not. Clerkenwell, like most other districts, did have a population of more substantial means concentrated on the "high street" of St. John. Most of the neighbouring population, both within St. James parish and the adjacent parishes of St. Giles Without Cripplegate and St. Sepulchre, were somewhat less well off. They would be less likely to pay the higher admission cost charged for gallery seats, and the structure of the Red Bull mirrored this fact in devoting less space to galleries than the other public theatres (Reynolds 1940: 11-12). This would have been due, in part, to the existing layout of the Red Bull Inn, but the fact that a theatre with less than the average space devoted to higher paying spectators proved a profitable concern from its inception through the closing of the theatres in 1642 suggests that an audience of less privileged playgoers was available.

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 releffe of the poore in the hospitalles" (*E.S.*: 1:281). The regulations on drama of the next year also stipulated that excess profits derived from public stagings 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 theatres were built, but this was not to mean that

the companies were in fact at liberty to keep all of their profits to themselves. An unsigned letter of 1587 to Francis Walsingham, Secretary of State and prominent member of England's highest executive body, 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, and 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 theatre was so far removed "frome 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:

> Secondlie because the Erectours of the saied howse are contented to give a very liberall porcion of money weekelie, towards the releef of our Poore, The nomber and necessity whereof is soe greate that the same will redounde to the contynuall comfort of the saied Poore.

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 Supplie oute of the Countrye" 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 theatre, 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 theatres 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 theatre for 20*s* a day to whoever was willing to risk a theatrical venture and who would furthermore contribute "towardes releife of their poore and repairing their highwaies" (*J.C.S.*: 2:571). The Red Bull's conversion from an inn into a full time theatre also appears to have been conditional upon contributions from the playhouse to the

neighbourhood. Sometime 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, asking that prohibitions on renovations and new building in Clerkenwell be contravened 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 20*s* a month towards poor relief, and an astonishing £500 for highway maintenance (*J.C.S.*: 6:215-16).

This £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 labour intensive business, and there was certainly a ready population to draw upon for this type of work. The parish was unable, though, to make the players consistently live up to their end of the deal. Christopher Beeston, a shareholder in Queen Anne's company who took over its operations on the death of Thomas Greene in 1614, found greener theatrical pastures elsewhere and decided in 1616 to move the company to a newly converted indoor playhouse, the Cockpit in Drury Lane. In October of 1617 Beeston 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 theatre at this time, and they argued that they should be exempted from making these payments. However, from the time when Queen Anne's company moved to the new private theatre until the local

government of Clerkenwell complained to a higher authority of abandonment, Beeston and his players were not able to rid themselves of all contact with their previous audience.

It is in the context of the Red Bull's close involvement with the surrounding community that we need to examine the events which took place on March 4th, 1617. A letter of March 5th from the Privy Council to the Lord Mayor and aldermen reports that the previous day "a Rowte of lewd and loose p[er]sons Apprentices and others" committed "tumultous outrages . . . in attempting to pull down a Playhouse belonging to the Queene's Ma[ts] Servents." 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)

March 4th, the day of the riot, was a Shrove Tuesday, and apprentices were known to use this traditional day of license to vent destructive energies in attacks on playhouses. There are twenty-four Shrove Tuesday riots recorded in Elizabethan and Jacobean England, many of them involving damage to theatres (Burke 1985: 33-36). Most of these riots, however, 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 theatre and the extent to which the players went to protect their livelihood. Alfred Habage suggests that Shrove Tuesday

attacks on playhouses "have no especial significance in dramatic history" and should rather be viewed as manifestations of the maxim that boys will be boys and have always needed an outlet for aggression which cannot be theorized: "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). Habage certainly has a point here; not all instances of destructive behaviour can be profitably read as evidencing well thought-out hostility. For instance, the predilection shown by many adolescent boys to urinate in construction sites, particularly those of new homes, does not signify (as far as *I* know) a specific hostility or resentment towards those who have the means to furnish themselves with new lodgings.

Habage's contention that theatres were targets simply because they were "conspicuous and public" (1941: 107) is brought into question by an event which never happened a year following the Shrove Tuesday riot of 1617. By that time Beeston and his company had resumed playing at the Cockpit, often called the Phoenix in reference to its rising from the ashes of the previous theatre. The apprentices appeared unwilling to grant this particular Phoenix the long life accorded to its mythical namesake, however. This time, the authorities had warning 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 meete at the ffortune," which they would use as a staging ground, "and after that to goe to the Playhouses the Red Bull, and the Cock Pitt, w^{ch} 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.

What provoked the attack on the Cockpit and the projected assault against both the Cockpit and the Red Bull? That the apprentices planned to meet at the Fortune, but not to damage that theatre, suggests that they were provoked not by a particular animus against theatres in general, but rather that for one reason or another the Cockpit, then the Cockpit and the Red Bull, were targets of especial interest. A need to vent aggression on a random target was not the apprentices' motive. Their actions should instead be read as a particular kind of exchange in what E.P. Thomson calls a "moral economy." He argues that the bread and grain riots of the eighteenth century were the direct result of price inflations which violated the crowd's communal consensus of fair dealing, and that most group violence can be best understood as a conscious statement of communal norms and values (1971; Davis 1975). Andrew Gurr suggests that precisely such a violation of accepted practices of fair dealing on the part of Queen Anne's men resulted in the sacking of the Cockpit, and that the apprentices were animated by a resentment against the higher admission prices at the new theatre (1987: 171), while C.J. Sisson more provocatively argues that the moral economy of the crowd interacted with the material economy of the neighbourhood. When Thomas Greene, the principal comedian and manager of Queen Anne's Men, died in 1612, his share in the company, valued at £80, devolved to his wife Susan as did a £37 debt which was owed to Greene by the company. The company's new manager Christopher Beeston was unable to make arrangements to purchase Greene's

former share, and after negotiations in June 1615 agreed to pay Greene's widow (now remarried to James Baskerville) a sum of 1*s* 8*d* a day, six days a week, as long as the company was playing and Susan and James lived.

The company did not 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 2*s* 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 one of its actors, 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 the Chancery Court 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).

