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CONCEIVING CITIES:  
THOMAS HEYWOOD'S *LONDINI SPECULUM* (1637)  
AND THE MAKING OF CIVIC IDENTITY

William Hardin

As cities grow, many of their distinguishing landmarks disappear: walls come down to accommodate expansion, new structures replace the old. In his 1598 *Survey*, John Stow documents the rapid growth of London, describing with nostalgia and anxiety a city that has grown ever more unrecognizable over his lifetime. The development of London in Stow's time indeed brought about striking changes in the physical landscape. Tenements sat outside the wall in what were formerly open fields. Streams such as the Fleet and the Wells were bricked over or reduced to clogged sewers. Of the Walbrook, Stow lamented that its course had become "hidden and hardly known."<sup>1</sup> These open greens and watercourses marked, for Stow and other Londoners, natural and familiar boundaries between wards and parishes, the city and its sprawling suburbs.

What emerges from Stow's *Survey*, and from other texts addressing London's growth in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, is a concern over shifting urban boundaries. Throughout Renaissance Europe there existed a common belief that cities reach a discernible limit of optimum growth, both spatially and economically. In his *Magnificencie and Greatness of Cities*, Giovanni Botero proclaims

"Let no man thinke, the wayes and meanes aforesaid, or any other that may bee in any way devised, can worke or effect it that a Citie may go on in increase, without ceassing. And therefore it is in truth a thing worth the consideration, how it comes to passe, that Cities

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<sup>1</sup>John Stow, *A Survey of London*, ed. C. L. Kingsford. 2 vol. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1971), 1:14.

growen to a point of greatnes and power, passe no further; but either stand at that staye, or else returne back againe."<sup>2</sup>

This 'thing worth the consideration' was indeed important to Stow and to others who chronicled London's economic and demographic expansion; so many of these accounts of the city harbor two implicit questions: had London already reached its ideal limits? Might it expand from a smaller, manageable city of distinct civic landmarks and customs into a sprawling, formless metropolis?

Even as a nostalgic Stow tried to stay London's growth in the pages of his *Survey*, the City's expansion accelerated, and fears were voiced then about the aldermen's ability to govern, provision, and maintain order among the more than 150,000 people who then lived in the capital. Most of the demographic growth during the seventeenth century occurred in the suburbs and distant parishes beyond the walls and ultimately outside the bars as well, areas that were also beyond the reach of some of the mechanisms which in the previous century had facilitated the assimilation of large numbers of immigrants. In the early 1600s the wall stood as the strongest visual marker of the City, yet as a number of its wards lay outside its boundaries it no longer represented a clear division between the two spaces. Houses were built up around it, obscuring it from view, and in numerous places it was breached to accommodate increased pedestrian traffic. Concerned about shoring up the City, the Lord Mayor in the 1630s legislated closer regulation of breaches in the wall, including its gates and ditches; numerous unauthorized passages through the wall were ordered to be sealed. In 1639 the City undertook an inspection and renovation of "posts and rails within Aldgate" which marked off one of its liberties, and in 1640 an iron chain was installed delineating suburban Middlesex from the City of London proper.<sup>3</sup>

No doubt there were practical reasons for keeping municipal boundaries visible, for instance, to stake out limits of jurisdictional responsibility, but such actions also exposed growing anxieties over the relationship of suburb to City. Industries were moving out of the City proper and into the environs, where labor costs were lower, and

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<sup>2</sup>Giovanni Botero, *Magnificencie and Greatness of Cities*, trans. 1635, *The English Experience*, no. 910 (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum; Norwood, N. J.: W.J. Johnson, 1979), 68.

<sup>3</sup>Corporation of London, *Index of Repertories*, vol. 4 (1640), fols. 30, 54, 55.

trading activity expanded far beyond the physical boundaries of the City's traditional marketplaces. In addition, the London livery companies, whose senior members comprised London government, were incapable of effectively managing this broad outer zone of unregulated free trade and industrial activity. From the thirteenth century, the companies had controlled the commercial landscape of London, but the rapid suburban expansion of trade and industry during the late 1500s outpaced their abilities to exercise regulation. The traditions on which the livery companies staked their authority carried little weight in the suburbs, and the very existence of this thriving, unregulated commercial space only brought into greater relief the diminished commercial control the livery companies held over London.

