# Signs of the Crimes: Topography, Murder, and Early Modern Domestic Tragedy

**Marissa Greenberg, University of New Mexico**

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/genre/article-pdf/40/1-2/1/413172/0400001.pdf by guest on 16 October 2021

> [I]t seems to have been the constant practice of the dramatists of that day, to avail themselves (like ballad-makers) of any circumstances of the kind, which attracted attention, in order to construct them into a play, often treating the subject merely as a dramatic narrative of a known occurrence, without embellishing, or aiding it with the ornaments of invention.
>
> -- John Payne Collier, *The History of English Dramatic Poetry* (1831)

> Police are toning down the bright yellow street signs used in the British capital to mark the sites of murders, robberies and assaults following complaints that they increase public fear of violent crimes.
>
> -- *The Advertiser* (2002)

In the century following John Payne Collier's discussion of domestic tragedies as a generic group, each of which originates "in a recent tragical incident," critics have continued to comment upon the plays' fidelity to reality (Collier 3:50).[1] In 1906 John Addington Symonds noted the plays' "sombre realistic detail" (329); in 1975 Andrew Clark wrote about their "realism of the most unrefined and sensational kind" (155); in the final decade of the twentieth century Frances E. Dolan discussed their "grim journalistic detail" ("Gender" 211) and Peter Holbrook their "quasi-documentary feel" (93); and at the turn of the twenty-first century, almost 170 years after Collier, Richard Helgerson remains fascinated by domestic tragedy's "extraordinary realism" (2). Though they share

[1] I am enormously indebted to Margreta de Grazia, whose comments on earlier versions of this essay helped considerably to shape its final form. For their input and support, I am grateful to Jean E. Howard, Michelle Karnes, Clare Costley King'oo, Erika Lin, Cary Mazer, Phyllis Rackin, my interlocutors at the Shakespeare Association of America Conference (April 2004), and two anonymous *Genre* readers.

 COPYRIGHT © 2007 BY THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA. ALL RIGHTS OF REPRODUCTION IN ANY FORM RESERVED.

an interest in the genre's depictions of early modern English life, these scholars disagree about the function of these realistic portrayals. For Symonds and Clark, among others, domestic tragedy's realism worked as a didactic strategy. If the audience could identify with the genre's middling-class protagonists who moved in recognizable settings and submitted to familiar temptations like lust and greed, the plays' moral content would be more readily brought home (Clark; Adams; Carson and Carson). More recently scholars have reevaluated domestic tragedy's realism in light of a broader range of cultural concerns emerging in early modern England.[2] The plays engage the anxieties and aspirations that occupied the imaginations of contemporary audiences, in particular those fantasies coalescing around the household and the nation (Belsey; Comensoli; Dolan, *Dangerous*; Orlin, *Private*; Richardson; Wall; Whigham). Like this latter group of scholars, I am interested in the fantasies that domestic tragedy reveals and explores. At the same time, I examine the plays as reflections not on the household or the nation but on the city of London. I argue that domestic tragedy brings realism into the service of a specifically urban fantasy. Yoking topographical details and actual crimes, domestic tragedy represents London as chartable, exposed to view, and hence resistant to crime.

By exploring the urban fantasy that domestic tragedy offered early modern audiences, this essay aims at positioning the genre within current conversations about the role of London as a theatrical setting for commercial drama. In the last decade there has been an outpouring of scholarship on England's capital city as the center of economic, political, and literary culture. A salient example of this trend is Lena Cowen Orlin's *Material London, ca. 1600* (2000). This volume casts a wide disciplinary net, bringing together historians, archaeologists, and scholars of literature and the fine arts, in order to investigate its eponymous issues of materiality, topography, and temporality. Drama, both commercial and civic, figures significantly in the collection; a quarter of the essays focus in some way on London's theaters, including two essays on the genre of city comedy. Domestic tragedy receives only passing mention, however. This omission is all

[2] In a groundbreaking article on *A Warning for Fair Women*, Frances E. Dolan up-ends this link. She argues that the moralistic account of crime and punishment, while important to domestic tragedy, is confined to the play's allegorical scenes, which appropriate earlier modes of representation, in particular, the "almost obsolete ... dumb show." The play's realistic scenes, which evince "an emergent form of representation," are not didactic; they dramatize not religious maxims but tensions in contemporary social and legal identity. These "hybrid dramatic forms," preoccupied with providence and sin on the one hand, and gender and class on the other, "provide the perfect vehicles for competing, irreconciled interpretations of the events depicted" ("Gender" 201-02).

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/genre/article-pdf/40/1-2/1/413172/0400001.pdf by guest on 16 October 2021

the more striking because, like city comedy, domestic tragedy (as scholars such as Lena Cowen Orlin, Frank Whigham, and Wendy Wall have shown) became popular on the commercial stage at the turn of the seventeenth century; is deeply engaged with the material conditions of early modern English life; and is frequently set in part or entirely in London. Critics have not emphasized this last aspect of the genre,[3] perhaps because the play often identified as *the* domestic tragedy—Thomas Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness*—takes place exclusively in rural Yorkshire. Yet this same feature singles out Heywood's play as unlike most domestic tragedies: *A Warning for Fair Women* and *Two Lamentable Tragedies* situate entire plotlines in London; *Arden of Faversham* sets a number of scenes in the city, and highlights the proximity between London and Faversham through references to intermediate locales; in a similar fashion, *The Witch of Edmonton* and *A Yorkshire Tragedy* orient their rural settings in terms of England's capital city.

This essay not only begins to fill this scholarly lacuna by attending to the manner and effect of domestic tragedy's representation of London, but also demonstrates how this genre's engagement with its urban setting operates in markedly distinct ways from other types of London drama. For example, in her recent study *Theater of a City: The Places of London Comedy, 1598-1642* (2007), Jean E. Howard argues that dramatized representations of urban locales "provided Londoners with ways to negotiate—through the mediation of staged fictions—some of the changes overtaking these increasingly cosmopolitan urban dwellers" (16). In London comedy, according to Howard, references to places associated with commerce "provid[ed] imaginary resolutions," albeit "not always...coherent solutions," to "real social problems," in particular the presence of foreignness and shifting gender relations that arose as a result of London's growing importance in national and international economies (22). I argue that domestic tragedy responds to an alternative if coterminous source of concern: through pervasive naming of places associated with the prevention and detection of historical crimes, domestic tragedy counters anxieties about law and order in an increasingly unfamiliar cityscape. Indeed, the same demographic and topographical changes that Howard points to as a foundational cause of social and commercial upheavals also contributed to concerns about disorder and security in the city. Through citations of place-names, domestic tragedy creates

[3] One significant exception is Peter Lake's with Michael Questier, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat*.

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/genre/article-pdf/40/1-2/1/413172/040001.pdf by guest on 16 October 2021

a counterfactual spatial semiotics, such that audiences may envision London as more easily surveyed than they actually experienced it. As a *fantasy*, what Wendy Wall defines as "the cultural setting or syntax for desire," the genre's dramatic vision turns an unsettling reality into a source of pleasure (12).[4] By rendering London epistemologically secure, domestic tragedy invites audiences to imagine, if only for the duration of the theatrical performance, that the city is physically secure.

London's topography might be portrayed as safe and enjoyable inside the playhouse, but outside the theater it was cause for alarm (Slack). During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, London's population grew three times as quickly as the rest of the nation's. In order to accommodate emigrants from elsewhere in England and from the Continent, the city expanded further into the northern and southern suburbs, "turn[ing] fields into streets and gardens into alleys" (Schofield 314; cf. Finlay and Shearer). The same multiplication of alleys or "closes" took place inside the city proper, as houses were divided and floors added to create more tenements or "rents" (Harding, "City" 215, 132). This explosion of avenues, alleys, and corners created a progressively more labyrinthine cityscape. The emerging topography resisted navigation, as the aids familiar to modern city dwellers and tourists did not yet exist: the first London Directory appeared in 1677, and street signs and numbering became mandatory only in the 1760s. A century before the Reverend R. Kirk described London as "a great vast wilderness" in which "[f]ew...know the fourth of its streets," England's capital city could turn both residents and visitors into strangers in a strange land (qtd. in Boulton 231).

