'I trac'd him too and fro': Walking the Neighbourhood on the Early Modern Stage

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This article considers the ways in which plays stage the negotiation of the relationship between public and private space in early modern London through characters walking in the city. It uses concepts developed by Michel de Certeau and Pierre Mayol to think about the twentieth-century city to argue that Heywood's Edward IV and the anonymous A Warning for Fair Women present walking the streets of London as an act of recognition and knowing that distinguishes those who belong in the city from those who do not.

In the famous metatheatrical Induction to A Warning for Fair Women (ca 1595-9), Tragedy addresses her audience directly:

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

 $(93-8)^{1}$

The spectators are envisaged here as a collective body that can 'own' London. Being 'native' to London, the speech implies, is to be connected both to London as a place and to each other as Londoners. This article discusses how playwrights stage walking in this play and a near contemporary work, Thomas Heywood's The First and Second Parts of Edward IV (ca 1599), to explore ideas of neighbourhood in early modern London.² The sociology of the spaces of the twentiethcentury city, and especially Pierre Mayol's work on neighbourhood, allows for productive thinking about the ways in which these plays show characters relating to each other as neighbours and strangers in the early modern city.³ These plays create a version of early modern London in which the dynamic intersections between public and private space, male and female gender, inclusion and exclusion are worked through in the drama of the city, which is itself a product of the neighbourhoods that drama conceptualizes. The spectator whose 'cheerful eie'

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turned towards the stage may have been watching the familiar figures of actors who were his or her own neighbours, and this suggests a relationship among play, actors, and spectators that can illuminate the meaning of neighbourhood in these plays' presentation of early modern London on stage.

Critics have accepted that, as Julie Sanders puts it, 'drama was one of the key means by which early modern English society strove to make sense of space'. The drama of early modern London attempted to make sense of a city often characterized as a place of hostility, greed, and danger, whose inhabitants were bewildered by its rapid growth — an assessment arrived at primarily in relation to seventeenth-century plays by, for example, Thomas Middleton and Ben Jonson. William Ingram and Natasha Korda, among others, however, have reminded us that the theatre was itself a business place whose participants were intimately involved in commercial matters themselves, while recent studies by Tracey Hill, Mark Bayer, and Eva Griffith have shown that dramatic performances in London's streets and theatres created a sense of civic engagement and communality. When we turn to the less studied plays of the 1590s, these contexts of commerce and neighbourhood are helpful; in examining A Warning and Edward IV as accounts of perambulation, this article reflects on the ways that the city's spaces could be experienced through movement as neighbourhoods.

The plays under discussion were among the first to show to the people of London characters who inhabited a play world that reflected their own city. The early performance history of both is uncertain, but their first printed editions in 1599 described them as having been performed 'many' and 'diverse times' already, A Warning by the Chamberlain's Men and Edward IV by Derby's Men. In 1599 Derby's Men had recently established themselves in a newly rebuilt playhouse, the Boar's Head in Whitechapel, just a few minutes' walk east along the Mile End road outside Aldgate.⁶ Richard Rowland suggests that *Edward IV* was likely one of the first plays the company offered in its new home.⁷ At the same time, a number of players, including Thomas Goodnell/Goodael, Richard Darlo, John Hill, Robert Lee, Augustine Phillips, and James Tunstall, were apparently living in the parish of St Botolph's, Aldgate, close to the Boar's Head, since parish records dating between late 1593 and 1600 mention them. 8 All of these players, except Hill, also appear in Henslowe's Diary, apparently as members of Derby's and then the Admiral's Men.9 In the late 1590s, when Edward IV played at the Boar's Head, some of the players themselves seem to have lived in the neighbourhood of the theatre.

The Boar's Head was only a short distance along the Mile End road from the parish church of St Botolph's. When the character Smoke threatens London from the spire of St Botolph's church (*Edward IV*, 1.5.65–6), the actor portraying him was enacting the invasion of a space which many of the players and playgoers regarded as their own, and indeed the steeple of the real church may have been visible from within the playhouse itself. 10 If, as Mark Bayer argues, playhouses were important local institutions, which helped to define and articulate the shared values of audiences drawn from their surrounding communities, the kind of London that these companies depict can help us to understand something about the values associated with neighbourhood in the early modern city. 11 This article argues that Edward IV and A Warning, as early plays that depict London, create for playgoers a city where bonds of neighbourhood are strong and the city operates as a protective force for its citizens, albeit only if they stay within their allocated boundaries of social status and gender. As A Warning's Tragedy suggests, the consequences for city-dwellers of transgression of these boundaries can also serve as 'intertainment' for the spectators.