The livery companies sought strategies to contain the economic and demographic expansion of their city, strategies which gave them and other citizens the impression that London was timeless and essentially unchanging. They controlled one of the most powerful means of shaping the public's conception of London—the Lord Mayor's Show. The annual show celebrated the inauguration of the new Lord Mayor, but perhaps as important was its role in constructing, through the speeches and emblematic displays staged along the processional route, a city with distinct social and spatial limits—in other words, a smaller and more manageable London, one within which the City and its livery companies could reclaim political and commercial authority. When the Haberdashers' Company took their turn to sponsor the show in 1637, they chose Thomas Heywood's *Londini Speculum: or, London's Mirrour* from among the proposals submitted.<sup>4</sup> Between 1631 and 1637, Heywood proposed and staged four other Lord Mayor's shows, each dutifully containing the expected praise for the new mayor and for civic history and tradition. Heywood had been writing for the Admiral's Men and various other companies since 1596, and gained a reputation for staging civic-minded plays, *The Four Prentices of London* being among the first in 1599. By 1633 he claimed to have written, or helped to write, over 220 plays, many of them dealing with London's history and citizen society. This experience must have made him especially attractive as a

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<sup>4</sup>Thomas Heywood, *Londini Speculum*, London, 1637; in *Pageants*, ed. David Bergeron (New York: Garland, 1986). Citations will be made from this edition and will appear parenthetically by line number in the text.

pageant writer—clearly he knew what the livery companies wanted, and what appealed to the viewing public.

As an accurate reader of the City's anxieties, Heywood addresses concerns over the expanding metropolis; his show reestablishes traditional City boundaries and contains suburban growth by using strategies from the emerging science of perspective, and by recasting London in the role of a passive female figure. This desire to fix London in time and space may have been especially acute in 1637, owing to the royal incorporation of the suburbs a year earlier. Between suburban expansion and royal authority over suburban industry, the surrounded City and its companies suffered from both an identity crisis and from a threat to their claims of monopoly over the commercial affairs of the metropolis.

## I

The management and representation of urban space is important, writes David Harvey, because "spatial...practices are never neutral in social affairs. They always express some kind of class or other social content, and are more often than not the focus of intense social struggle."<sup>5</sup> In the early decades of the seventeenth century the London suburbs were just such a site of struggle, waged between City and court, over how this space was to be represented and controlled. This contest was made manifest when King Charles incorporated the suburbs under what came to be called the New Incorporation. As a reorganization of space, the New Incorporation of 1636 had a dramatic effect upon the City, its claims to power, and the collective identity of the merchant elite. With the advent of the New Incorporation, the line separating sanctioned from unsanctioned commercial activity disappeared, rendering the original corporation no longer unique. The New Incorporation literally surrounded the City Incorporation, encapsulating it within a larger commercial entity. Once established, it extended outward for three miles around London, with a warden overseeing each of its four divisions—north, south, east, and west—along with some eighty assistants. This area was considerably larger than the square mile of the City, and over time surpassed it in population and industrial production. Once the crown

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<sup>5</sup>David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 239.

invested the suburbs with an incorporation mirroring the City's, the two spaces and the qualities separating them became, in effect, less distinguishable.

During the dramatic growth of London in the early 1600s, the City and the court engaged in an ongoing but largely fruitless dialogue over the administration and control of these suburbs. "From the sixteenth century," writes Valerie Pearl, "the Privy Council, aware of the contrast between the well-organized City and the weaker manorial government of the liberties and out parishes, appears to have expected the City magistrates to accept some responsibility for ensuring that royal proclamations and statutes were observed in these areas."<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, the Lord Mayor regularly complained to the court about the unsettled state of the suburbs. Concerns were voiced over the state of the suburbs for over half a century, and by the first decade of the 1600s the small number of county justices in Middlesex and Surrey were unable to adequately serve the growing population. In addition, the justices had little, if any, jurisdiction over the affairs of industry, a point which especially concerned the livery companies. They watched helplessly as suburban industry and trade sprang up free from their inspections and regulations. Both the Lord Mayor and the Privy Council voiced complaints about social disorder and rampant building of inferior structures; these were problems that they mutually desired to control. However, with the City unwilling to stretch its jurisdiction over the suburbs, Charles's New Incorporation claimed the responsibility. With a constant influx of migrants into the suburbs, it was difficult for the informal structures of social control that normally rise up within these stable communities to establish themselves. Without unified structures of control within the City for forming a basis and a model for suburban government, there was little the City could have accomplished in these peripheral areas. Despite the numerous regulations drawn up against building, vending, and manufacturing issued by both the Lord Mayor and the Privy Council, matters in the suburbs continued to take a self-determined course.

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<sup>6</sup>Valerie Pearl, *London and the Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1961), 30.