Londoners expressed dismay at this early-modern urban sprawl and congestion. In *A Survey of London* (1598), John Stow describes neighborhoods, once filled with trees, fields, and a smattering of houses, as "nowe ... made a continuall building throughout" and "pestered with diuerse Allyes" (1:127). How this crowded topography would affect social order became a source of concern for city residents and leaders. Vanessa Harding has shown that at the turn of the seventeenth century many Londoners feared that as the city grew "relatively

[4] In *Staging Domesticity*, Wall explores scenes of "the material realities of household work" in order to trace "the paradoxical ways domesticity signified in the cultural imagination and how it helped to structure social, sexual, gendered, and national identifications" (6). In terms of domestic tragedy specifically, she demonstrates a middling-class sense of Englishness that "illogically emerges from within the supposedly 'ordinary' and 'true-to-life' features of household life," including its identifiable locality (218).

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/genre/article-pdf/40/1-2/1/413172/040001.pdf by guest on 16 October 2021

unchecked," so too would crime ("City" 123, 130). The records of London's Common Council and Bridewell Hospital anxiously note the growing number of "private" spaces, "secret corners," "close" passages, and "unknown places" where activity could be concealed from view (qtd. in Griffiths 119). As Paul Griffiths argues, the authorities apprehended that "light, regulation, and citizens' routes" did not permeate these nooks and crannies, which "appeared to turn off to all points of the compass, giving shelter to threatening 'sorts'" (119, 117).

It is not surprising that audiences might seek out representations of London less anonymous and more coherent than the city they experienced. What is surprising is the role domestic tragedy plays in propagating this fantasy. In the terms Michel de Certeau develops in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), domestic tragedy allows audiences to imagine London in terms of place (*lieu*) rather than space (*espace*). For de Certeau, places are stable, definitive, unique locations; they have "proper" names. In contrast, spaces are characterized by movement, multiplicity, intersection; they lack the propriety and particularity of places. De Certeau also distinguishes between place and space in terms of human experience. Whereas a place exists whether or not persons are there, a space exists only if experienced by persons. The two plays I discuss in this essay—the anonymous *A Warning for Fair Women* (1599) and Robert Yarington's *Two Lamentable Tragedies* (1600)—invite audiences to imagine England's capital city as a recognizable and navigable network of places, not an obscure and treacherous cluster of spaces. The plays provide this vision by developing a system of urban signage that belied playgoers' actual experiences. The swelling populace that brought about the city's topographical congestion and expansion is largely absent,[5] and the small number of Londoners who populate these plays move through the city and its environs without confusion or fear. In fact, characters routinely enter anonymous spaces that seem to invite unlawful activity; but as would-be offenders and victims situate and identify their locations, these spaces are rendered orderly places of crime's prevention or detection.

[5] The relative dismissal of London's populace marks one of the significant ways in which domestic tragedy is unlike the histories and historical tragedies that Ian Munro investigates in *The Figure of the Crowd in Early Modern London: The City and Its Double*. In this insightful study, which also takes the explosion of early modern London as its starting point, Munro argues "that the crowd operated as the visible manifestations of an increasingly incomprehensible city, the tangible referent onto which the desires and fears provoked by London's swelling mass were projected" (1). Domestic tragedies foreground murder, rather than rebellion or riot, as the threatening consequence of urban illegibility. And while crowds appear in the execution scenes with which many domestic tragedies conclude, elsewhere London's teeming masses are largely absent, and it is the cityscape itself that functions as the "tangible referent" for urban anxiety and fantasy.

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/genre/article-pdf/40/1-2/1/413172/040001.pdf by guest on 16 October 2021

Domestic tragedy's spatial semiotics is illuminated by the terminology Kevin Lynch outlines in his influential study *The Image of the City* (1960), though it pertains to modern urban centers. Lynch argues that a city becomes "legible" when particular elements are stamped on the imaginative faculties of residents and visitors. He calls these impressions "cognitive maps" (Lynch 2-3, 9-10).[6] The particular elements that generate and characterize cognitive maps are (a) paths, along which one moves; (b) edges, both invisible and visible boundaries; (c) districts, subdivisions that are identifiable both from within and without; (d) nodes, by which Lynch designates "strategic spots in a city"; and (e) landmarks, which include local as well as more broadly-known points of reference (Lynch 47-48). Lynch concludes that a well-designed city features these aids to legibility, such that residents and visitors may map it cognitively with ease, and thereby navigate it easily and confidently without the aid of schematic or descriptive guides. Sprawled out and turned in on itself, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century London was anything but a well-designed city. Yet all five aids to urban legibility can be identified in the two plays that are the focus of this essay. *A Warning for Fair Women* and *Two Lamentable Tragedies* offer a revised perception of the city, one grounded in specific and discernable places: the Thames (a path and an edge), Billingsgate (an edge and a district), and the Royal Exchange (a node and a landmark), to cite a representative few.

This fantasy of an imageable city is also a fantasy of absolute safety. A legible city seems accessible and open to being "explored and in time...apprehended," Lynch argues, and thus "gives its possessor an important sense of emotional security" (6, 4). It is this link between urban legibility and civic law and order that makes Lynch's analysis of modern cities applicable to domestic tragedy's representation of early modern London. In these plays, shady locales are deprived of their anonymity: Stow's "diverse Allyes" are named, the Common Council's "secret corners" are opened to view, and the "unknown places" noted by Bridewell authorities are rendered knowable. With the flagging of every nook and cranny of the dramatized city, fewer narrow alleys and dark corners remain to conceal transgression. This persistent naming of the sites of crime would seem to evoke fear. Like the bright yellow signs erected by London's

[6] In his essay "Cognitive Mapping," Frederic Jameson critiques Lynch's formulation as overly phenomenological and insufficiently material. However, the postmodern model to which Jameson adopts Lynch's theory is not unlike the thesis I outline in this article. Both a socialist political project and domestic tragedy are interested in imagining a Utopian space, an idealized reality that actual conditions repeatedly fail to achieve.

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/genre/article-pdf/40/1-2/1/413172/040001.pdf by guest on 16 October 2021

modern police force, to which this essay's second epigraph refers, domestic tragedy's spatial semiotics invite playgoers to identify particular spots in the city as dangerous, places where crime has happened before and may happen again. Through its fantasy of urban signage, domestic tragedy caps these anxieties and renders them enjoyable. As Jacqueline Rose explains, fantasy provides both "fierce blockading protectiveness" and "grounds for license and pleasure" (4).[7] It is also domestic tragedy's particular fantasy that comforts and entertains: time and again, the anonymous spaces where illicit activities occur become distinctive places of crime's deterrence and detection.

From literally the opening line of the main action, *A Warning for Fair Women* repeatedly calls attention to its London setting as familiar and knowable. In the play's Induction, a personified Tragedy announces, "Our Sceane is London, native and your owne" (l. 95). On Tragedy's heels, George Sanders enters with his wife, Anne, and several others, and says, "Gentlemen, here we take our leave" (l. 103). The Sanderses do not exit immediately, however, and in the interim dialogue, "here" is defined as London. Specifically, George Sanders asks George Browne about Ireland, to which Browne replies that he is "no better knowne in London *here* / Than [he is] *there* unto the better sort, / Chiefely in Dublin" (ll. 109-111; emphasis added). Browne's acknowledgement of his fame in two capital cities underscores the play's setting: although Browne's reputation extends elsewhere, the dramatized action occurs specifically in London. Furthermore, it emphasizes that London is "here," an immediate and familiar city, and not "there," a distant and unknown locale.