Sisson contends 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 desertion of the Red Bull and the injustice done to Susan in a matter of local notoriety" (1954: 68). Clerkenwellers had more cause to resent Beeston, as the company's failure to make payments towards highway repairs would have dried up a source of employment and

contributed to the degradation of the neighbourhood. In exchange for their patronage, the audience of the Red Bull insisted on a mutually beneficial return from the company. The Red Bull was an important neighbourhood institution, not an anonymous site of license for a deracinated and heterogeneous audience, and its theatrical practice drew on just such a sense of community.

Chapter Three: Satire, Sentiment, and Idealized Constructions of Community on the Early Modern Stage

> It is surely time that a stand should be made against the cant which glorifies as "intellectual" all sorts of brutal cynicism, and despises as "sentimental" everything which betrays the smallest touch of human feeling. (Archer 1924: 418)

Laughter is an inescapably social form. A joke, to reach fruition, requires at least three distinct grammatical agents--a first person teller, a second person listener, and a third person object. These positions may, of course, coalesce in one individual, telling a joke to herself about herself. Regardless, humour usually requires an external object--what the joke is about--and this object may or may not be privy to the laughter involved. The joke may be at his/her expense. To put it reductively, a joke is always at the expense of someone or something, and will only be found funny if told to a receptive audience which finds the humour in a particular utterance. This is to say that a joke, or comedy more broadly, cannot be fruitfully examined outside of a social context as merely a particular type of verbal form whose content can be reduced to its semantic properties. Take, for example, the statement "Hi honey, I'm home." Nothing about the phrase suggests anything particularly humourous. It seems to be a more or less innocent exchange of information between two parties. However, in context it is shot through with particular assumptions about gender roles and family organization (English 1994: 5-6). Thus, the joke could be at the expense of a particular way of ordering society (the husband goes off to work, "Honey" stays home) which is found antiquated and even humourous by the

teller. Perhaps the traditional gender roles have been reversed in a particular setting, or maybe it is told by one member of a same-sex couple. In both these cases, though, the joke may not necessarily be found funny by the listener, even if he/she does recognize that the statement is *meant* as a joke: he may resent the implication that he is fulfilling what he (or his partner) considers to be a passive or secondary role in the relationship; he may be frustrated or humiliated by his inability to find work outside of the domestic sphere; or, more simply, he may not find the statement funny at all, but rather a simple and reassuring notification that his loved one has returned.

Dunce caps, to take another example, are *generally* held to be pretty funny things--unless you are the one wearing it. They are meant to evoke laughter among some, at the expense of shaming and humiliating another. Thus, the mirth derived serves to form, or to draw upon, a group consensus of appropriate behaviour or standards, with those who do not measure up subjected to the opprobrious yardstick of communal standards. Again, though, the device of the dunce cap is no more inherently funny than any other joke, and may instead be profoundly unfunny, depending on the context. Perhaps, when it is worn by the class clown, the humour through humiliation aimed at by the teacher backfires as the class applies a different standard of proper conduct based on resistance to educational authority. By increasing the visibility of the perpetrator, the authoritarian strategy may be turned against itself as the standards which are applied become themselves the objects of derision. In other circumstances, such as during the Cultural Revolution in China, the cap may be worn by one previously in authority, a teacher or a landlord. What is then

ridiculed and celebrated is the uncrowning (or more properly recrowning) of what is understood as repressive authority. The laughter provoked by such a sight is bitter and satiric, constitutive of a sense of community at the expense of the humiliation of another who is placed both beneath and outside the laughing group. Again, social context is crucial to the meaning of the joke, in terms of those who "get" the joke in the sense of apprehending the humour in an inversion of hierarchies and those who actually "get" it, as in "they got it good." For the recipients or objects of this type of humour, the genre of the utterance is tragedy, not comedy.

What the foregoing suggests is both the difficult pleasures afforded by comedy and how demanding the task is of pinning down comedy as a genre. Shakespeare criticism has wrestled with the taxonomy of the canon, although we have no indication as to whether our hesitancy to accept without reservation the generic attributions of Heminge and Condell was present in the editors of the First Folio themselves. The 1623 folio arranged fourteen plays under the rubric, excluding *Pericles* which was not appended until the Third Folio of 1664 (perhaps as the restored monarchy made a play about the disguised travels of a true Prince through hostile lands of interest to some of the reading public). *Cymbeline* was placed with the tragedies. The tripartite division of the new Oxford edition lists eighteen plays as comedies, including *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale*, both of which have more typically been cast as romances. Since the nineteenth century, the term "problem plays" has been ascribed to several Shakespeare works--most commonly *All's Well that Ends Well*, *Measure for Measure*, and *Troilus and Cressida*--

which do not seem to fit comfortably in any particular genre. Other plays, specifically *The Merchant of Venice* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, have presented stumbling blocks to some critics who are simply unable to find anything funny in the stories of the baiting and humiliation of a Jew and a misogynist project undertaken by a zealous husband to bring his new wife firmly under his control. If there is nothing funny about these plays, can we really call them comedies? Perhaps in one sense we can, as they do both make use of comic devices which we can still recognize as such, even if we don't find them particularly laughable or if we are bothered by the target of the humour. The problem plays of Shakespeare demonstrate the impossibility of fixing comedy as a genre based on structural taxonomies alone; comedy looks out beyond the boundaries of the play text and engages with the social world of its reception. Throughout the above, I have assumed by my use of *we* that the audience for this paper shares the same discomfort with the humour of certain plays that I do. *We* form a certain type of audience. In a different context, though, an audience may have no problems whatsoever with Shakespeare's "problem plays" (this is of course assuming a homogeneity of tastes among spectators and doesn't take into account an audience divided among itself).