## II

The City's hesitation to annex the suburbs arose from concerns about what effects doing so would have. It may have caused the City greater anxiety to tackle these problems than if it had simply put off dealing with them indefinitely. For instance, creating additional wards would require an expansion of both the Court of Aldermen (since one was elected from each ward) and the Court of Common Council.<sup>7</sup> As a closely-knit group of London's wealthiest merchants, the ruling oligarchy must have had reservations about bringing new representatives into their midst from the poorer suburban wards. Another point of their anxiety lay in the prospect of expanding the bars of the City to the very edges of these disorderly and poor zones, the result being that the City, as a distinctly bounded space of order and relative wealth, would in effect cease to be; "London" would become subsumed within a "Greater London." While the New Incorporation did not constitute a visible alteration of London's landscape, as the spread of tenements did, such a restructuring of suburban space nonetheless heralded the advent of socially unsettling, emergent economic practices: "Urban space," writes Henri Lefebvre, "was fated to become the theater of a compromise between the declining feudal system, the commercial bourgeoisie, oligarchies, and communities of craftsmen."<sup>8</sup>

The City's opposition to the New Incorporation was vigorous also because it "threatened to encroach on the basis of all City privilege, its jealously guarded 'freedom.'"<sup>9</sup> In 1636, with the City surrounded by its suburbs, it could still claim a distinction that separated it as an exclusive society—the freedom—for it was an institution, from time out of mind, that conferred membership in the guild and thus in the political and commercial spheres of the City. The freedom was the core of the City's identity, its way of marking itself off as distinct from the much larger community massing itself

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<sup>7</sup>Pearl, 32; Robert Ashton, *The City and the Court 1603-1643* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1979), 165.

<sup>8</sup>Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 269.

<sup>9</sup>Pearl, 35. For a detailed discussion of the freedom and the powers it conferred upon citizens, see Steve Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds: Structures of Life in Sixteenth-Century London* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989), in particular chapter 2.

outside the walls.<sup>10</sup> But now, under the protection of the Crown, suburban industry could claim a legitimacy that had been, until that time, one the City alone enjoyed. This rival incorporation made obtaining the freedom possible to a much greater population of merchants and craftsmen who were otherwise ineligible for City membership. The guilds were still an influential force in the City, holding as they did the right of conferring the freedom, but the implementation of the New Incorporation heralded a lessened prestige for them. As early as 1632 the City government presented the King a petition declaring that "the freedom of London which is heretofore of very great esteem is grown to be of little worth, by reason of the extraordinary enlargement of the suburbs, where great numbers of traders and handicraftsmen do enjoy, without charge, equal benefit with the freemen and citizens of London."<sup>11</sup> The freedom of the City was obtainable by patrimony, apprenticeship, and redemption. Both patrimony and apprenticeship, as required prerequisites to entering the freedom, were based upon lineage and duty respectively, while redemption necessitated a monetary payment to the City. These methods of acquiring the freedom had deep roots, established as they were in the early fourteenth century.<sup>12</sup>

Dispensing with the customary terms required for the City freedom, the New Incorporation liberally granted membership to whomever could pay. It bestowed an official sanction, directly from the King, upon these renegade crafts—in one meeting of the Privy Council these suburban industries were granted privileges of a degree that the City had taken centuries to cultivate. As a result of this duplication of privileges, the citizens felt that their identity as a distinct community was threatened by developments in the suburbs—not only by those problems of social upheaval and uncontrolled enterprises, but by the King's response to these problems as

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<sup>10</sup>Based on company and municipal records, it is known that about three-quarters of adult males living within London were freemen by the mid-sixteenth century (Rappaport, 49). No similar calculations exist for the early seventeenth century, but there exists no compelling evidence that the percentage of freemen had changed considerably in the intervening decades.

<sup>11</sup>*Privy Council Register*, 2/42, 29 November 1632.

<sup>12</sup>The relationship between City and court during the 1630s is many-faceted, so much so that generalizations oversimplify the complex structure of alliances and disputes between the two institutions. For more on these disputes over jurisdiction, see N. G. Brett-James, *The Growth of Stuart London* (London: Unwin, 1935), 235; Ashton, 166; Pearl, 37.



well. As for this new body's promises to regulate industry and labor, "persons who had never served an apprenticeship were to be admitted to the freedom of the new corporation on payment of a fine of twenty shillings to the king's use (as opposed to four shillings paid by those who had served apprenticeship); as to the exclusion of foreigners, they too might be admitted on paying forty shillings."<sup>13</sup> This pay scale, in essence, removed the freedom from its bonds to custom, and placed it firmly in a commercial arrangement. The situation is reminiscent of King James's sale of baronetcies, making the titles available practically to whomever could pay. In each case, the Stuarts were transforming customary privileges and rights into marketable commodities, taking control of them from the City companies.