By the time of the play's performance, Browne was likely better known in London than anywhere else. As Tragedy points out, the play's "subject [is] too well knowne" to the theatergoers "now in this round" (ll. 96-97). *A Warning for Fair Women* portrays the 1573 murder of London merchant George Sanders and the executions of the principal murderer, George Browne, and his accessories, including Sanders's wife. Although the play was probably written and performed ten to fifteen years after these events,[8] theatergoers could have known about

[7] I was directed to Rose's discussion of fantasy by Wall's *Staging Domesticity*, which cites Rose's discussion of fantasy as the "precondition or psychic glue" of social reality (3).
[8] Refusing to "go beyond the evidence and enter the realm of conjecture," Charles Dale Cannon cites an allusion to a "tobacco pipe" in *A Warning for Fair Women* and concludes that the play was written between the mid-1580s, when tobacco smoking was introduced to England, and 1599, the date on the title page (48).

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/genre/article-pdf/40/1-2/1/413172/040001.pdf by guest on 16 October 2021

them from a variety of texts, including Arthur Golding's *A briefe discourse of the late murther of master George Sanders* (1573, 1577); two other pamphlets that recount infamous offenses—Anthony Munday's *View of Sundry Examples* (1580) and T. I.'s *A World of Wonders, A Mass of Murders* (1595); as well as Holinshed's *Chronicles* (1577) and Stow's *Annales* (1592). Indeed, up to sixty years after the fact, George Sanders's murder and the perpetrators' punishments were still being broadcast in a range of publications, from Thomas Lodge's *Wits Misery* (1596), to Thomas Heywood's *Troia Britanica* (1609), and finally T. E.'s *The Law's Resolutions of Women's Rights* (1632).[9]

These persistent claims to spatial and topical knowledge threaten to have the opposite of their intended effect. Rather than convince audiences of their familiarity with the play's setting and action, the opening sequence gives an inkling of protesting too much. The disparity between what theatergoers know and what the play represents becomes evident as the action shifts to criminal affairs. Browne conspires to seduce Anne Sanders with the help of her friend, Anne Drury, and Drury's servant, Roger. In the course of planning adultery, all three characters who eventually become accessories to George Sanders's murder are introduced in terms of the play's urban setting. Roger describes Anne Drury as "as curteous a gentlewoman, as any is in London" (ll. 178-79); Drury introduces her servant as "trustie ... [a]s anie fellow within London walles" (ll. 187-88); and she portrays Anne Sanders as "[a]s kind a peate [i.e., pet], as London can affoord" (l. 209).[10] Through these comparisons, *A Warning for Fair Women* insists that its characters are as familiar to theatergoers as its "Sceane." Yet as Roger, Drury, and Anne Sanders conspire to commit and conceal murder, theatergoers recognize these portraits as favorable distortions of less pleasant realities.

The insistence upon theatergoers' knowledge continues to break down in the remainder of the scene, as the play begins to chart a city quite unlike the one they experienced. In plotting the seduction of the merchant's wife, Drury directs Browne to watch for an "oportunitie" to speak with Anne Sanders when "her husband goes to the Exchange" and she "sit[s] at [the] doore" of her home (ll.

[9] Most of these references have been noted previously (Orlin; Marshburn; Nelson 89-92). I have yet to find comment on Heywood's reference in *Troia Britanica*: "now by the violent hand / Of one George Browne, who murdrous fury leads, / Was Maister Saunders slaine (the matter scand) / Anne Druery (for the fact) and Saunders wife, / George Browne, with trusty Roger lost his life" (Canto 17. Arg. 2. 123).

[10] A similar comparison is made subsequently between George Sanders and the play's setting: Drury tells Browne that, "to his wife, in all this cittie, none [is] / More kinde, more loyall harted, or more firme" than George Sanders (ll. 515-16).

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/genre/article-pdf/40/1-2/1/413172/040001.pdf by guest on 16 October 2021

286-93). The location of "the Exchange" receives no further explanation. Nor would many residents or visitors need any, whether they be native Londoners, foreigners (from elsewhere in England), or aliens (from outside of England). Erected in 1568 the Royal Exchange played a considerable role in domestic and international commerce, and helped to put London on the map, as it were, of early modern Europe (Howard ch. 1). In contrast, the whereabouts of the Sanderses' residence would have been wholly unknown and must be charted through reference to particular structures, streets, and neighborhoods—in Lynch's terminology, to imageable landmarks, paths, and districts. When Browne agrees to Drury's plan and inquires, "But where's her house?," Drury replies, "Against *Saint Dunstones* church" (ll. 301-02). This answer proves ambiguous. Two Saint Dunston's churches stood in sixteenth-century London: one outside the city's western wall near Fleet Street, and the other in the eastern part of the city within the ward of Billingsgate. The confusion is quickly dispelled, however, when Browne asks, "*Saint Dunstones* in Fleetestreete?" and Drury responds, "No, neere Billingsgate, / *Saint Dunstones* in the East, thats in the West" (ll. 303-05). Once these sites are named, the churches, street, and gate become coordinates on a dramatized urban network that effectively identifies and situates the site of attempted seduction. It should be noted that less than fifty lines earlier Roger tells Browne that the Sanderses live in "Billingsgate-ward" (l. 257), thereby locating their home in eastern London, specifically inside the city's walls and near the River Thames. This information is not very helpful, in any event. Each of the city's twenty-six wards had specific "bounds," what Lynch would later categorize as edges; yet these jurisdictional boundaries became "increasingly meaningless as experienced spaces" due to the surge of construction in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Harding, "City" 137).[11] The greater precision provided by locating the church near a particular city entrance is necessary to pin down the Sanderses' residence.

The light shed on the Sanderses' home facilitates and frustrates Browne's desires. When Browne finds Anne Sanders "sit[ting] at her doore" on an "obscure street," he perceives her solitary and barely discernable position as an occasion for intimate address (ll. 321-322 S. D., 343). His initial inquiry—if she "sits to take the view of passengers" (that is, passersby)—undermines his intents, for it gives Anne Sanders the means to dismiss him (l. 355). "I giue smal

[11] For London's and specifically Billingsgate's "bounds," see Stow 1:117, 205-06.

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/genre/article-pdf/40/1-2/1/413172/0400001.pdf by guest on 16 October 2021

regard / Who comes, or goes," Anne Sanders replies, "my husband I attend, / Whose comming wil be speedie from th' Exchange" (ll. 356-57). At the same time, this brief dialogue establishes a link between the play's spatial semiotics and the resistance and exposure of illicit activity. Browne's query recalls the topographical specificity outlined in the preceding scene, whereas in her response, Anne Sanders draws attention to her confident authority over access to her residence and person.[12] Likewise, when her husband asks about her solitary position at their door, she insists on her ability to discern and regulate her "company" (l. 402). The Sanderses' home is secured, as well, by the movements of an urban populace that, like the play's detailed mapping, render it open to view. Anne Sanders describes Browne as just one of those "arrand-making Gallants" who walk London's streets and find excuses to chat up the women sitting at their doors (l. 394). Yet the threshold of the Sanderses' home, figured as legible and monitored, seems incapable of admitting such roving, lustful interlopers.[13]

The play's fantastical cityscape continues to resist transgression even after Drury's interference leads Anne Sanders to return Browne's advances. Unsatisfied by their adulterous relationship, Browne wishes to marry Anne Sanders and makes three attempts on George Sanders's life. Browne trusts that London's secret corners and close paths will conceal his crime, yet each of these spaces becomes an identifiable place where murder is uncovered. Browne's first attempt occurs in the evening as Sanders walks home. Browne waits at "a corner" along the path he believes his victim "should come" (ll. 904 S. D.-904). This shrouded urban crevice threatens to facilitate Browne's design, and only after the play sheds light on the spot is murder averted. Sanders takes the predicted route, but at the moment "Browne drawes to strike," a gentleman enters with his servant and a torch (l. 924 S. D.). After identifying the gentleman as a friend, Sanders explains that he was "here at a friends of [his] in Lumbard streete" (l. 933). The men exit together, leaving Browne onstage to rail against the "light" of the torch and the "companie" that bears it for foiling his attempt (ll. 930, 954). According to Peter Lake, these seemingly mundane causes for crime's delay signal the continued role of providence in post-Reformation popular theology. In *A Warning for Fair Women* and other domestic tragedies, Lake argues, divine intervention forces murderers "to commit the crime on their home turf, in a context where

[12] On the importance of domestic thresholds, see Gowing. On women's surveillance of domestic spaces and activities more generally, see Korda.
[13] I am grateful to an anonymous *Genre* reader for pointing out that "arrand-making" contains a pun on "errant" or "error" as both wandering and mistaking.