If comedy is designed to elicit laughter, it does so by drawing on a sense of community and appealing to shared structures of belief. Not all critics have agreed, though, that there is a necessary correlation between laughter and comedy: in *Anatomy of Criticism* Northrop Frye called melodrama "comedy without humour" (1957: 161), in effect asserting the lack of any rigorous connection between the comedic genre and laugh-

eliciting effects. The current consensus on Frye seems to be that, for all of his acknowledged successes, his criticism is underpinned by a certain naïvety, a fundamental misunderstanding of political exigencies (if he is interested in politics at all), and a misguided faith in both the possibility and the desirability of reconciliatory measures. Perhaps Frye's criticism could not help but evidence a strong utopian strain: when he was a young child, he had a vision which he said influenced his criticism profoundly "of how men once lived in a Garden of Eden, how that world was lost, and how we may be able to get it back again" (Czarnecki 1982: 10). Frye is ultimately talking about incorporation in both the traditional Christian sense of becoming one with God in heaven and in terms of a the formation of an inclusive community of believers on earth. The vision is, perhaps, naïve, although I am obviously in sympathy with his communitarian values. Simply put, the debate played out over Frye's work opposes an instrumental pragmatism or cynicism and alternative claims for the possibility of communities of minimal conflict. A concise and cogent summary of Frye's incongruity in a critical climate which is to a great degree influenced by the "findings" of deconstruction is provided by A.C. Hamilton: in contradiction to Frye, most literary criticism today has an "emphasis on difference not identity, temporality not spatiality, fissure not fusion, gaps not continuity, dissemination not polysemy, fragmentation not unity, aporias not vision--in sum, a metaphysics of absence not of presence" (1990: 218). Clearly, a metaphysics of presence is an integral underpinning to my arguments about community, and I necessarily emphasize spatiality, continuity, identity and presence. Frye's model of comedy in *Anatomy of Criticism*,

though certainly not without its problems, provides a useful point of departure for what of necessity will be a somewhat brief discussion of how comedy interacts with community.

As mentioned earlier, comedy for Frye does not have to evoke laughter. Instead, it draws on a *mythos* of conflict and resolution for its affective power: "At the beginning of the play the obstructing characters are in charge of the play's society, and the audience recognizes that they are usurpers. At the end of the play the device in the plot that brings the hero and heroine together causes a new society to crystallize around the hero" (1957: 163). Frye first assumes that the audience shares a common belief--that those in charge of a society which thwarts the desires of (usually young) love have no valid claim to authority. Without a consensus that the lover's desires should be gratified, we simply would not have a comedy, regardless of the formal properties of the text. The resolution of the conflict in favour of the hero and heroine can thus be appreciated as the instauration of genuine authority in society. Nothing is necessarily comic about how the conflict is resolved either to the play figures who form the "old society" or provide the obstacles to the lover's happiness, nor to audience members whose real world authority, or rather legitimacy, is called into question and rejected in the denouement (Shylock, for example, does not constitute an authority of Venetian society; instead, the claims that he makes and his very right to make claims of the Christian world of *The Merchant of Venice* is denied). Frye's *mythos* of comedy is most clearly seen in several Shakespeare plays, particularly *Twelfth Night*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *As You Like It*, and the movement of plot towards heterosexual union is clearly not a feature of all of what we would call

comedies. Comedy, for Frye at least, is not a genre *per se*, but instead a trajectory of plot through an archetypical myth from conflict to resolution. Alexander Leggatt precisely demarcates the generic divisions between the private and public theatre traditions, arguing that the former's dramaturgy "offered a more sophisticated type of drama--intellectual, sceptical and satiric" whereas the standard repertoire of the public theatres, and particularly the Red Bull and the Fortune, was "sentimental and romantic" (1992: 1). He suggests that the private theatre offered an avant-garde critique of society, while the public theatre was much more conservative in its functions and aims. Leggatt's distinction is perhaps over-precise, but he does usefully distinguish how the rival traditions typically treated their subject matter. How the conflict between the social worlds of the play is handled determines whether specifically comedic effects (those designed to elicit laughter) veer towards the genre of irony or satire, or instead romance or what I will call sentimentality.

The types of laughter provoked in either of the twin poles of satire and sentiment rely on an ideal of community: "Our laughter is always the laughter of the group" (Bergson 1956: 62). However, they draw on different models of integration or group coherence. Hobbes, in a disproportionately influential comment on humour from *Leviathan*, argued that we laugh at a debased other and take pleasure in our perceived superiority:

> *Sudden Glory*, is the passion which maketh those *Grimaces* called LAUGHTER; and is caused either by some act of their own, that pleaseth

> them; or by the apprehension of some deformed thing in another, by comparison whereof they suddenly applaud themselves. And it is incident most to them, that are conscious of the fewest abilities in themselves; who are forced to keep themselves in their own favour, by observing the imperfections of other men. (1651: 125)

Laughter is not a disinterested pursuit for Hobbes; it is ineluctably social and depends on normative standards and evaluations. Exultation at the misfortunes of others, whether that misfortune is manifested as physical deformity or as deviance from norms of social conduct, is expressed as glorious laughter which signals the laugher's relief that she is not the target of the humour. Aside from professional comedians, no one particularly likes being laughed *at*. Hobbes vehemently denies positive powers for this type of derisive laughter; in his account, individual and group identities are asserted through negative terms as the unity and dignity of the group or of the self is held up not by comparison with proper objects of emulation, but instead by reference to a debased outsider. This type of laughter forms community by asserting an in-group, one which finds non-conformity to internal standards risible and predicates group coherence on the exclusion of an other. Drawing on the work of Laclau and Mouffe, and in particular Mouffe's argument that "a fully inclusive political community and a final unity can never be realized since there will permanently be a 'constitutive outside,' an exterior to the community that makes its existence possible," James English takes Hobbesian derisive laughter as central to thinking through the paradoxes of community and humour. Jokes vent hostility and aggression, are

never socially neutral, and derive their power by acting as "a sort of rudimentary 'dividing practice' (Foucault), as an 'understanding test' (Thompson) to distinguish an 'ingroup' from an 'outgroup' (Martineau) affirming some cultural or subcultural identity . . . and asserting a certain superiority over nonlaughing others" (1994: 9). English's model, derived from both Hobbes and Freud, helps to explain what Frye calls ironic or satiric comedy.