### III

*Londini Speculum* was staged for the initiation of the new Lord Mayor, Richard Fenn, an alderman and liveried member of the Haberdashers' Company. An account of the show was printed in 1637 for officials of the City and the livery companies. In this text, Thomas Heywood invokes parallels between Republican Rome and London (only serving to fuel tensions between court and City), followed by a genealogy that sets up the metropolis as "Troynovant," heir to the traditions and customs of the Republic. Heywood then promises that his "mirror" of London will not distort the "true forme" of the city or its institutions.

The first pageant display, or "show," is of St. Katherine, riding "on a Scallop, which is part of his Lordships Coate of Armes, drawne in a Sea-Chariot, by two Sea-horses with diverse other adornments to beautify the peece; the Art of which, the eye may better discover, than my pen describe" (118-22). St. Katherine, patroness of the Haberdashers' Company, describes in her speech a declaration made among the sea gods to honor Lord Mayor Fenn. The first show on land features a display "outwardly *Sphericall* and *Orbicular*, yet being opened it quadrates it selfe just into so many *Angles* as there be Scepters, over which his Sacred Majesty beareth title: namely, England, Scotland, France, and Ireland" (190-5). An actor impersonating Pythagoras explains that "the strength and vertue of all number consisteth in the *quaternion*" (202-3). The significance of the num-

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<sup>13</sup> Ashton, 166.

ber four is raised in Pythagoras's speech in Paul's Churchyard; he points out that there are four elements, four complexions, or humours, of man; four colors (referring to race); four stages of man (from "Child-hood" to "Decrepit Age"); four moral virtues; and the four "degrees" of the kingdom: Court, City, Camp, and Country.

The third show of *Londini Speculum* "consisteth of Anticke gesticulations, dances, and other Mimicke postures, devised onely for the vulgar" (256-8). The fourth show features "an *Imperiall Fort...*" which "includes his Majesties royall chamber, which is the City of *London*" (274-7). Bellona, "goddess of war," speaks to the Lord Mayor from atop this structure, proclaiming to him that piety and peace dwell within, and that the fort must be defended against outside threats of pride, arrogance, and sloth. The fifth show bears the title "*Londini Speculum*," all earlier shows intended as prelude to it. The pageant display is decorated with small mirrors, and eight children represent eight different types of perception listed by the figure of "Opsis," or Sight. The point Heywood makes here is that the Lord Mayor must have a wide range of perception in order to protect the metropolis. Opsis tells the Lord Mayor to examine his city thoroughly through the optical strategies listed above. Finally, in the last speech of the evening, an actor representing Pythagoras returns to remind the mayor that all eyes are upon him, "that all men may see / What *Magistrates* have beene, and ought to be" (424-5).

As the show itself is titled *Londini Speculum; or, London's Mirrour*, we are challenged to view this conceptualization of civic identity and space as it is reflected in the mirror metaphor. Heywood uses the space-shaping characteristics of the mirror as a means of capturing and reconceiving a disappearing social space. In the preface to the show, Heywood writes that "it is called...*Londons Mirrour*, neither altogether improperly so termed, since she in her selfe may not onely perspicuously behold her owne vertues, but all forraigne Cities by her, how to correct their vices" (2-6). Heywood's use of the mirror motif was part of a larger trend; between 1550 and 1650 there was a marked increase in the use of mirror imagery in English literature.<sup>14</sup> In the first four decades of the seventeenth century, some seventy-three texts printed in England bore the terms "glass," "speculum," or "mirror" in their titles; these include a wide array of

<sup>14</sup>For a descriptive study of mirror usage in early English texts, see Herbert Grabes's *The Mutable Glass: Mirror-imagery in Titles and Texts of the Middle Ages and the English Renaissance*, trans. Gordon Collier (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982).

tracts on, among other things, fishing, crafts, government, religion and commerce.<sup>15</sup>

The regular appearance of mirror motifs in discourse came about as the English began exploring emergent conceptions of identity and mimesis. The mirror became quite useful as a means of articulating constructions of identity, as well as reconceptualizing civic space. It made visible through reflection the mysteries of various trades, and taught models of appropriate public, private, and professional behavior. The Lord Mayor's Show clearly functions in this didactic manner; year after year, the Lord Mayor and his subjects are instructed how to act in their respective civic roles. The mirroring of individual social roles, however, was not an unproblematic form of mimesis, for contradictions inevitably appeared between such reproductions of society and society itself. Struggles to assert a given concept of mimesis were taking place in many cultural contexts. What is most significant about this conflict over mimesis is that it provoked questions about essentialist assumptions in politics, religion, and social station, assumptions similar to those the City employed to construct ideologies legitimizing their authority. As a didactic text, *Londini Speculum* draws upon such assumptions in reproducing the metropolis as an ordered, unconflicted space. Moving through the streets of the City, *Londini Speculum* "reproduces" St. Paul's, the Thames, the Guildhall, the City gates, the wealth of Cheapside; the mirroring ceremony reaffirms the City's claim to these sites of power by bringing them into the purview of its frame. The illusion of space created by the mirror fills with spectators lining the route, and returns to them an idealized reflection of them and their City; as subjects, they too have been remade through such representations.