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/genre/article-pdf/40/1-2/1/413172/0400001.pdf by guest on 16 October 2021

anonymity and secrecy are virtually impossible" (39). What Lake's reading does not seem to recognize is that in these plays, anonymity and secrecy prove equally impossible in the contexts where crime fails as in the contexts where it succeeds. The entire cityscape becomes "home turf," for as characters perpetrate, thwart, and discover crimes, their movements turn anonymous spaces into identifiable places. In this sense, it is significant that the author of *A Warning for Fair Women* chose to set Browne's first attempt, which is not detailed in any account of Sanders's murder, on a well-known street with a singular, historically-established name. According to Stow, it was named "for the Marchants of Florence, which proueth that street to haue had the name Lombard street before the raigne of *Edward* the second" (1:201). In contrast, many of the city's pathways had multiple names, their appellations changing with householders' signs, dominant trades, and other immediate associations. For example, Stow describes a lane in Billingsgate "called Rother Lane, or Red Rose Lane, of such a signe there, now commonly called Pudding Lane, because the Butchers of Eastcheape haue their scalding House for Hogges there, and their puddinges with other filth of Beastes, are voided downe that way to theyr dung boates on the Thames" (1:210-11). Whereas staging Browne's first attempt along Lombard Street offers a vision of London as a network of definitive locations, citing a path such as Rother (or Red Rose or Pudding) Lane would have gestured to the city's historically unstable topography.

The conjunction of urban legibility and crime's prevention is not unique to this scene; it characterizes Browne's second attempt on Sanders's life, as well. Undaunted by his initial failure, Browne tries again after Roger tracks Sanders throughout the city and its environs. In a lengthy speech Roger describes his frenetic movements as he chases Sanders "too and fro" (l. 1138). After lying in wait at the Sanderses' home in Billingsgate, Roger follows Sanders north to "a marchants warehouse" in "Cornhil" and "[f]rom thence ... to the Burse" or Royal Exchange, which also stands in Cornhill (ll. 1123-25). Next, he follows Sanders back across the city. The merchant dines at home and then sets out to the nearby dock at "Lion Key," where he hires a boat to take him to "the court" at "Greenewitch," which lies well east of London and on the opposite side of the Thames (ll. 1129-37). Roger's catalog of places offers theatergoers the alternative topographical pleasures of novelty and familiarity, and the dual satisfactions of edification and a sense of belonging. More strikingly, this account of clandestine surveillance has the potential to arouse fears of being hunted within

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/genre/article-pdf/40/1-2/1/413172/040001.pdf by guest on 16 October 2021

London's urban wilderness. These anxieties are displaced and ultimately rendered enjoyable, however, by the legibility of the characters' movements. In relating his travels, Rogers persistently names renowned places in the city and its environs, spots that both residents and visitors could cognitively map with ease. Readily identified and imagined, the locations where Roger observes Sanders unawares would appear incapable of concealing urban predators.

The play enhances this vision of London when Browne's intent is again forestalled. While following Sanders around Greenwich, Roger overhears Sanders arrange to land "at Lion key this evening," and so returns to London to advise Browne on how he "might dispatch [Sanders] and escape unseene" (ll. 1144-45). Roger even recommends at which "corner" he and Browne should lie in wait, a location Browne "like[s] ... well" because "tis darke and somewhat close, / By reason that the houses stand so neare" (ll. 1164-66). As in Browne's first attempt, the reference to lying in wait, undetected in a shadowy and narrow corner between close-standing tenements, suggests a cityscape that encourages illicit activity. But once again London's murky hideaways are opened to view and murder is prevented. Browne gives the coordinates of the corner where he awaits his victim: he approves the spot Roger recommends because it not only conceals him but also places them "betwixt [Sanders's] house and him" whether "he should land at Billingsgate" or at Lion's Quay (ll. 1167-68). Once this corner is located in relation to both docks and the Sanderses' residence, it ceases to be an obscure and obscuring space. Just as topographical references mark the intended murder site within the play's urban image, a seemingly providential event does so within the play's plot. Anne Sanders enters on her way to meet her husband, inspiring Browne to curse, "A plague upon't, now am I prevented, / She being by, how can I murther him?" (ll. 1191-92). As in Browne's first attempt, the unexpected entrance of company alone ostensibly prevents murder, but the topographical details that mark both attempts demand we read the scene differently. As characters move through and survey the city, they turn nondescript nooks and crannies into distinct sites of deterrence—and of revelation, as the audience witnesses in the aftermath of crime's success.

As Browne bemoans his second foiled attempt, he stumbles upon a third opportunity to murder Sanders, and as Roger predicts, "The third time payes for all" (l. 1231). Browne overhears Sanders's plans to travel "upon Tuesday next" to "Wolwich," specifically to "Mary Cray" (ll. 1209-10, 1252). Once again Rogers follows Sanders and learns how he intends to travel home. Rogers assures

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/genre/article-pdf/40/1-2/1/413172/0400001.pdf by guest on 16 October 2021

Browne that Sanders will "come this way," and explains the source of his information:

> I heard him say so:
> For having lodg'd at Wolwich, al last night,
> As soone as day appeard, I got me up
> And watcht aloofe at maister *Barnes* doore,
> Til he [Barnes's servant, John Beane] and master *Sanders* both came forth.
> (ll. 1316-21)

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/genre/article-pdf/40/1-2/1/413172/0400001.pdf by guest on 16 October 2021

Whereas the previous two attempts were made at night and company entered unexpectedly, Browne makes his third attempt during the daytime (approximately 7:30 in the morning [l. 1346]) and with foreknowledge of a third party's presence. Browne seems to be aware of these disadvantages and improvises strategies to deal with them. Without the dark of night to hide him, Browne attempts to "shrowd [him]selfe" behind some "bushes" (ll. 1349, 1362). As for Beane, Browne dismisses him as "that stripling" and orders Roger "unto the hedge corner / At the hill foote" to look out for additional passersby (ll. 1327-28). So when Beane and Sanders enter on route through the "wood," Browne, confident that vegetation and solitude will permit him to get away with murder, "steps out" and stabs both men (ll. 1353, 1372 S. D.).

At first blush, this scene juxtaposes rural space, where Sanders's murder occurs, to urban place, where this crime had been prevented. Quite literally, the wood and not the street becomes the murder site; bushes rather than corners conceal offenders, and desolation occasions that which habitation forestalls. But in terms of the play's broader spatial semiotics, Browne's success cannot be credited to a dearth of topographical specificity. Before the double-homicide occurs, Browne and Roger's location remains relatively indeterminate. The title page of *A Warning for Fair Women* notes that Sanders is killed "nigh Shooters Hill," but the dialogue reveals merely that the murderers are somewhere between Woolwich and London and within sight of both "Greenwich parke" and "black heath" (l. 1330).[14] Only in the crime's aftermath does the play locate the murder site with greater precision. Upon reading a letter that describes Browne's "very bloudy act," a Lord exclaims, "Ev'n at the edge of Shooters hill, so neare?" (ll.

[14] The title page of the 1599 printing (STC 25089) reads: A / WARNING / for Faire Women // Containing, / the most tragicall and lamentable mur- / ther of Master George Sanders of London / marchant, nigh Shooters hill. // Consented vnto / By his owne wife, acted by M. Browne, Mistris / Drewry and Trusty Roger agents therin: / with their seuerall ends. // As it hath beene lately diuerse times acted by the right / Honorable, the Lord Chamberlaine / his Seruantes.