After Malvolio leaves the stage vowing revenge at the end of *Twelfth Night*, Olivia remarks that "He hath been most notoriously abused" (5.1.375). Malvolio's humourless officiousness has made him the butt of the joke perpetrated by the ingroup of Toby Belch, Maria, Feste, and Andrew Aguecheek. He will not accept the comic premises or conclusion of the play's world, and is relentlessly satirized. Frye distinguishes three types of satire: the first or lowest stage "takes for granted a world full of anomalies, injustices, follies and crimes, and yet which is permanent and undisplacable"; the second stage judges the norms of society to be absurd in themselves; the third, and highest phase, "true comedic irony and satire . . . defines the enemy of society as a spirit within that society" (47). This enemy or spirit in society, inimical to the "new" order to whom legitimacy is conceded by the rhetoric of the play, finds form in the character of the churl, "the refuser of festivity" (176). By not finding the humour in a given situation, churls *become* the joke; reactions of bewilderment, anger or resentment to a supposedly "comic" utterance are often provoked and in turn mocked by the teller of the joke and those recipients who are in the "proper" state of mind. This churlish refusal to comprehend

particular types of humour *as* humour, to make a laughing matter out of the abjection of another, affirms that one's normative standards of community are substantively different. Certainly such altruism does not motivate all churlish characters of the likes of Malvolio, and he is chastised not for his positive valorization of inclusive community, but for bringing to bear claims antithetical to community identity and formation. Francis Teague argues that tragedy privileges characters who deny, or seek to deny, that the individual must of necessity depend upon others and become involved in reciprocal relations, whereas comedy affirms codependence and trust in others as positive values. Churlish characters misunderstand the nature of the world that they inhabit: "Within the context of comedy, a tragic individual--i.e., one who believes that tragedy is inevitable or denies the possibility of trust and union--is finally a laughable (comic) figure" (1994: 11). For Frye, the churl is an ironic comedic character, one at whose officiousness and pomposity the audience laughs.

This type of laughter at claims of high seriousness and personal integrity, at ideologies of "asceticism, sombre providentialism, sin, atonement, [and] suffering" (Bakhtin 1984: 73) is crucial to the Mennipean tradition of carnival festivity which Bakhtin privileges. The kill-joy who would reiterate the inevitability of death is reproached with the countervailing claim that "life goes on," and is ceremoniously mocked and excluded from the festivities. This creation of community at the expense of another, by making them the butt of the joke, does not usually give commentators working with Bakhtin great cause for concern, as the excluded is typically a representative of what are generally

understood as forces of repression--the Church or State. However, as I suggested earlier, this type of laughing *at* rather than laughing *with*, while perhaps constitutive of communal bonds, can occur at great expense. In the case of Carnival inversion, or temporally bounded and licensed abuse, perhaps such threats to the dominant order can ultimately be contained when the reversal of hierarchies is, again, reversed. If the unofficial world of Carnival was lived for three months in a year, the official world could give back as good as it got for the other nine. However, if the energies and social vision expressed by the Carnival spirit are envisioned as more than just a temporary release, or even as a contemporaneously lived "second life" of the people, if they are instead desired as a permanent and credible alternative to the present order of things, then the question of the exile of laughter becomes more vexed: what are we to do with the landlords? Dunce caps? In Frye, this problem is resolved by appeal to a doctrine of remission and forgiveness for past sins, an uncritical forgetting of history which, it has been argued, can have no place in a truly critical theory (Bristol 1990: 181). Carnival's corrosive laughter is, of course, not necessarily directed towards the high and mighty, nor does it always have as its aim the exclusion of its objects from the community. Integration through ridicule or lampoon has been held to be the proper aim of satire: Dryden's second rule of satire (after establishing the principle of thematic unity) charges that "The poet is bound, and that *ex Officio*, to give his reader some one Precept of Moral Virtue; and to caution him against some one particular Vice or Folly" (1961: 4:80). Castigation of deviance from communally held norms by means of laughter, though, certainly isn't funny in and of itself;

the humour (whether or not we laugh at the object of the jokes) is dependent on shared communal values. Thus, *Othello* can rightly be styled a "comedy of abjection" (Bristol 1992) in which a departure from common ways of doing things can be laughed at on stage, while the humour remains profoundly unfunny to other audiences, to at least some if not all of their members.

The point that I wish to make here is that satire, while providing various types of pleasures through its use of humour and castigation, is inherently neither radical nor conservative, though often uncritically celebrated or disparaged as one or the other. Satire is generally considered as a genre with a particular interest in shaping morals, but for a critic such as Phillip Sidney any positive function for derisive humour was completely cancelled by its negative moral effects upon those who do the laughing: "For what is it to laugh at a wretched beggar and a beggarly clown; or against law of hospitality, to jest at strangers, because they speak not English as well as we do?" (1595: 67). Sidney's injunction that unfamiliar accents are not patently funny has had no appreciable effect on the subsequent development of the grand tradition of British humour, it would seem. What he insists though is that laughter, which "hath only a scornful tickling," is destructive of a sense of community, when the proper aim towards the abject (even if they are only abjected by the grave misfortune of not speaking the Queen's English) should be an ideal of extending aid and comfort; they "should be pitied, not scorned" (68). Laughter is a particular type of comedy for Sidney, lower in both its aims and effects than the opposed pole of delight. Delight is comedy which derives from sympathy, from revelling in

similarities not difference, and is in complete opposition to the mean-spiritedness of laughter. What is familiar and beautiful provokes delight. *A Defence of Poetry* argues that it stems from "things that are noble and aristocratic" (67), and the unfamiliar should rather be *made* familiar or brought closer than mocked as permanently disfigured.

In contrast to the Hobbesian tradition of understanding laughter as primarily a divisive practice stands an opposed strain which runs through Kant, Schopenhauer, and Herbert Spencer (Monro 1951: 147-161). If in Sidney "laughter" (*contra* "delight") provides a debased type of pleasure, for Kant the disrespect shown by mockery and scorn threatens to undermine completely the foundations of healthy community. In Kant's moral theory, practical reason dictates that every human being, as an autonomous consciousness and invested with reason, is unconditionally valuable. The other is to be treated as an end in herself, not as an instrument to our own ends--as an object of laughter. In the *Metaphysical Principles of Virtue* Kant stresses that to deride someone is ultimately to deny them full human status, and calls instead for a principle of interpretive generosity which recognizes the errors of judgement and reason that all of us are prone to:

> Hereupon is founded a duty to respect man even in the logical use of his reason: not to censure someone's error under the name of absurdity, inept judgement, and the like, but rather to suppose that in such an inept judgement there must be something true, and to seek it out. . . . Thus it is also with the reproach of vice, which must never burst out in complete contempt or deny the wrongdoer of all moral worth, because on that

> hypothesis he could never be improved either--and this latter is incompatible with the idea of man, who as such (as a moral being) can never lose all predisposition to good. (qtd. in Korsgaard 1996: 141-42)

The strong Enlightenment belief in the malleability if not the perfectability of human "nature" is expressed forcefully through Kant's insistence upon a community of sorts--a community of all reasonable beings. While I don't want to step into the abyss of sorting out who exactly for Kant were reasonable creatures, it is clear that this idea is attractive both as a suggestive beginning to fleshing out a theory of comedy quite strongly opposed to traditions of scornful laughter and satire, and as a (hopefully) authoritative guidepost to readers of this thesis who may consider the attempt to bring together Hobbes, Kant, Bakhtin and Frye in the compass of one chapter risible, signalling "absurdity" or "inept judgement." Perhaps it is, although Kant would rather that you looked into yourself and your past actions and recognized that we are all prone to this particular vice.