A striking illustration of the ceremony's mirroring of London comes in the fifth display and speech of *Londini Speculum*. This segment, "Londons Mirrour," stands as the event's general title, and describes the show's physical features: "The Pageant it selfe," writes Heywood, "is decored with glasses of all sorts" (352). This display must have had a dramatic impact in the emblematic significance it communicated to the mayor and the assembled masses. By reflecting the environment of the City in small mirrors mounted on the display, in Cheapside, it incorporates images of the physical city into this conception of London. That is to say, the mirrors provide a sort

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<sup>15</sup>Graves, 12.

of emblematic *tabula rasa* that the City—its buildings, its crowds—literally fill so that they become part of the display. But as the mirrored pageant display was towed along in the procession, it was only reflecting the surface text of the City's streets, its well-stocked and well-built exterior; the squalid tenements massed closer to the wall and beyond it, where the overwhelming number of Londoners actually lived, did not fall into the purview of the mirror.

The image of London appearing in this "perfect and true Christall" obviously is not an unmediated reflection of the City's spatial layout and social institutions: "duplication by means of a mirror is almost never simple replication"; it deforms, or rather reforms its object in a relationship analogous to that existing between texts and what they purport to represent.<sup>16</sup> The metaphor of the altering mirror, one that in some way enhances, distorts, magnifies or anatomizes, was sometimes employed for various didactic purposes. But an equally strong tradition of criticism existed against such mirrorings, the argument being that they obscure the actual, one that Heywood invokes:

*Plutarch* tells us, That a glasse in which a man or woman behold their faces, is of no estimation or value (though the frame thereof be never so richly deckt with gold and gemmes), unlesse it represent to us the true figure and object. Moreover, that such are foolish and flattering glasses, which make a sad face to looke pleasant, or a merry countenance melancholy: but a perfect and true Christall, without any falsity or flattery, rendreth every object its true forme, and proper figure. (71-9)

Later in the show, however, Heywood contradicts himself by introducing a variety of "glasses": "Opticke, Perspective, Prospective, Multiplying, &c" (335-6). That Heywood discounts the frame of the mirror itself is ironic, given that his own "Londons Mirrour" was decked with lavish costumes and "divers other adornments to beautifie the peece"; in fact, the typical Stuart Lord Mayor's Show cost many hundreds of pounds to stage (120-1). Also, the passage of these costly displays through Cheapside was an act, metaphorically speaking, of framing the show in gold, as each side of the street was lined with the well-stocked shops of goldsmiths and drapers. Heywood's dismissal of frames contradicts the ideological project of the show,

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<sup>16</sup>Yury M. Lotman, "The Text within the Text," trans. Jerry Leo and Amy Mandelker, *PMLA* 109.3 (May 1994): 381.

which is to establish boundaries that circumscribe the community, to frame it, quite literally, apart from the suburbs.

The act of reflection, notes Stephen Greenblatt, is an act of construction, one that

exhibits a whole spectrum of representational exchanges where we had once seen simple reflection alone...For the Renaissance more is at stake in mirrors than an abstract and bodiless reflection. Both optics and mirror lore in the period suggested that something was actively passing back and forth in the production of mirror images, that accurate representation depended upon material emanation and exchange.<sup>17</sup>

What the City oligarchy wanted was to incorporate the physical features of London within their ceremony, to represent its gates, its spires, and other features of the cityscape in such a way that they become accessories of the pageant. Mirrors bring about the "fragmentation of internal and external boundaries through the reflection of windows," and in doing so pull both the private, public, and commercial lives of the citizenry into a conglomerate reconception, a totalizing of private and social space.<sup>18</sup> The mirror, in brief, creates new spaces in which to capture and contain the City—its sites of power, its citizenry—beyond historical change. *Londini Speculum* traverses those spaces where the merchant elite lived and worked, representing to them an image of their community they most desired—ageless, paternal, and powerful. It claims to reproduce, but in doing so the mirror also exposes contradictions despite its seamless self-reflexivity. Through these revealing moments we uncover the traces of this show's ideological project.