1674, 1683). Shooter's Hill stood in Kent, the next county over from Middlesex, yet the Lord's exclamation gestures to the actual and perceived proximity between it and England's capital city. Shooter's Hill stood at the southeast periphery of early modern London, and from "Shootershyll" one could "ouer loke the cytie," as John Fitzherbert wrote in 1522, albeit at a distance that would prevent a precise survey of London's "goodly streetes" and "fayre buildings" (qtd. in Gordon 84). The reverse is also true: Shooter's Hill is visible on *The View of the Cittye of London from the North towards the Sowth* (circa 1600-1613), a rare contemporary panoramic depiction of London's northern districts. By including Shooter's Hill, moreover, *The View of the Cittye of London* indicates the extent to which divisions between the city and its environs were fading during the early modern period (Berry 209, 197; Harding, "City" 135-36). Urban expansion was quickly turning London into a metropolis on par with, and then surpassing, European cities like Paris and Naples (Harding, "London" 130). In fact, the reference to the crime occurring "at the edge of Shooters hill" could easily slip into "at the edge of London." The anxiety produced by the city's steady encroachment on extra-mural spaces is evident in the Lord's "so neare?"[15] Of course, it is possible that here the Lord is referring to the proximity of Shooter's Hill to Greenwich (another Lord expresses amazement that murder was "committed in eye of Court" [l. 1675]). Yet more likely, theatergoers would have registered his comment in terms of the play's vision of London. Indeed, neither city nor court had the exclusive on this sense of shrinking proximity and heightened unease. In a 1616 speech before the Star Chamber, James I lamented how London's "overgrow[th]" and "increase" "in the suburbs" is "bringing miserie and surcharge to both Citie and Court" (343). By locating Browne's crime, then, *A Warning for Fair Women* works to encompass the emerging metropolis—from ancient center to swelling peripheries—within its fantasy of urban legibility and security.

Several domestic tragedies set outside of London deploy a similar strategy of locating their settings in relation to London.[16] In the anonymous *Arden of*

[15] Craig Horton argues that the destabilization of the city/country divide occasioned by London's expansion informs Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*, specifically by undermining the capacity of pastoral space—in this case, rural Bohemia—from fulfilling its conventionally romantic function of resolving conflict. Borton's reading of Leontes's and Polixenes's obsession with boundaries, and "in whose language the anxiety of failed spatial enclosure is everywhere," reverberates with my reading of the Lord's "so neare?" (101; 104-05).

[16] Domestic tragedies set outside of London also, if less frequently, locate crime in terms of local sites. In *Arden of Faversham*, for instance, Alice Arden and her lover commit adultery and then

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/genre/article-pdf/40/1-2/1/413172/0400001.pdf by guest on 16 October 2021

*Faversham* (1592), for example, Arden's murder ultimately occurs in his home in Faversham, yet several attempts are made on his life in London, where he stays "in Aldersgate street" (2.98), eats at "the Nag's Head" tavern in Cheapside (3.40, 123), and conducts his business at "Paul's" (3.7, 32, 49, 110; 6.3, 41). As I noted earlier, the play also highlights the proximity between London and Faversham through references to several locations on the route from one to the other, including Rochester, Rainham Down, Sittingburgh, and Gadshill (2.107, 9.55; 7.18, 28; 9.56, 59, 91; 17.8, 12). Through more indirect references, Rowley, Dekker, and Ford's *The Witch of Edmonton* (1621) relates its immediate setting to London. For instance, the naïve Young Banks cites well-known venues in London in order to defend Dog, the demonic familiar who facilitates the crimes represented in the play. "This is no Paris-garden bandog," Young Banks claims, alluding to the vicious dogs seen bear-baiting in the Liberty of Paris-Garden (4.1.258); "Neither is this the Black Dog of Newgate," referring to the ghostly canine that supposedly haunted the prison at Newgate prior to executions (4.1.261-62). Young Banks also adds, "The devil in St. Dunstan's will as soon drink with this poor cur as with any Temple-bar laundress that washes and wrings lawyers," thereby citing three additional sites: the Devil Tavern and the adjacent Temple Bar and St. Dunstan's Church in the East (4.1.266-69). Not all domestic tragedies name specific sites in London so pervasively, of course. The anonymous *A Yorkshire Tragedy* (1605), for instance, refers simply to generalized "London" and only in its opening scene. Yet in this seventy-six-line introduction, the play's setting, referred to only as "here," is related to England's capital city no less than nine times (less one reference in a stage direction).[17]

By topographically pinpointing the dual actions of crime and detection, these plays cap the mixed, even troubling pleasures released by the representation of murder. Recent studies in early English theater demonstrate "the elements of anxiety- and pleasure-ridden fantasy" and "the ambivalent mixture of desire and fear" that dramatized violence evoked (Lake xxiv-xxv; Owens 119-20). Then as now, there is something both fascinating and disconcerting about the

murder her husband in the Ardens's home, which the play situates in Faversham across from an inn named the Flower-de-Luce. Similarly, *The Witch of Edmonton* locates the scene of polygamy, witchcraft, and murder by naming sites topographically proximate to Edmonton, including Waltham Abbey, Chessum Banks, and Enville Chase.

[17] Specifically, "from London" is repeated numerous times (ll. 9-10, 15 S. D., 21, 29-30, 58, 58-59), as well as "at London" (l. 69), "in London" (l. 72), and "i' th' country (l. 62). Cawley and Gaines argue that this prefatory scene was likely penned by a different writer than the rest of the play (13-15). On the omission of the specific setting of the tragic action, see Hopkins.

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/genre/article-pdf/40/1-2/1/413172/040001.pdf by guest on 16 October 2021

sheer entertainment value of texts and performances "that repackage the inequities and horrors of everyday life" (Marshall 7). Not unlike modern debates on the media, many early modern critics feared that the representation of murder could, as Jody Enders writes of death on the medieval stage, "[create] an audience demand for violent reality" (143). *A Warning for Fair Women* defuses the threat of actual violence when it turns the murder scene into a site of crime's exposure. Browne fatally wounds Sanders and Beane, and though Sanders dies almost immediately, Beane survives the attack. Beane is soon found atop Shooter's Hill, and before he dies, he helps to identify his and Sanders's killer. Shooter's Hill then serves as the setting for Browne's post-mortem suffering. Tried, sentenced, and executed onstage, Browne is condemned to have his "bodie be convaide to Shooters hill, / And there hung up in Chaines" (ll. 2482-83). The mortifying display of criminals' bodies was a penalty in and of itself, as the play emphasizes through Browne's repeated appeals to be buried immediately after his execution. It served, as well, to publicize to passersby that a community would not allow transgression to go undetected or unpunished. Though at first an anonymous space that occasions murder, Shooter's Hill is reclaimed as a place that relentlessly reveals crime.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, this image of Shooter's Hill as a secure point on London's urban network does not match up with historical reality. Later in the seventeenth century, Shooter's Hill both became infamous as a haunt for highwaymen and continued to serve as a site of post-mortem punishment. (In his diary, Samuel Pepys describes the body of a condemned offender hanging on Shooter's Hill.[18]) Yet it is precisely the disparity between actual experience and urban fantasy that prevents *A Warning for Fair Women*'s representation of murder from evoking fear and discontent. Offstage Shooter's Hill served as a reminder of London's rapid decline into topographical chaos and irrepressible criminality; but onstage it could convey comfort and pleasure as one site within a knowable and secure city.

In *Two Lamentable Tragedies* Robert Yarington uses a two-pronged approach in the production of a legible urban image. As its title suggests, and its running title—*Two Tragedies in one*—makes clear, Yarington's play incorporates two plots. One tragedy is set in London, the other near Padua. Like

[18] In his entry for 11 April 1661, Pepys wrote: "Mrs. Ann and I rode under the man that hangs upon Shooters hill; and a filthy sight it was to see how his flesh is shrunk to his bones" (2:72-73).