In these plays we find two couples, the Shores and the Sanderses, members of established London families who are tightly integrated into London's social and economic structures.¹² In Edward IV, Jane Shore is the niece of the Lord Mayor, who calls her husband 'cousin'; as a goldsmith, Matthew Shore is a member of a highly skilled and regulated craft controlled by a structure of company supervision that was seen as emblematic of the good civil governance of London. 13 He rejects the king's offer of a knighthood as reward for his valiant defence of the city since this will disrupt the proper hierarchy of the city's institutions: 'Far be it from the thought of Matthew Shore / That he should be advanced with Aldermen / With our Lord Mayor, and our right grave Recorder' (1.10.233-5). George Sanders, whose 'true' story A Warning tells, is a merchant who trades at the Royal Exchange; the play effaces his historical links with nobility, focusing instead on his networks within London's commercial hub.

Both of these plays about Londoners present the city as the stable centre threatened by outsiders, those for whom London is not 'native' or their 'owne'. Heywood's version of the reign of King Edward IV and events following his death centres not on the court, as does Shakespeare's Richard III, but instead on the perspective of the citizens of London. The play offers Matthew Shore as the possessor of heroic forbearance, honour, and valour while royal and noble characters are venal, violent, and lustful, or perhaps more damagingly, seem trivial or malicious. Struggles for power between men who, despite their superior social status, are ethically inferior to the citizens of London set in motion destructive forces against the civic stability of London. Janette Dillon places the plays in a 'broadly conservative and celebratory dramatic tradition', but Edward IV is a deeply subversive

play as Richard Helgerson, and particularly Richard Rowland have recognised. ¹⁴ Heywood positions the city against the court, offering honesty, openness and stability as the city's enduring virtues, and showing its citizens as morally superior to the deceitful, quixotic, and vindictive Edward IV and Richard of Gloucester.

The inability, or unwillingness, of the king and nobility to protect the security and stability that London required for its commerce to flourish appears vividly as the rebel soldiers threaten to 'sell pearls by the peck' (1.2.53) at Leadenhall and to ransack the mercers' shops of Cheapside where they will 'measure velvet by our pikes, / And silks and satins by the street's whole breadth' (1.2.66–7). The central irony of *Edward IV* is that by seducing Jane Shore, the king brings about the destruction of social and commercial structures in London more effectively than the rebels who had earlier threatened to abduct her and rob the city's merchants. From the threats of Falconbridge, Edward's seduction of the reluctant Jane, and Richard of Gloucester's subsequent persecution of her, *Edward IV* shows London's inhabitants besieged by threats from the forces of royalty, threats expressed and negotiated in part in the ways that the play's characters navigate the city.

Although the wealthy and well-connected London merchant couple George and Anne Sanders who feature in A Warning are not as heroic as the Shores, their play also depicts the London that its characters inhabit as a place of reciprocal bonds of duty, integrity, and security; as in the Shores' London, forces from without threaten these values of the city neighbourhood. From the outset, Captain Browne is depicted as an invading predator, determined to acquire the city's women and wealth through seduction and murder. The play's action commences with the Sanderses and their neighbours saying goodbye to their new acquaintance, Browne, after a convivial dinner, where he has been telling them about life in Dublin. Sanders makes a remark about the uncivilized and lawless Irish, which draws on the stereotype of the wild Gaelic Irish that pervaded English culture in the late sixteenth century. 16 Browne, an army captain, pointedly replies that Dublin is 'As civill in the English pale as here / and laws obeide, and orders duly kept', disassociating himself and Dublin from the native Irish (117–18). The play thus transports the implicit opposition between civil, inhabited spaces within the Dublin pale and a wilderness or wasteland outside (which, as Stephen O'Neill has pointed out, 'underpins figurations of Irish space in a range of texts from the period') to London, from the outset setting up an association between the city and civilisation, and the outside, 'beyond the pale' where danger lurks. ¹⁷ Browne is proved right in his belief that London is 'civill'; despite his attempts he cannot import disorder into London itself, and, after several attempts to murder Sanders within the city, he succeeds only in the countryside outside London, at Shooters

Hill. Despite Tragedy's request to be given 'intertainment' by the city's theatregoers, in this play London is a place where to know, and be known, as a 'native' can defer, if not always prevent, Tragedy's arrival.