*Londini Speculum* does not yield its contradictions easily. Built into the ceremony, as Heywood describes it, are moves that reinforce the reflexive singularity between City and ceremony. Such self-reflexivity, notes Lefebvre, is essential to constructing new conceptions of social space:

The very concept of a form, with an internal self-'reflection' or duplicate of itself as its defining characteristic—the concept, in other words, of symmetry with its constitutive dualisms (reflectional symmetry and rotational symmetry, asymmetry as itself deter-

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<sup>17</sup>Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Berkeley: U of California Press, 1988), 8.

<sup>18</sup>Lotman, 381.

mined by symmetry, and so on)—implies a circumscribed space: a body with contours and boundaries.<sup>19</sup>

Symmetry, when viewed from this perspective, brings a discernible shape to the City, a manageable space for the merchant community with distinct borders. For the ceremony to appear as a pure reflection, the gaps between represented and representation must be smoothed over; leaving visible “seams” would weaken the ideological power of the ceremony’s ability to circumscribe boundaries. In a dramatic display of this seamlessness, the trappings of the pageant and the features of London’s prominent landmarks are actually fitted together. In his praise for the show’s artificers, John and Mathias Christmas, Heywood proclaims that:

I can say no more but thus, that proportioning their Workes according to the limits of the gates through which they were to passe, being ty'de not to exceede one Inch either in height, or breadth: My opinion is, that few Workemen about the Towne can paralell them, much lesse exceede them. (430–5)

Precise engineering is not the only quality extolled by Heywood here; the pageant displays and the City gate also stand as synecdoches of the companies and the City respectively, and fit together snugly as a single entity. Earlier in this show, Heywood attaches a heightened significance to the gates through some semiotic cleverness; as he undertakes the customary convention of tracing the historical development of London, he writes:

first cald...*Trinovantum*, or *Troy-novant*, *New Troy*, to continue the remembrance of the old, and after, in the processe of time *Caier Lud*, or that is *Luds Towne*, of King *Lud*, who not onely greatly repaired the City, but increased it with goodly and gorgeous buildings; in the West part whereof, he built a strong gate, which hee called after his owne name *Lud gate*, and so from *Luds Towne*, by contraction of the word and *dialect* used in those times, it came since to be called *London*. (44–51)

Through this specious etymology lesson, London, its gates, and the foundations of its early history become conflated. The desire is for a seamless closure that joins the textual show and, in the form of the gate, the physical city. The two merge in a text that joins the dis-

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<sup>19</sup>Lefebvre, 181.

course and emblems of the pageant with the physical features of the city.

#### IV

In the last pageant display of *Londini Speculum*, from which the show gets its title, the pageant car "is decored with glasses of all sorts" and the speech is presented by the allegorical figure of Opsis, described by Heywood as the faculty of sight. "Glass" is a term that in early modern English may refer either to a mirror or a lens; Heywood makes use of both meanings to reconfigure the metropolis. Prefacing this pageant display, Heywood writes that

Sight is the most soveraigne sence, the first of five, which directeth man to the studdy and search of knowledge and wisdom; the eyes are placed in the head as in a Citadel, to be watch towers and Centinels for the safety, and guiders and conducters for the sollace of the body. (338-42)

In the show, the Lord Mayor becomes the eyes of the civic body, as Opsis provides the magistrate with various means of "how to dispose his *Opticke* sence." These ways of seeing, or strategies of surveillance, employ an extensive range of perspective across both space and time:

*Despice* cast downe thy powerfull eye  
On the poore wretch that doth beneath thee lye.  
Then *Conspice* take counsell first and pause  
With meditation, ere thou judge a cause.  
*Prospice* bids looke a farre off, and view  
(Before conclude) what dangers may insue.  
*Perspice* wils, in sifting doubts, then scan  
the nature of the matter with the man.  
Let every cause be searcht, and duely sought,  
Saith *Inspice*, ere thou determinst ought.  
*Circumspice* saith, looke about to immure  
So great a charge, that all within be sure. (367-80)

The Lord Mayor's gaze, in short, misses nothing—he has the capacity to see threats to the City inside and outside the wall, while the last line of this passage affirms his ability to circumscribe the City limits by a mere visual scan. In its ideological function, this ability to scan the city at any time, both private and public spheres, resembles the workings of the Foucaultian panopticon; like it, this official gaze attempts to

induce...a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary....<sup>20</sup>

The City square mile, highly stratified socially and gridded within a network of local spatial structures (wards, parishes, clusters of kindred craftworkers), was under no comprehensive system of executive control. There was no police force, and the City's governing apparatus was far too small to be influential in this regard. Thus, the totalizing scan of the Mayor stands in as an ideological means of asserting authority, and panopticism was the ideal ideological concept to give them this illusion. The Mayor's gaze may or may not have affected citizen consciences, but most important here is that this idea was cultivated within the minds of the merchant elite, who through their ceremonies needed to believe that they remained in firm control of the metropolis.