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/genre/article-pdf/40/1-2/1/413172/040001.pdf by guest on 16 October 2021

*A Warning for Fair Women*, the London plot would have been well-known to contemporary audiences. This plot dramatizes the 1594 murders of Robert Beech and his servant by tavern-owner Thomas Merry and the hangings of the principal murderer and his sister, who is condemned as accessory. News of these events spread via five ballads and a "booke" (all now lost), as well as a pamphlet account of infamous criminal events entitled *A World of Wonders, A Mass of Murders* (1595) (Patenaude 359-60, 23). In addition, Henslowe's *Diary* suggests that these events inspired another play, *The Tragedy of Thomas Merry* (1599) by Haughton and Day (also lost) (Collier 3:50 n.). All of these texts appear to have been published in the immediate wake of Thomas Merry's crimes and punishment. Having determined the 'real' events dramatized in the London plot, scholars began to search for sources of the Paduan plot. Several possibilities were proposed: a presumed Italian source, an often-printed English ballad, and infamous English familial histories. In her critical edition of Yarington's play, Anne Patenaude gives an appraisal of each possibility, especially the ballad, which she compares to the play in great detail. She concludes this review with the following admission: "until firm evidence appears to link the orphan plot to any source, all hypotheses remain pure conjecture" (28). But this lack of a source may be precisely the point. The Paduan plot avoids the topical and topographical specificity of the London plot. Not only is there no source; audiences are meant to recognize its spatial indeterminacy.

The contrast between the highly particularized London plot and the elusive Paduan plot is already evident in the play's full title: *Tvvo lamentable tragedies. The one, of the murther of Maister Beech a chaundler in Thames-streete, and his boye, done by Thomas Merry. The other of a young childe murthered in a Wood by two Ruffins, with the consent of his Vnckle*. "Thames-streete" can be distinguished from other streets in a manner that "a Wood" cannot be from other dense growths of trees. So too proper names individualize the victim and offender in the London plot while the "young childe," "Vnckle," and "two Ruffins" of the Paduan plot remain anonymous. In due course theatergoers learn the names of the Paduan victim and principal offender: young Pertillo is killed by assassins whom his uncle Fallerio hires in order to secure Pertillo's inheritance for himself and his son, Allenso. Yet the site of Pertillo's murder remains vague; criminals and victim alike move through perpetually unspecified locales. In the Induction, Truth reveals only that "the young childe['s]" tragedy occurred "[n]eere *Padua*," and then adds, in a mischievous tautology, that its setting is "further off" from

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/genre/article-pdf/40/1-2/1/413172/040001.pdf by guest on 16 October 2021

the locale of the audience than is the London of Thomas Merry's tragedy (sig. A3r). Furthermore, Yarington provides no geographical details that might minimize this sense of indeterminacy. Although Pertillo's murder is represented onstage, the only location-specific clue is Fallerio's command that the assassins kill the boy at "a thicket ten miles from this place" (sig. D1v). The audience is left to wonder even the general direction of this thicket when Fallerio feigningly announces, "I haue deuisde to send the boye abroade, / With this excuse, to haue him fostred, / In better manners then this place affoords" (sig. D1v). Subsequently, the audience learns that the location "abroade" to which Pertillo is purportedly headed when he is killed is Padua: Pertillo announces that Allenso gave him "[a] prettie Nag to ride to *Padua*," and later Pertillo's aunt relates that "the little boy / Was sent away, to keepe at *Padua*" (sigs. D4r, H1r). Yet "this place," the originary point of Pertillo's final journey, remains unknown. In effect, like the title's reference to "a Wood," and Truth's "[n]eere *Padua*," these bits of information leave the crime scene quite nebulous. The site of Pertillo's murder could be any wood—near Padua or elsewhere, for that matter.

Nor is the crime scene assigned any more specificity once the murder is committed. After Fallerio hints that Pertillo will never reach Padua, Allenso goes in search of his cousin and ends up wandering in the same wood where Pertillo is killed. Allenso describes "this wood" as a "woody sauadge labyrinth," full of "vnknowne pathes of dreadfull wildernesse," from which he "can finde no waye to issue out" (sig. F1r). Lacking any particularities of place, the wood resists navigation, and the site of Pertillo's murder is discovered quite accidentally. Allenso despairs of finding his cousin in "this erroneous winding wildernesse," and bumping into the Duke and his men, who had been chasing a rabbit through "[t]he thickets," Allenso asks for directions to a "pathe that leades to *Padua*" (sig. F1r). Before Allenso and the Duke may proceed toward Padua, however, they espy the "murtherous spectacle," which includes the bodies of Pertillo and his assassins, who turn on one another after stabbing the boy (sig. F1v). One assassin briefly survives his wounds—just long enough, in fact, to tell Allenso and the Duke the name of his employer. The discovery of murder and its architect does little to quell the anxiety evoked by the representation of violent crime, however. Even Fallerio's arrest and condemnation provide insufficient relief, for the site of murder continues to elude legibility. Unable to place the Paduan plot,

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/genre/article-pdf/40/1-2/1/413172/040001.pdf by guest on 16 October 2021

either as a recognizable event or within a legible landscape, theatergoers must remain doubtful that the detection of illicit activity is at all inevitable.[19]

Of course, most theatergoers had likely never been to Italy, let alone Padua. But Yarington could have developed a semiotics of space based on the city's unique associations in late-sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century England. As Fynes Moryson writes in *An Itinerary* (1617), "Touching the cities of Italy, it is proverbially said [that ... ] Rome [is] the holy, Padua the learned, Venice the Rich, Florence the Beautiful, Milan the great, [... and] Naples the Gentile" (3:455-56). And in *Coryats Crudities* (1611), Thomas Coryate distinguishes Padua as "Paradise" on earth, "[f]or indeed it is as sweetly seate as any place of the whole world is or can be" (qtd. in Levith 43). Shakespeare's comedies illustrate how, well before the publication of Moryson's and Coryate's accounts, Padua denoted education and beauty. *In Much Ado About Nothing* (1600), "Signor Benedick of Padua" is renowned for his wit (1.1.30); in *The Merchant of Venice* (1598), "the learned Bellario" sends from Padua the legal documents, apparel, and letter of introduction Portia needs to defend Antonio (4.1.162); and in *The Taming of the Shrew* (1592), Lucentio describes "fair Padua, nursery of the arts" as "[t]he pleasant garden of great Italy" (1.1.2, 4).[20]

In addition to these general associations, the particularities of Padua's cityscape were available to playwrights and audiences. Scholars, statesmen, and entertainers brought back information about the city, which spread through manuscript accounts and casual conversation.[21] After the publication of Coryate's *Crudities* and Moryson's *Itinerary*, detailed knowledge of Padua would certainly have been more widespread. Coryate wrote more about Padua than any other Italian city (save Venice) because he had a guide and therefore saw more of the city (Coryate 156). He describes Padua's topography, including the location and features of Livy's house; the city's "very auncient gate," which stood "neare to the signe of the Starre where [he] lay being a very faire Inne" (135); and its covered streets, which provide "pleasant and safe shelter" from the sun in summer and injurious rains and "violent storms" in winter (152, 155). Coryate cannot

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/genre/article-pdf/40/1-2/1/413172/040001.pdf by guest on 16 October 2021

[19] On early modern usage of "plot" as both dramatic action and physical place, see Turner.

[20] *The Taming of the Shrew* is a significant point of comparison because its action also takes place in two distinct settings, one English, the other Italian. But unlike Shakespeare's comedy, Yarington's tragedy does not designate one setting as 'real' and the other as fictional.

[21] Literary and political figures who spent time in Padua include Thomas Hoby, Thomas Wyatt, Cardinal Pole, Francis Walsingham, Philip Sidney, and Samuel Daniel. Dramatists may have learned about Padua from manuscript accounts or conversations with these men, or "through casual conversations with fellow actors and other entertainers who had travelled there" (Brennan 86).

account for the emptiness of these streets, but Moryson offers this explanation: "This City hath little trafficke, though it lies very fit for the same, because the Venetians draw it all to themselves" (1:156).[22] Coryate also details the area surrounding Padua, naming towns and describing the "many pleasant and delectable Palaces and banqueting houses, which serue for hooses [*sic*] of retraite for the Gentlemen of Venice and Padua, wherein they solace themselues in the Sommer" (125). None of these details make their way into Yarington's play; his Italian characters inhabit a strikingly featureless landscape.