Kant's specific remark regarding laughter is even more infuriatingly pithy than Hobbes's, and like Hobbes's it has exerted considerable influence on subsequent theories of humour. Laughter, says Kant, "is an affectation arising from a sudden transformation of a strained expectation into nothing" and is experienced as a different type of relief than that which is afforded when one finds that one is not the target of the joke; instead, we are relieved that what was previously incongruous with our experience can be made to fit after all, and we will neither have to expend mental energy nor take alarm at something intrusive to personal or group identity (Holland 1982: 43). As with Sidney's theory of

delight, we take pleasure in the familiar or known as our initial expectations turn out to be ill-founded. Ejner J. Jensen's *Shakespeare and the Ends of Comedy* (1991) draws I think to a certain extent on Kant's incongruity theory (although this is unacknowledged and perhaps not ultimately a source of Jensen's), arguing that the comedic effects of Shakespeare's plays should be understood locally as a series of expectations created in the audience and not according to a teleological drive towards closure as they are in Barber and Frye. Jensen would rather look on the bright side of life, and in support of his book-length argument he makes the point that our pleasure in comedy does not stem from malicious delight at the misfortunes of the excluded other (a position which stresses difference), but rather from "the similarities among ourselves": "The audience of comedy, then, is less interested in asserting its superiority to the comic butt than in celebrating its own unity" (1996: 519). This, perhaps, helps explain why we are often more prone to laugh in a crowded theatre than in one with only a few seats filled. In the Kantian model of humour, processes of incorporation rather than differentiation provide the impetus for laughter, as "someone in the central group laughs to assimilate those who are incongruously different" (Teague 1996: 20).

In romantic or sentimental comedy, the incongruously different finds form in the character of the buffoon. For Frye, the buffoon and the churl polarize the comic mood. The audience delights in laughing at the intransigence of the churl and asserts the unity of their comic mood by ridiculing him, whereas in sentimental comedy the buffoon provides a sympathetic figure who is without animus towards the festive trajectory. Thus two kinds

of laughter are afforded--a laughing *at* and a laughing *with*. A character such as Falstaff, though patently ridiculous at times, isn't really satirized. He is so without malice that the audience, for the most part, may prefer to vicariously share in his overcoming of age and girth. In sentimental comedy, cynicism is for the most part absent, and while we may share in the follies of the comic protagonists, we also share in their corrections.

I do not mean to suggest that satire was only to be found on the stages of private theatres, as if their lack of natural light somehow contributed to a darker view of the human condition, or that Red Bull theatre plays were always patterned on a sentimental model. The different models of community formation and coherence expressed in satire or sentiment represent ideals or tendencies of divergent theatrical practices rather than strict formulas. Certainly playwrights for the public stage did not lack the capacity for satire: Dekker's quill was sharpened to a razor point in many of his prose works, and when he wrote for the children's companies such plays as *Westward Ho!*, *Northward Ho!* and *Satiromastix* he proved himself a keen satirist. Public stage plays drew on a native heritage of complaint which, like satire, often looked back nostalgically to a past in which grievances were more readily addressed by benevolent authority. However, the native tradition of complaint, from Langland, Chaucer, Barclay and Skelton to the public stage, draws its moral power for correction from an ideal of reconciled community. Satire is specific and castigates people *in themselves* for creating social friction (though not necessarily real historical personages) while complaint literature is hesitant to ascribe blame to an individual or to consider that particular individual irredeemable. Anomie is to

be deplored, but not necessarily the manifestation of it, and complaint plays of the Red Bull such as *1 The Blind Beggar of Bednal Green*, *The Honest Lawyer* and *The Poor Man's Comfort* reintegrate the dissolute into the overall dramatic community. When satire was essayed at the Red Bull, the targets tended to represent specific threats to communal peace, such as Joseph Swetnam in *Swetnam the Woman Hater, Arraigned by Women*. Most often the plays attempted reconciliation, and like the tradition of complaint literature were "concerned with the abuse rather than the abuser" (Peter 1956: 9-10), pertaining less to specifics than generalities, and stressing structure over agency. The imperative of the traditional proverb "love the sinner but hate the sin," which stresses an ideal of correction and reconciliation for the malfeasant rather than expulsion, voiced itself in the standard repertoire of the Red Bull.

Conclusion: An Audience of Actors

From the idealized versions of community formation and identity acted out on the Early Modern stage, we need to turn now to consider what role the theatrical experience played in the real lives of its audience, and concomitantly what role the audience played in the production of the drama. A fictionalized representation of popular participation on stage, in Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (Blackfriars, 1607), provides the first contemporary dramatic reference to the Red Bull. The predilections of the citizen-grocer and his wife for improbable tales of romance and adventure are derided by the boy player:

> CITIZEN: What shall we have Rafe do now boy?
>
> BOY: You shall have what you will sir.
>
> CITIZEN: Why so sir, go and fetch me him then, and let Sophy of Persia come and christen him a child.
>
> BOY: Believe me sir, that will not do so well; 'tis stale, it had been had before at the Red Bull. (4.1.46-53)

The scene alluded to is from *The Travels of the Three English Brothers* by Day, Rowley and Wilkins, performed at the Red Bull earlier that year. The boy players' attitude towards the Red Bull and the audience of that theatre is frankly derisive, and in other sarcastic jibes throughout the play they imply both that the fare of that theatre is not sophisticated enough for the Blackfriars' audience and that the playwright should have

exclusive control of the onstage action. The audience should remain essentially passive, safely shut out of the action and not impacting upon it.