The fascination with perspectivism exhibited in *Londini Speculum* constitutes part of a larger interest in the early seventeenth-century science of optics.<sup>21</sup> Those who controlled the visualization of space held sway over how it was conceived and used. Point of view became the ultimate means to authority because it gave one the power to construct the "reality" of an essentialist world. Perspectival strategies help build a cohesive civic ideology by recasting both early history and contemporary emergent social practices within the framework of the pageant:

Perspective vision and prospective vision constitute the twofold projection of an opaque past and an uncertain future onto a surface that can be dealt with. They inaugurate (in the sixteenth century) the transformation of the urban *fact* into the *concept* of a city.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup>Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1979), 201.

<sup>21</sup>See Samuel Edgerton, *The Renaissance Rediscovery of Linear Perspective* (New York: Basic Books, 1975). For an analysis of royal ceremony and perspectival development, see Steven Orgel's *The Illusion of Power: Political Theater in the English Renaissance* (Berkeley: U of California Press, 1975).

<sup>22</sup>Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: U of California Press, 1984), 93-4. Henri Lefebvre corroborates the observation that cities were undergoing cultural reconceptualizations. "Only in the sixteenth century," he writes, "did the town emerge as a unified entity—and as a *subject*. . . . [T]he town



Once the "urban fact" is transformed symbolically into the spectacular concept, the City is able to posit a central point of view in the Mayor. His shaping vision—the power to mark boundaries, to survey the social order before him—is such that Heywood internalizes the metropolis within the magistrate himself: "Still to preserve her so, be't your indeavour, / And she in you, you her shall live forever" (405–6). Once this conception of an ordered, boundaried city is interiorized as a vision of the Mayor's civic conscience, it becomes transcendent and essential, resistant to historical interrogation.

## V

In the view of many contemporaries of Heywood, London was becoming an unmanageable body, open to passage, and enveloped by its vast suburban population. *Londini Speculum* and various other cultural texts of the early seventeenth century allegorize London as a feminine figure, transforming her into a maternal embodiment of the metropolis. The "feminization" of civic space was conducive to building ideologies of social domination and control, given that female subjectivity was freely appropriated by patriarchal institutions for their own ends. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, sermons, courtesy books, popular drama, and public ceremonies shaped conceptions of how men saw themselves, i.e., as agents capable of constructing autonomous subject positions within society.<sup>23</sup> Women in early modern England, on the other hand, lacked the authority that was necessary for constructing consistent subject positions:

Able to speak, to take up a subject-position in discourse, to identify with the "I" of utterance and the uttering "I" which always exceeds it, they were none the less enjoined to silence, discouraged from any form of speech which was not an act of submission to the authority of their fathers or husbands. Permitted to break their si-

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became the basic premise of a discourse which offered a glimpse of a harmonious transcendence . . . [It] appeared to found a history having its own inherent meaning and goal—its own 'finality'..." (271). In order to maintain such a distinct identity in these terms, the boundaries that shaped the City were rendered visible both geographically and culturally (through civic rituals and maps, among other texts).

<sup>23</sup>A useful examination of female subjectivity in early modern English culture and society is Catherine Belsey's *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama* (London: Methuen, 1985).

lence in order to acquiesce in the utterances of others, women were denied any single place from which to speak for themselves.<sup>24</sup>

Allowed no consistent voice of her own, woman became the vehicle for carrying numerous patriarchy-sustaining messages—national solidarity and civic order, among others.<sup>25</sup> Female objectivity, for the most part, was constructed and reproduced for numerous ideological ends. For the City oligarchy, the feminine embodiment of London provided a means of articulating the anxieties they felt over indistinct boundaries and shifting conceptions of social space:

troubling were the ruptures, stretches, folds, and loosened threads of the social fabric, the potentially divergent powers and interest that were geographically epitomized by the subdivision of the city into a discontinuous terrain of holdings and jurisdictions....The attribution of the feminine persona to the city diminished these concerns ideologically, providing not only a gender-based model of obedient submission but also a transhistorical identity which absorbed and suppressed the spatial divisions and discontinuities that manifested the city's true historic dynamism....<sup>26</sup>

Once the metropolis is transformed into the feminine, it is rendered a passive maternal figure whose duty it is to reproduce a civic ideology. Ophis (or Sight), the speaker, announces in the "*fifth show, cald Londons Mirroure*," that:

For *Londons selfe*, if they shall first begin  
To examine her without, and then within,  
What Architectures, Palaces, what Bowers,

<sup>24</sup>Belsey, 149.