When characters construct stories of navigations of the city, they transform its spaces into places in which those who belong there become distinguished from those who do not. These plays propose walking by citizens as a proper surveillant function of neighbourhood, a way in which the virtues of the city are created and reinforced. In contrast, the unlicensed and illicit walking of Browne and Edward, which does not participate in the practices that construct neighbourhood, bring the degeneration of Ireland and the corruption of the court directly into the heart of the London household. Browne and Edward, as they prowl around London attempting to seduce the city's women and destroy its men, embody the power of outsiders to corrupt the London which is 'native and your owne' for the playgoer.

Early in *A Warning*, when Browne asks his new acquaintance Anne Drury to help him find the Sanderses' house, the directions that she gives illustrate how people navigated early modern London and also the ways in which knowledge of the city marks out the native from the stranger:

BROWNE But where's her house?

DRURY Against Saint Dunstones church.

BROWNE Saint Dunstones in Fleete street?

DRURY No, neere Billinsgate, Sainte Dunstones in the East, that's in the West. (301–5)

Fleet Street, as an expert Londoner would know, was the place to find not merchants but lawyers or gallants from the nearby Inns of Court. The play distinguishes between those who are part of a shared, unifying cultural knowledge — that is, those who know that a merchant's wife is much more likely to live near the church of St Dunstan's at Billingsgate than the one at Fleet Street — and strangers like Browne. Any distinction between outsiders and those for whom London was 'native and your owne' destabilizes, of course, when assessed in terms of knowledge of the city; the 'knowability' of London's spaces did not depend on the birthplace of spectators but rather their access to and experiences of them. The play does, however, set Browne up as an unknowing and inexpert outsider unused to navigating the city.

The Sanderses' house is near St Dunstan's in the East, 'neere Tames Streete' (1694) and Lion Quay, which was the quay on the east side of London Bridge. ¹⁹ Although the ironically named Trusty Roger reports that he has 'had a jaunt /

Able to tyre a horse' (1115–16) after he has trailed George Sanders around London for the day, the area he has covered is rather small:

First know,

That in the morning, til it was nine a clock, I watcht at *Sanders* doore til he came forth, Then followed him to Cornhil, where he staied An hower talking in a marchants warehouse, From thence he went directly to the Burse, And there he walkt another hower at least, And I sat at heeles. By this it strooke eleven Home then he comes to dinner, by the way He chanced to meet a gentleman of the court [...]

I watcht at his doore til he had din'd,
Followed him to Lion key, saw him take a boate,
And in a pair of Oares, as soone as he
Landed at Greenwitch, where ever since,
I trac'd him too and fro.

(A Warning,

(A Warning, 1120–38)

Sanders's morning walk is purposeful as he carries out his business as merchant and resident of London, connecting the commercial sites of London into a network as he moves between the warehouses, the Royal Exchange ('the Burse') and the quays on the river.²⁰ His day comprises encounters with other men of business: the merchant whose warehouse he visits, the trading of news at the Exchange, and the gentleman who he chances to meet on the way home to dinner. His walking creates a map of the commerce of the city.²¹ The lazy and untrustworthy Roger, by contrast, spends most of his illicit journey sitting 'at heeles' and waiting for his unwitting prey.