Yet even if the audience could not change the course of the play once it was underway, the power to withhold their favour was firmly in their hands. *The White Devil*, performed at the Red Bull in 1611, was initially a theatrical failure. Webster adumbrates to the reading public the causes for his play's disappointing reception, specifically absolving the Queen's Men from any charges of incompetent acting and laying the blame squarely upon the perceived ignorance of the Red Bull's habitual audience: his play "wanted (that which is the only grace and setting out of a tragedy) a full and understanding auditory." Webster charges that the crowd in the pit, although they stood under, did not *understand*, and craved novelty rather than sustaining dramatic fare. Since the initial production of his play, Webster indicates that he has been conducting his own sociology of the Red Bull audience and has concluded that their tastes were uniformly plebeian, and that "most of the people that come to that playhouse, resemble those ignorant asses (who visiting stationers' shops their use is not to inquire for good books, but new books)." Finally Webster aligns himself with contemporary dramatists, stressing his favourable opinion of Chapman, Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, "and lastly (without wrong last to be named) the right happy and copious industry of Master Shakespeare, Master Dekker, and Master Heywood." His compliment is ambiguous: does he mean that he means no slight by mentioning Shakespeare, Dekker and Heywood last, or rather that it is not without good reason that they are the low men on his totem pole? "Copious

industry" suggests that these dramatists were merely hacks cranking out novelties for a hungry and indiscriminate audience; for Dekker and Heywood, that audience was to be found at the Red Bull. Alexander Leggatt persuasively argues that the Red Bull audience did not misunderstand *The White Devil* at all, but rather comprehended it all too well for it to achieve success in that theatre. While he speculates that the lurid violence of the play might have held great appeal to that theatre's unsophisticated auditory, the play as a whole lacks a clear moral focus and it may have been this shortcoming which resulted in its rejection. Moral generalizing is not only a feature of the thematic content of popular drama for Leggatt, but part of the theatrical method which is created by a dialectic between performers and audience: "The story was not properly told until it was generalized in a clear and satisfying way, creating a sense of community between stage and audience, relating the story to a world of agreed truth" (1992: 128).

That the Red Bull audience preferred specific types of plays and composed a distinct auditory is argued by contemporary and modern sources. Louis Wright, in his magisterial tome on Early Modern middle class culture, calls the Red Bull "frankly a plain man's playhouse, where clownery, clamour and spectacle vied with subject matter flattering to the vanity of tradesmen" who made up the bulk of its audience (1935: 609). Most contemporary references assume a rather harsher tone, and it is astonishing the number of contemptuous jibes taken at the theatre, its standard repertory, and its audience; *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage* devotes a special subchapter to allusions evidencing that the Red Bull "was the subject of more sneers than any other playhouse of

its time," and that it "reign[ed] supreme in ignominy" (6:238). It is difficult to choose paradigmatic proofs of the Red Bull's lowly status from the mass of material available, so a few examples will have to suffice. Jasper Mayne, in a commemorative poem to Ben Jonson, compares that playwright's art to the fare offered at the Red Bull and scorns the unrealistic dramaturgy of that theatre in favour of a drama which adhered to the Aristotelian unities:

> Thy Sceane was free from Monsters, no hard Plot
> Call'd downe a God t'untie th'unlikely knot.
> The Stage was still a Stage, two entrances
> Were not two parts oth' World, disjoyn'd by Seas.
> Thine were land-Tragedies, no Prince was found
> To swim a whole Scene out, then oth' Stage drown'd
> Pitch't fields, as Red Bull wars, still felt thy doome,
> Thou laidst no sieges to the Musique-Room. (*J.C.S.*: 6:244)

Maynes is referring to the action in plays such as *Fortune By Land and Sea* (Red Bull, 1606) and *The Travels of the Three English Brothers* where the action ranges across geographical space and is set in a timeless past. Thomas Carew reviled the meretricious mixing of genres at the Red Bull, which he called an "adulterate stage" whose audience composed an "untun'd Kennell" (*J.C.S.*: 6:242). Early modern and modern writers both want to fashion the Red Bull audience into a type of community, evidencing the low

artistic standards indicative of what one writer calls "a regressive plebeian taste" (Bulman 1990: 353).

The audience of the Red Bull should not be defined as a community strictly in the negative terms of its detractors. While the following is speculative, in that no documentary evidence exists which suggests outright that the Red Bull audience formed a community in their self-understanding, the theatrical occasion at that theatre provided an opportunity to forge bonds of social solidarity. "Class consciousness" has not been an operative term throughout this thesis for the simple reason that it is anachronous to apply it in a strict sense to the Early Modern period. This is not, however, to say that individual identities were fashioned without reference to a larger unit of analysis. Such a position is incoherent, in that an individual cannot be recognized *as such* unless confirmed by his/her similarity to or difference from a wider group. The Early Modern period is a focus of contention in a wider debate about identity which has become a unifying intellectual concern. Two primary units of inquiry into a sociology of identity in Early Modern England and their fundamental concerns can be briefly defined: *corporatism* finds the crucial nexus of social life in the bonds of family, clan or guild, while *individualism*, stemming from the Burkhardtian tradition, posits a shift in the Early Modern period from corporate ties as the salient context for identity fashioning to unique and self-defined agents free from bonds of obligation to community.

It has been argued that the Early Modern period did see the emergence of the heroic individual known as the "bourgeois subject," but that such a conception was

essentially (so to speak) obfuscatory, the cynosure of constitutive discourses masquerading as a specious unity (Barker 1984; Belsey 1985). Just such a divided subject is the topic of Stephen Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self Fashioning*. Beginning from the premises of Burkhardtian individualism, Greenblatt argues that the Early Modern period saw both a greater assertion of individual styles of identity and increased fetters placed on the executive power of the will. With the greater recognition that self-fashioning is possible, however, comes the concomitant realization that such acts of will only make sense in a communal setting. Greenblatt is more concerned with textual effects--how the exceptional individual fashions himself through writing for interpretive communities, or how fictions of self-and-community are played out on the stage. He comes to the conclusion that, no matter how much he may wish to believe in individual "shaping power," the processes of self-fashioning and of being fashioned oneself were one and the same (1980: 256). Modes of self-fashioning that are not imbricated in a subject/object dialectic but result from a concerted effort at unitary agency form the topic of Frank Whigham's discussion of identity on the Early Modern stage. Whigham wants to detail how the anxiety occasioned by the realization that one was not complete in and of oneself, but in some way required acceptance from a larger social unit, could manifest itself in concerted exercises of agency which attempted to obliterate the distinction between self and other through violent acts of incorporation or "seizures of the will." This analysis is fruitful in terms of the dramatic texts he reads, but the extent to which such pathological methods of self-fashioning acted out on the stage enabled "social action outside the

playhouse" (1996: 18) or provided exemplary models for the audience of how individual identity could be made or asserted is highly dubious. Strong exercises of the will resulting in violent acts of seizure could not and did not provide the crucial lesson in identity formation that the Early Modern stage had to teach.