The spatial indeterminacy of Yarington's Paduan plot serves as a foil to London's place-specific topography. This comparative strategy parallels the broader trend of setting plays in Italy in order to comment on English events, issues, and values. At times the portrayal of Italian freedom and humanist tradition works to critique English restraint and provincialism. Just as if not more frequently, England is upheld as free from Italy's more unsavory associations: mischievous stratagems, Machiavellian dissimulation, and Senecan violence (Hoenselaars; Hutchings; Parolin; Paster). The London plot of Yarington's play demonstrates that Italy does not hold a monopoly on deception and violence. In fact, the Induction to *Two Lamentable Tragedies* presents the London and Paduan plots as two halves of the same whole: Avarice boasts of "know[ing] *two* men" who will commit murder for lucre, Homicide gleefully announces that he and Avarice "will go make a *two-folde* Tragedie," and Truth warns audiences to "prepare [their] teare bedecked eyes, / To see *two shewes* of lamentation" (sigs. A2$^{v}$-A3$^{r}$; emphasis added). Moreover, descriptions of the "dark" and "narrow" spaces where Thomas Merry commits and attempts to "hide" his crimes seem to equate London's crevices with Padua's thickets. If at first blush woods and city appear to be comparable dens of iniquity, it becomes apparent that the sylvan but not the urban setting frustrates the discovery of transgression.[23] In contrast to

[22] Like Coryate, Moryson describes "[t]he forme of the City," its covered streets, and Livy's house (1:151-55); he also points to a more particular establishment: a building "seated over against Saint Martins church, and was of old a publicke Inne, having the signe of an Oxe, which name it still retaineth" (1:156).

[23] In the recent *Domestic Life and Domestic Tragedy in Early Modern England*, Catherine Richardson addresses Yarington's discrepant spatial representations as part of her examination of a universal "grammar of domestic organisation" (18; cf. ch. 4). This grammar is largely absent from the Paduan plotline of *Two Lamentable Tragedies*: "Only the local strand of the narrative [i.e., the London plotline] is interested in the particularising qualities of domestic settings, a feature which is given considerable prominence in contrast to the generalised sparseness of the Italian plot" (130). By engaging the early modern audience's experiences and imaginings of household spaces and interpersonal relationships, Yarington's London plotline offers a vision of "the operations of justice" in terms of the

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/genre/article-pdf/40/1-2/1/413172/040001.pdf by guest on 16 October 2021

Padua's not-so-pristine wilderness, London's charted corners and exposed alley-ways form a legible cityscape that relentlessly exposes crime.

When Thomas Merry plans to murder Robert Beech "in [his] garret," he gloats, "The night conceales all in her pitchie cloake, / And none can open what I meane to hide" (sig. B3ʳ). Thomas's confidence is misplaced, however. Light is literally shed on Thomas's crime when his sister Rachel brings him a candle so he and his 'guest' need not "tarry in the darke" (sig. B4ʳ). Topographical details shed light of another sort on Beech's death. Truth explains that this "cursed deede" occurred "[w]ithin that streete whose side the riuer Thames / Doth striue to wash from all impuritie" (sig. A3ʳ). Thames Street is a rather lengthy thoroughfare, running through seven of London's twenty-six wards or aldermanries. Yet the play specifies where along Thames Street Thomas's first crime takes place when it names the Merrys' tavern-home: "the Bull" (sig. B4ʳ). Around the turn of the seventeenth century, at least nine establishments went by the name Bull, or the frequently interchangeable name Bull Head or Bull's Head. In fact, extant records indicate that about fifty years after Thomas Merry died for his crime, a Bull Inn stood on Thames Street (Lillywhite 78-82; cf. Rogers).[24] Whether or not this inn is the same Bull that Thomas Merry operated is less important than that by naming "the Bull," Yarington's play offers one critical piece of information needed to pin down the site of Beech's murder. In early modern London, an establishment by the name of the Bull would have had jutting out from its side a sign representing either a whole bull, a bull's head with or without horns, or only horns (Lillywhite 78). Such images served, as one historian of London signage explains, "to indicate a location in streets without numbers, and as a means of identification of a residence or a tradesman when few people were capable of reading a name" (Lillywhite xvi; cf. Heal 2). However, because numerous establishments could use the same sign, additional information, such as a street name or an adjacent landmark, would have been necessary to find a particular business or household. An illustrative example of this chorographic means of address appears on the title-page of Yarington's play: *Two Lamentable Tragedies* was "[p]rinted for Mathew Lawe, and to be solde at his shop in Paules Church-yarde neere vnto S. Austines gate, at the signe of the Foxe." Three topographical markers—a famous churchyard, a par-

"co-operation" between individual households, whose operations resist scrutiny, and the community, whose collective memory and efforts to interpret physical evidence facilitate discovery (144).

[24] I am grateful to Mary Bly for directing me to these sources.

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/genre/article-pdf/40/1-2/1/413172/040001.pdf by guest on 16 October 2021

ticular gate, and a specific sign—help locate Mathew Lawe's shop. In a similar fashion, Yarington's play locates the Merrys' tavern-home by situating it along Thames Street and naming its sign. In this way, even though the crime takes place in a dark garret, a space that pointedly evokes the disordered build-up of contemporary London, the play spotlights the site of Beech's murder.

Thomas Merry tries repeatedly to cover up Beech's murder, but the more he works to conceal his crime, the more the play works to represent London as a legible network of places that reveals transgression. As I have shown, for an audience accustomed to combining various pieces of topographical information in order to navigate the city, the act of naming Thomas's tavern-home begins the work of exposing the murder site. Within the plot, as well, the knowledge of a place-name threatens to reveal the crime. When the murderer draws Beech to his tavern-home on the false pretense of meeting friends, Beech tells his servant, Winchester, "If any aske, come for me to the Bull" (sig. $B4^r$). Thomas worries that Winchester can identify the Bull as the last place where Beech would have been seen alive, for "the boy … knew [Thomas] fetcht his maister to [his] house," and also "know[s] wherabouts [Thomas] dwel[s]" (sigs. $C3^r$-$C3^v$). By killing Winchester, Thomas believes he can seal this potential leak of information. Yet this second murder spouts more topographical leaks. Winchester cries out when Thomas attacks him, literally calling attention to the crime scene. As Thomas tells his sister, "The mightie clamour that the boy did make, / Hath raisde the neighbours round about the street," such that Thomas "[k]now[s] not where to hide [him]self" (sig. $C4^v$). Thomas's fear of (and possibly theatergoers' hope in) the neighbors proves quite groundless. The only neighbor to see Winchester's murderer leave the crime scene cannot identify him, claiming "twas so darke [she] could see no bodie" (sig. $C3^v$). Moreover, as the play repeatedly demonstrates, these onstage Londoners are wholly ineffective detectives. They conduct a supposedly thorough search of the neighborhood but find no evidence of the murderer (sigs. $D3^r$, $D4^r$). In contrast, dramatic place-naming effectively publishes crime: Thomas commits his second murder "neere Lambert Hill," a well-known district located along Thames Street (sig. $G1^r$; cf. sigs. $I2^v$, $I4^r$). The play thus erects another bright yellow signpost, extending its portrayal of the city, and eventually the murderer, as open to view.