Sanders is an integral part of commercial London, and his open and sociable travel through London contrasts Browne's inexpert negotiation of the city. The walk that Roger describes enacts this kind of neighbourhood creation; starting at his home, others repeatedly recognize Sanders as he inscribes multiple trajectories through the city. The series of encounters that Roger recounts establishes Sanders in his neighbourhood, where, unlike Browne, he is known and recognized. Roger reports that 'he chanced to meet a gentleman of the court' and later, as he is stalked by Browne, Sanders takes a warm farewell from a gentleman of whom he is a 'dayly guest' and whose family he calls 'true friends'. The (unnamed) gentleman responds equally warmly saying, 'I endeere your love sweet master

Sanders' (871–6). Sanders refuses the offer of an apprentice to light his way home with a torch, saying it is not needed because 'Tis very light and the streetes are ful of people' (892). Browne's planned ambush is frustrated when Sanders meets another friend who insists on providing him with a light to go home. The people who fill the streets of London include Browne, the would-be murderer, but also Sanders's network of friends and neighbours who disarm the threat that Browne presents. Jean Howard writes that the theatre was enormously popular in early modern London in part 'because of the work it unconsciously but robustly and imaginatively performed in accommodating Londoners of all stripes to the somewhat bewildering world in which they were living'. George Sanders, far from being a bewildered presence in London's streets, enjoys open and sociable travel through the city of which he is an integral part, experiencing a sense of neighbourhood that King Edward in *Edward IV* never can.

When the disguised king arrives in London to seek out Jane Shore, his journey covers much the same ground as that of George Sanders and Trusty Roger: 'At Lion Quay I landed in their view, yet none of them took knowledge of the King' (1.17.24–5). From Lion Quay, the obvious route to the Shores' shop at the All Hallows end of Lombard Street would be to go through the area near St Dunstan's in the East, where the Sanderses lived, and up Gracechurch Street, following a similar route to that taken by Sanders and Roger to Cornhill and the Royal Exchange. The audience joins Edward towards the end of his journey as, shifting into the present tense, he entices them to collude in his stalking of Jane: 'Soft. Here I must turn: here's Lombard Street, and here's the Pelican and there's the phoenix in the pelican's nest' (1.17.27–8). The fictionalised historical account maps onto the playgoer's recollections of the real places of London in the scene in front of them, in an elision of the geographical and temporal places of London that invites them to consider the proper uses of those spaces. Although the king and the merchant occupy the same physical space, their different ways of walking signal the difference in their intent; Edward creeps around London in disguise 'muffled like a common serving man' (1.20.34), whereas Sanders is frequently recognised as he walks openly around his neighbourhood.

If to be 'at home' in the city is to trace those trajectories between private and public space that make the public space a private one, then the significance of the path taken by Edward becomes illuminated by Lawrence Manley's work on processional routes through London. Manley shows that monarchs traditionally entered London across London Bridge and travelled up Gracechurch Street, where the first pageant welcoming the king to the city was usually positioned, in order to join the main ceremonial processional route that ran east-west through

the city along Cheapside.²³ Manley argues that these ceremonial processions acknowledged and reinforced a mutual dependence between monarch and city, confirming the symbiosis of London and the crown. This is the relationship that Falconbridge wants to claim for himself as he rouses his troops by envisioning that they will 'ride in triumph through Cheap to Paul's' (1.9.19). By arriving in disguise at Lion Quay, Edward abandons the ceremonial entrance required to maintain the proper relationship between monarch and city; his choice of a clandestine route symbolizes the breach he is about to make in that relationship by seducing Jane, a citizen's wife. To be 'at home' in London is to be able to trace those trajectories between private and public spaces, which, as Pierre Mayol describes, convert the public space into a private one, a task that is not possible for the king whose role in London should remain ceremonial.²⁴ As king, Edward's journey through London appropriates the spaces of London that for him should remain public, ceremonial and 'un-private' and therefore unknown as a domestic space or, by extension, a neighbourhood.

The monarch's ceremonial route through the city is an authorised use of the urban environment, but Edward's journey through the neighbourhood in disguise tactically appropriates the space of London, which for him, as king, should never be private. Such appropriations form, using Michel de Certeau's term, a 'network of an anti-discipline', and the play shows Edward, from his impulsive marriage to Elizabeth Woodville to his abrupt departure from the Lord Mayor's banquet, to be undisciplined, impulsive, and motivated by sexual desire. Matthew Shore, having recognised his visitor, observes the threatening nature of a king taking a close interest in the domestic lives of his subjects: 'When kings themselves so narrowly do pry / into the world, men fear; and why not I?' (1.20.54–5). Where de Certeau admires the subversive anti-discipline with which city dwellers deviate from their assigned paths to walk on the grass, *Edward IV* conveys a deep unease about the consequences of such subversion of public order, especially by the king himself.