As a means of adjudicating between equally inflexible apprehensions of self-construction, the one positing identity as plastic and moulded and the other which finds it resting on concrete foundations, Symbolic Interactionism insists that men and women make their own identities, occasionally in conditions of their own choosing. The unit of analysis is neither an *a priori* individual, complete in and of herself, nor an equally abstract society over and above its constitutive parts, but instead the social relations which link individuals in what Erving Goffman calls the "interaction order," or the face-to-face domain of interactions between embodied individuals (1983). It is within this nexus of close contact with others that individual identities are formed and experimented with. Selves can only be formed in concert with others, as a key component of our sense of self-identity is the confirmation that we receive from others in a group that the stories we tell about ourselves, and about the world, are believed as fact rather than just our desirable fictions. To a certain extent our stories of self-identity *are* fictions; crucial to Goffman's work is the metaphor of identity fashioning as a theatrical activity. In "backstage" areas one is free from the anxiety of performing a role--stage fright is alleviated in private spaces. The type of drama performed in public self-presentation is not monologue, and

while there are aspects of improvisation involved, the script is not entirely flexible and follows codified rules for action embedded in the collaborative community.

Mind is always formed in a dialectic with others, in proximity to a community which mediates between the individual and rarefied society. The rules given by a specific group or event provide scripts for social interaction through which the individual can negotiate roles and fashion a sense of personhood by the validation given to their projects of self-identity by the other participants in the community (Jenkins 1996; Purkhardt 1993). This sense of self-identity is conferred by the larger group as recognition that one has learned the "rules of the game," and can express individual knowledges, skills, or opinions in a given context. For George Herbert Mead, having a sense of self-identity, or even a mind that can engage in rational thought, is contingent upon involvement with and acceptance of such rules of social interaction:

> The organized community or social group which gives to the individual his unity of self may be called the "generalized other." The attitude of the generalized other is the attitude of the whole community. Thus, for example, in the case of a social group such as a ball team, the *team* is the generalized other in so far as it enters--as an organized process or social activity--into the experience of any one of the individual members of it. (1934: 154).

Mead's sporting analogy provides a less concrete example than might be desired of how a cultural event creates a sense of community in its participants, but his example is

nonetheless suggestive. However, thinking about the *audience* of a sporting event, rather than its participants, in terms of a community allows us to compare the hypothesised use of the Red Bull as "community theatre" to a more familiar example.

For the athletes of professional sports teams, their activities constitute endeavours in the practical order in that they provide an opportunity to earn a living. Fan culture is a part of the expressive order, a means for individuals to come together in a group, share in common pleasures, and create a space for the articulation of their own sense of identity as a valued individual. Of course, the validation of individual worth is conferred by those who have watched the progress of the individual's "moral career"--a trajectory of actions embedded in a group context by which one derives a reputation among a small interactive community as an individual of worth (Marsh 1985). Part of the enjoyment derived from sporting events is precisely the sense of community mobilized by the team which "represents" the collective. Unquestionably, the rhetoric of community deployed by professional sports teams is increasingly bogus in an era in which franchises are sold to the highest bidder and players are rarely drawn from a local pool of talent (Gruneau 1993: 199-233), but nevertheless civic boosterism is not entirely a cynical ploy foisted upon a credulous public who do not share in the material gain derived from their favourite team. News reports and phone-in sports talk shows provide occasions for obtaining and displaying knowledgeability among like minded individuals and afford identities and a kind of cultural capital that can be enjoyed in exchanges with other fans (Whitson 1995) The composition and overall ethos of sports teams often derive from and reflect social and

political attitudes and self-understandings prevailing among their local fan base. Vancouver was the first National Hockey League team to actively pursue players from the Soviet Union, in part because such a move would be largely accepted by a city which aspired to a more cosmopolitan image. In contrast, the political culture of fans in Buffalo resulted in widespread protest against the introduction of a Soviet goaltender whose mask artwork glorified Russian achievements, leading team management to insist that he not display the hammer and sickle emblem. Communities of interest or location wish to see their own values reflected by those who purport to represent them, and presume bonds of loyalty and sentiment between the symbol and the collectivity (Ingham 1988: 437).

Mark Fortier argues that the Early Modern theatrical event cannot be exhaustively analysed in terms of the text's semantic content, but rather that pre- and post-performance events such as jigs provided an immediate and crucial context about which we can only speculate (1993). What I want to suggest is that reading play texts outside of their performance context is analogous to watching the game on television: pleasures are available, but they are not the same, and explaining what added value was derived from "being there" at the Early Modern theatrical event necessitates translating what we know about certain types of modern cultural activities to a past event that is not fully recoverable. People often choose to drink beer in a bar even though they could enjoy the same beer more cheaply at home because they want the social "buy-products" that can be derived from drinking in a public place, and to which a price cannot be attached. Similarly, more was on offer at the Red Bull than the latest play of Dekker or Heywood.

Members of a deracinated and heterogeneous audience can undoubtedly function only as consumers purchasing what is ostensibly for sale at the theatre, but in doing so they are not partaking in the interactive pleasures of a communal event. The relationship of an audience member to performers and other spectators in much theatre is that of an observing "I" to a differentiated "they"; the individual audience member never identifies himself in terms of the other pronominal positions available, as part of a "we."