<sup>25</sup>In a similar grasp of this concept, Mary Ryan, in her study of female representations in American civic parades, observes that

the female embodiment of the thirty-odd states of the Union evoked some abstract concept far removed from the women themselves—an overt expression, perhaps, of their cultural utility. The female symbols were serviceable in a variety of ways. Their status as the quintessential "other" within a male-defined cultural universe made them perfect vehicles for representing the remote notions of national unity and local harmony. Similarly, as nonvoters they could evoke the ideal of a nation or a city freed of partisan divisions. As supposedly domestic creatures, they could stand above the class conflicts generated in the workplace. ("The American Parade: Representations of the Nineteenth-Century Social Order," in *The New Cultural History*, ed. Lynn Hunt [Berkeley: U of California Press, 1989], 149–50.)

<sup>26</sup>Lawrence Manley, "From Matron to Monster: Tudor-Stuart London and the Language of Description," in *The Historical Renaissance: New Essays on Tudor and Stuart Literature and Culture* (Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 1988), 349.

What Citadels, what turrets, and what towers?  
 Who in her age grew pregnant, brought a bed  
 Of a *New Towne*, and late delivered  
 Of such a burthen, as in a few yeares space,  
 Can almost speake all tongues, (to her more grace). (383-90)

The City must come to grips with the "New Towne," the suburban space of foreigners and aliens ringing her: the solution, manifested in these lines, is to acknowledge such growth yet remain unchanged in shape by it. Heywood achieves this feat by mystifying the power-invested relationship between these competing spaces, recasting the suburbs as a dependent child whose rapid development is testimony to the gifts of its mother, furthermore owing his life to her. Within the frame of the show, the City community remains a unified, unchanged body, symbolically expelling the troubling polyglot suburban space that has swelled around her, yet turning the gesture into an act of maternal love. The embodying of London during this period of demographic expansion becomes even more fascinating when scrutinized in light of the following comments by Lefebvre:

When an institution loses its birthplace, its original space, and feels threatened, it tends to describe itself as 'organic'. It 'naturalizes' itself, looking upon itself and presenting itself as a body. When the city, the state, nature or society itself is no longer clear about what image to present, its representatives resort to the easy solution of evoking the body, head, limbs, blood or nerves. This physical analogy, the idea of an organic space, is thus called upon only by systems of knowledge or power that are in decline. The ideological appeal to the organism is by extension an appeal to a unity...<sup>27</sup>

We have seen this phenomenon in the earlier containment of the City within the person of the Lord Mayor. In this similar strategy of embodiment, London is brought to life as a being whose stages of growth are as natural and systematic as the birth its mature form delivers. The "burden" of the suburbs is recast into a natural process of female biology, then conveniently expelled.

Moreover, it happens that this "body" undergoes more than the symbolic separation of the City from her suburban "issue." After a brief examination of her outer skin, London undergoes what amounts to an anatomical examination of her inner organizational structures. As if confirmation of the outward form of the City were

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<sup>27</sup>Lefebvre, 274-5.

not sufficient to identify the body of the community, we find that the figure of Opsis abruptly dismisses all these external features and invites those who would view London to take an even closer look:

Unto her outward shape I doe not prize her,  
 But let them come within to anatomize her.  
 Her *Praetor*, scarlet Senate, Liveries,  
 The ordering of her brave societies:  
 Divine *Astrea* here in equal scale  
 Doth ballance *Justice*, *Truth* needs not looke pale,  
 Nor poverty dejected, th' Orphants cause,  
 And Widowes plea find helpe.... (395-402)

While the external shape of the City was undergoing a constant visible transformation, its elite community could still point to its institutions, existing from time out of mind, as civic traditions impervious to change. To fully recognize London one must look beyond the external features (geographical landmarks) that are no longer reliable markers of the community; through the *speculum*, the City's essential, timeless traditions and social structures become visible at last. This move to define London by its internal structures is a strategy intended to fix its identity, to render it essential and impervious to history.

"It is small wonder," writes Valerie Pearl, "that the City magistrates found the problem of the suburbs practically insoluble...Even if their powers were extended to cover these areas, such burdens of office were bound to prove heavier than could be borne by merchants, usually engaged in trade."<sup>28</sup> While this and other practical problems of suburban governance were surely factors in the City government's inability to expand into the suburbs, the symbolic repercussions of annexation posed a greater threat to the social, political, and economic authority claimed by the merchant elite. They were unwilling to let the institutions and customs by which they identified themselves become assimilated into a larger metropolitan space. To do so would render their community, its identifying spaces and customs, unrecognizable. They therefore drew upon the talents of Thomas Heywood to contain the historical changes they could not contain in practice.

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<sup>28</sup>Pearl, 42-3.