Another of *Edward IV*'s ironies is that Jane's penitential walk, imposed by the vengeful Richard, retraces the processional route to which Falconbridge aspired, and that Edward avoided, through London:

You must be stripped out of your rich attire, And in a white sheet go from Temple Bar Until you come to Aldgate, bare-footed, Your hair about your ears, and in your hand A burning taper.

(2.18.193-7)

The sentence expels Jane from London at Aldgate, the eastern gate which her husband and the other citizens fought so hard to defend against the threats of the rebels: Spicing says that the hacks that his sword has made 'upon the flints and iron bars at Aldgate' proclaim his valour (1.10.37). Writing about early modern London has long associated the theatre, the suburbs, and disordered femininity as sources of potential trouble.²⁶ Critics, for example Mark Bayer and Natasha Korda, increasingly see this characterisation as a product of modern historiography, but nonetheless both A Warning and Edward IV clearly distinguish between what is contained within the city walls — neighbourhood, duty, honour — and what threatens to invade it from outside — which may include the king.²⁷ After Falconbridge's defeat, in Heywood's play what is outside of London is not disorder but the absence of both the sustenance and friendship found within the city, to which Jane Shore gives equal weight in her lament: 'Welcome the lack of meat, and lack of friends' (2.2.30–2). If vice is expelled from London into a vacuum of absence, Edward IV implies, what remains inside its walls is the presence of virtue.

For George Sanders, as for Jane, death awaits outside the city, at Shooters Hill where, travelling friendless and alone, Browne finally murders him. In the closing scenes of A Warning, the execution of the murderers, including Browne, Sanders's wife Anne, their neighbour Anne Drury, and her servant Trusty Roger ritually cleanses the city. A Warning, however, seems less confident about the efficacy of this process than Edward IV: 'In every shire, each cittie, and each towne' the unrepentant Browne gloats, 'George Sanders stil is murthered by George Browne' (2402-3).

Notes

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All references are to A Warning for Fair Women ed. Charles Dale Cannon (The Hague and Paris, 1975). Martin Wiggins and Catherine Richardson's British Drama 1533-1642: A Catalogue (Oxford, 2013), 3.401, gives the first performance dates as 1595-9, with a 'best guess' of 1597.

- 2 Parenthetical citations reference Thomas Heywood, *The First and Second Parts of King Edward IV*, ed. Richard Rowland (Manchester, 2005). None of the early quartos of *Edward IV* bear Heywood's name, but Rowland concludes that 'although final proof is lacking, there is a strong possibility that Heywood was at least a principal author of the play' (9–11). Wiggins and Richardson's *Catalogue*, 4.124–34 ascribes it 'tentatively' to Heywood, while suggesting Dekker or Drayton as other possible authors.
- 3 Pierre Mayol, 'The Neighbourhood', Luce Giard (ed.), Timothy J. Tomasik (trans), *The Practice of Everyday Living, Volume 2: Living and Cooking* (Minneapolis, 1998).
- 4 Julie Sanders, *The Cultural Geography of Early Modern Drama*, 1620–1650 (Cambridge, 2011), 9.
- 5 William Ingram, The Business of Playing: The Beginnings of the Adult Professional Theater in Elizabethan London (New York, 1992); Natasha Korda, Labors Lost: Women's Work and the Early Modern English Stage (Philadelphia, 2011); Mark Bayer, Theatre, Community, and Civic Engagement in Jacobean London (Iowa, 2012); Tracey Hill, Pageantry and Power: A Cultural History of the Early Modern Lord Mayor's Show, 1585–1639 (Manchester, 2010); Eva Griffith, A Jacobean Company and its Playhouse: The Queen's Servants at the Red Bull Theatre (Cambridge, 2013).
- 6 Lawrence Manley and Sally-Beth MacLean, *Lord Strange's Men and Their Plays* (New Haven, 2014).
- 7 Rowland, *Edward IV*, 3. Wiggins and Richardson's *Catalogue* observes that the play may have been published soon after performance 'as an advertisement of the new company's presence and wares'.
- 8 Ingram, The Business of Playing, 25-30.
- 9 R.A. Foakes (ed.), Henslowe's Diary, (Cambridge, 2001), 326–33.
- 10 The digital reconstruction of the Boar's Head prepared by the Ortelia Project shows clear sight lines from inside the playhouse to the surrounding skyline, especially from the upper galleries, although it does not include surrounding buildings; *The Boar's Head Theatre*, http://www.ortelia.com/BoarsHead.html. See also Herbert Berry, *The Boar's Head Playhouse* (Washington, 1986) and Julian Bowsher, *Shake-speare's London Theatreland: Archaeology, History and Drama* (London, 2012).
- 11 Bayer, *Theatre, Community, and Civic Engagement;* see also 'The Red Bull Playhouse', *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theatre*, ed. Richard Dutton (Oxford, 2009), 225–39.
- 12 A Warning derives from published accounts of the murder and subsequent trial taken from a contemporary pamphlet written by Arthur Golding, A briefe discourse of the late murther of master George Saunders (London, 1573; STC 11985) and from chronicles accounts.