However, the mode of social interaction characteristic of the Red Bull was not mediated by the footlights that separate spectator from performance and encourage a distanced perspective on the onstage action. Group mingling in the yard of the theatre provided an occasion to closely interact with one's peers and neighbours, to voice consent with or dissent from the onstage action, and to contribute to the collective understanding of the event. Throwing beverage cups on the ice at a hockey game to protest a referee's "bad" call, or pelting actors with fruit, does not signify oafish behaviour, but instead represents the intentions of the audience to make their collective values known. Of course, someone has to start the ball rolling, and the first individuals who express themselves in such a way can expect to develop strong reputations among their community (whether that is understood as a subculture among the larger spectatorship, or the whole of the audience). As with sports, so with the Red Bull understood as a prototypical community theatre: what is represented is not only the intentions of the athletes, playwrights or performers; sharing the discursive space are models of the audience's self-representation and their understanding of social good. Self-fashioning *is* a

theatrical activity, and for the audience of the Red Bull theatre this was not only realized through metaphor, but in the very act of attending dramatic performances as part of a group of like-minded individuals. The audience's relation to the performers was not that of passive consumer-spectators to solipsistic acts of self-expression, but partook of an ethos of community in which "subjects are formed cooperatively" (Rayner 1993: 21). In the suburbs of Early Modern London, corporate ties were weakening; the traditional authority of guild organizations was undermined, and religious fraternities no longer provided a space in which bonds of community could be formed. However, this is not to say that the audience of the Early Modern theatres was necessarily heterogeneous and deracinated. Individuals do not live out their lives only in relation to an abstract society comprised of atomistic, discretionary consumers, but actively seek out closer contexts in which to develop what may not be primary relationships, but which are nonetheless important. The Red Bull was imbricated in the financial and cultural life of its neighbourhood, the crucial geographical unit of identification for Early Modern Londoners. Rather than an anonymous site of license, playhouses in the Liberties gave an occasion for rituals of daily life (even if attended infrequently), providing a discursive sphere not only to the actors, but to the audience who could express their political and social culture to each other, both confirming and contributing to individual and collective identities.

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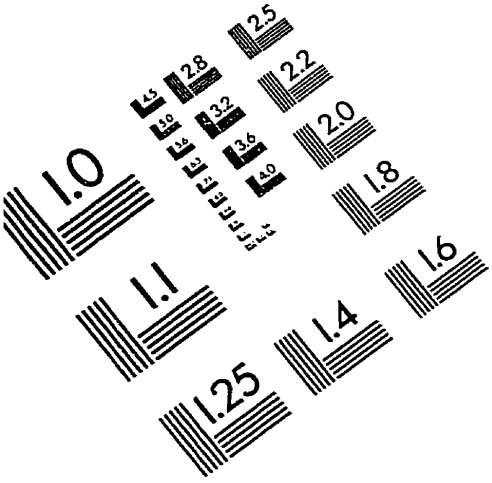

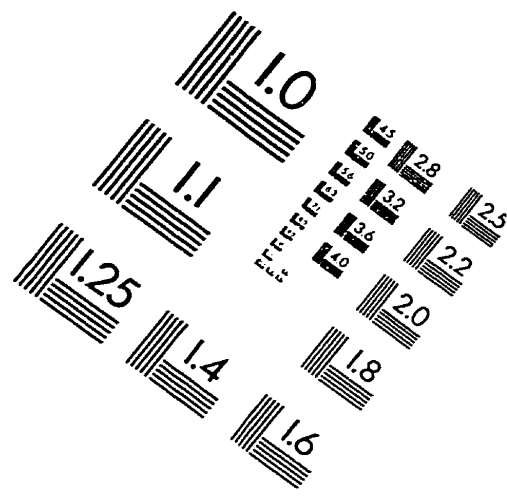

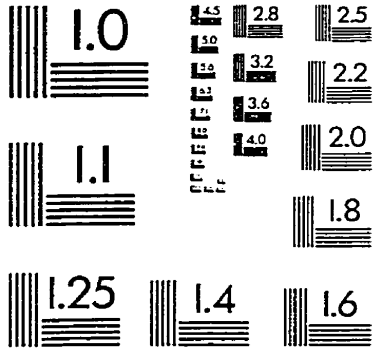

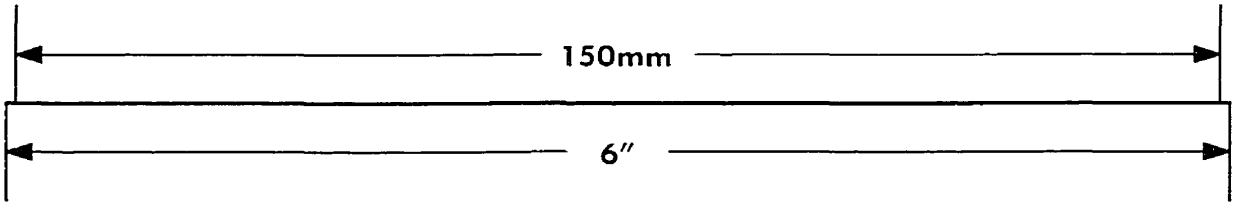

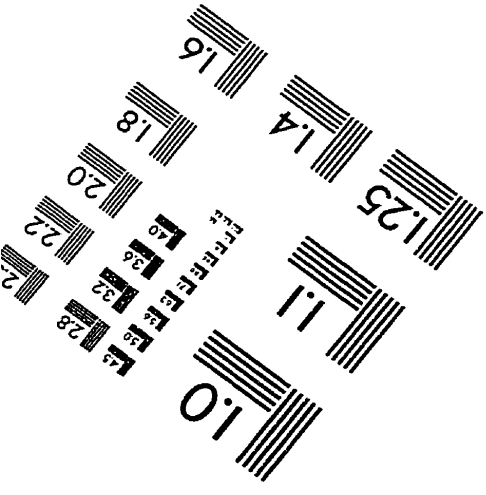

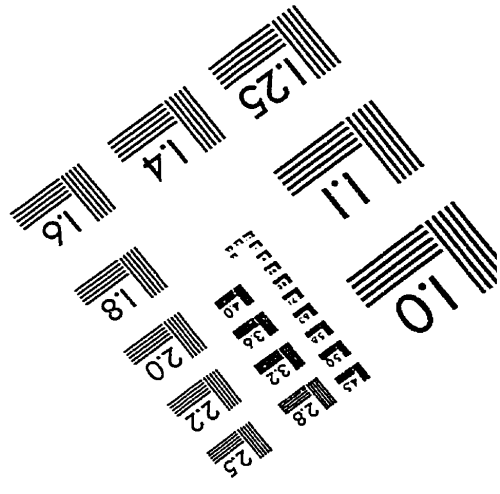

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