- 13 Paul Griffiths, 'Politics made visible: order, residence, and uniformity in Cheapside, 1600-45', Paul Griffiths and Mark S.R. Jenner (eds), Londinopolis: Essays in the Cultural and Social History of Early Modern London (Manchester, 2000), 176-96.
- Janette Dillon, Theatre, Court and City, 1595–1610: Drama and Social Space in London (Cambridge, 2000); Richard Helgerson, 'Weeping for Jane Shore', South Atlantic Quarterly, 98.3 (1999) 451-76; Richard Rowland, "Speaking Some Words but of no Importance":: Stage Directions, Thomas Heywood and Edward IV', Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England, 18 (2005), and Rowland, Thomas Heywood's Theatre, 1599-1639 (Farnham, 2010).
- 15 On the meaning of early modern 'neighbourhood', see Keith Wrightson, English Society, 1580-1640 (London, 2002) and Jeremy Boulton, Neighbourhood and Society: A London Suburb in the Seventeenth Century (Cambridge, 1987).
- 16 Stephen O'Neill, Staging Ireland: Representations in Shakespeare and Renaissance Drama (Dublin, 2007).
- 17 Ibid, 63.
- 18 Stow lists nine 'houses of students of common law', all in or around Fleet Street, whereas St Dunstan in the East 'hath a great parish of many rich merchants'. John Stow, A Survey of London Written in the Year 1598 (Stroud, 2005), 83, 129.
- 19 The locations mentioned in this article, and the routes described between them, may be identified on 'The Agas Map', The Map of Early Modern London, http:// mapoflondon.uvic.ca/map.htm.
- In thinking about the ways that these walks map the internal logic of the plays, I am influenced by Franco Moretti, Atlas of the European Novel 1800–1900 (London, 1999). Sanders's purposeful walk and Edward's sneaky progress contrast with the urbane walking for leisure depicted in Caroline plays discussed in Sanders, The Cultural Geography of Early Modern Drama, 172-7.
- 21 Compare, for example, Sanders to the Portuguese merchant Pisaro in William Haughton's Englishmen for my Money who has been read as personifying the economic forces that undermine the cultural unity of London. See Crystal Bartolovich, 'London's the Thing: Alienation, the Market, and Englishmen for My Money', The Huntington Library Quarterly 71.1 (2008).
- 22 Jean Howard, Theater of a City: Places of London Comedy (Philadelphia, 2007), 14.
- 23 Other than for coronation processions, which started at the Tower. Lawrence Manley, Literature and Culture in Early Modern London (Cambridge, 1995), 223-35. See also Dillon, Theater, Court and City, 43-58.
- 24 Pierre Mayol, 'The Neighbourhood', 11.
- 25 Michel de Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Living, trans Steven Rendall (Berkeley, 1988) 1.xiv-xv.

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- 26 Gail Kern Paster, *The Idea of the City in the Age of Shakespeare* (Athens, 1985); Steven Mullaney, *The Place of the Stage: License, Play, and Power in Renaissance England* (Chicago, 1988); Korda, *Labors Lost*.
- 27 Bayer, Theatre, Community, and Civic Engagement.