As the play links place-names to the persistent exposure of crime, it provides theatergoers with a comforting image of London as a city in which transgression cannot remain hidden. Thomas attempts to cover up Beech's murder by

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/genre/article-pdf/40/1-2/1/413172/040001.pdf by guest on 16 October 2021

disposing of the evidence in seemingly obscure spots far from his tavern-home. Thomas announces he will "throw" Beech's trunk and arms "into *Paris-garden* ditch," and "leaue" his legs and head "[i]n some darke place nere to Bainardes castle" (sigs. E2r, F3v). Yet both places discover their bloody contents to Londoners passing through. "Walking betime by Paris-Garden ditch," a gentleman is inspired by his dog's barking and fawning "to make the ditch be dragd, / Where then was found" Beech's trunk and arms (sigs. G2r-G2v). Likewise, two watermen walking along the "narrow lane / Neere Baynardes Castle" literally stumble upon Beech's legs and head (sig. G1v). Place-names associated with the concealment of murder thus become coupled with its detection, as well. Despite these bloody revelations, the murderer's identity remains unknown. Beech's trunk is found in a bag still bearing the "marke" of its seller, and the neighbors track down "the Salters man that solde the bag," who agrees to "[g]o round about to euery neighbors house" (sigs. G2v, G3r). This tour of the neighborhood proves fruitless: when he comes to the Merrys' tavern-home, the Salter fails to recognize Rachel as the woman to whom he sold the bag. Once again the neighbors' inability to discover the murderer highlights the play's specifically topographical fantasy. Whereas investigation falls short of exposing Thomas's guilt, the cityscape persistently divulges incriminating evidence.

The discovery of Beech's remains becomes proof of the maxim "murder will out." Proverbial in England since the fifteenth century, invocations of this maxim frequently yoke place and providence (Maddern 79-80).[25] Nor is the London plot of *Two Lamentable Tragedies* unique in portraying the idea that God manipulates the cityscape to bring offenders to justice. In *A Warning for Fair Women*, after he stabs George Sanders, Browne worries that "the very bushes will discover [him]," and upon learning of Browne's bloody deed, Anne Sanders exclaims that "the very stones / That lie within the streetes cry out vengeance, / And point at us to be the murderers" (ll. 1401, 1668-70). Despite these apprehensions of an accusatory cityscape, it is neither shrubs nor cobblestones but Beane who reveals George Browne's guilt. So too in the London plot of *Two Lamen-*

[25] As Alexandra Walsham has shown, "topographical legends current in the Elizabethan and early Stuart period ... embodied a belief that God literally inscribed His judgements on the landscape" (97; cf. 109). According to Peter Lake, the frequency with which this maxim appears in murder pamphlets and domestic tragedies "is just one small element in the mass of Christian and sub-Christian cultural stuff, the conceptual and discursive bric-à-brac that, disaggregated and, in many instances, separated from the congeries of meaning and practice that had sustained them in the late Middle Ages, by the erratic but destructive course of the English reformation/s [*sic*], had been left strewn about the cultural landscape by the Tudor century" (154).

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/genre/article-pdf/40/1-2/1/413172/040001.pdf by guest on 16 October 2021

*table Tragedies*, Thomas Merry is ultimately brought to justice by human rather than spatial interference: Thomas's servant, Harry Williams, names Beech's murderer. At the same time, Williams's revelation is occasioned by a discussion of urban place. After Beech's death, Williams begins to fear his master, so he flees the Bull and takes up residence at the Three Cranes (sigs. C1$^r$, D3$^v$). When a friend asks why he does not return "vnto [his] maisters house," Williams lets slip his master's guilt (sig. H3$^r$). Within the dramatized fiction, then, the exposure of guilt hinges upon the characters' physical and discursive negotiation of a legible cityscape.

Collier missed the mark when he wrote that domestic tragedies portray historical events without embellishment or ornamentation. The plays adorn their enactments of actual crimes and punishments with numerous, varied place-names. Spatial appellations are not inherently necessary to the representation of well-known occurrences, which makes the fixated citation of place-names in domestic tragedies all the more striking. Early modern London's streets, buildings, and neighborhoods are not, of course, the dramatists' "invention." Nor do these topographical details function as mere decorative trimming. Rather, domestic tragedy's references to sites in England's capital city create a specific theatrical fantasy that supplements the portrayal of violent crime. Historians have shown that murders among neighbors and family members were actually quite rare (Sharpe; Dolan, *Dangerous* and "Household Chastisements"). Yet the repeated staging of domestic crime might, like the erection of bright yellow signs, lead audiences to imagine the opposite: that such offenses occur consistently and frequently in London's neighborhoods and households. Domestic tragedy counters this unsettling notion by constructing a system of urban signage that announces not only where precisely crime was attempted or committed; the system also indicates that crime was prevented, discovered, and punished in these same locations. To return to de Certeau's terminology, domestic tragedy turns anonymous spaces into identifiable places of both crime *and* its persistent exposure. Spaces that seem to invite illicit activity are reclaimed as spaces of lawful and law-enforcing activity. This recovery promises to be comprehensive, not isolated to sites of crime. As London's darkest corners are brought to light, the broader urban network becomes safe for human activity. A cityscape that threatens to forestall movement, exchange, and exploration thus becomes subject to a dramatic urban renewal. Pedestrian travel, commerce, and recreation—the activities that de Certeau associates with *espace* and Lynch with legible cities—

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/genre/article-pdf/40/1-2/1/413172/040001.pdf by guest on 16 October 2021

seem possible once again. Even as domestic tragedy created an image of London as an orderly space that may be easily surveyed and securely traversed, this image remained confined to the theatrical experience. The labyrinthine urban wilderness of the audience's lived experience waited outside the playhouse. Domestic tragedy depended upon this disparity between dramatic fantasy and urban actuality, despite their overlapping topographies, for the genre's pleasures emerge from the space between its comforting albeit ephemeral urban 'reality' and the unremitting and perilous realities of early modern London.

## WORKS CITED

Adams, Henry Hitch. *English Domestic or, Homiletic Tragedy: 1572-1642*. New York: Columbia UP, 1943.

*Arden of Faversham*. *Plays on Women*. Ed. Kathleen E. McLuskie and David Bevington. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1999.

Belsey, Catherine. *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama*. New York: Methuen, 1985.

Berry, Herbert. "The View of London from the North and the Playhouses in Holywell." *Shakespeare Survey* 53 (2000): 196-212.

Boulton, Jeremy. *Neighbourhood and Society: A London Suburb in the Seventeenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987.

Brennan, Michael G. "English Contact with Europe." *Shakespeare and Renaissance Europe*. Ed. Andrew Hadfield and Paul Hammon. London: Arden, 2005. 53-97.

Cannon, Charles Dale. Introduction. *"A Warning for Fair Women": A Critical Edition*. Ed. Charles Dale Cannon. The Hague: Mouton, 1975.

Carson, Ada Lou and Herbert L. Carson. *Domestic Tragedy in English: Brief Survey*. Salzburg, Austria: Institut für Anglistik und Americanistic, U Salzburg, 1982.

Cawley, A. C., and Barry Gaines. Introduction. *A Yorkshire Tragedy*. Ed. A. C. Cawley and Barry Gaines. Mancester: Manchester UP, 1986.

Clark, Andrew. *Domestic Drama: a survey of the origins, antecedents, and nature of the domestic play in England*. Salzburg, Austria: Institut für Anglistik und Americanistic, U Salzburg, 1975.

Collier, John Payne. *The History of English Dramatic Poetry to the Time of Shakespeare*. 3 vols. London: Murray, 1831.

Comensoli, Viviana. *"Household business": Domestic Plays of Early Modern England*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1996.

Coryate, Thomas. *Coryats Crudities*. London, 1611.

de Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Trans. Steven Rendall.

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/genre/article-pdf/40/1-2/1/413172/040001.pdf by guest on 16 October 2021

Berkeley: U of California P, 1984.

Dolan, Frances E. *Dangerous Familiars: Representations of Domestic Crime in England, 1550-1700.* Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1994.

--. "Gender, Moral Agency, and Dramatic Form in *A Warning for Fair Women.*" *Studies in English Literature* 29 (1989): 201-18.

--. "Household Chastisements: Gender, Authority, and 'Domestic Violence.'" *Renaissance Culture and the Everyday.* Ed. Patricia Fumerton and Simon Hunt. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1998. 204-25.

Enders, Jody. *Death by Drama and Other Medieval Urban Legends.* Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2002.

Finlay, Roger, and Beatrice Shearer. "Population Growth and Suburban Expansion." *The Making of the Metropolis: London 1500-1700.* Ed. A.L. Beier and Roger Finlay. London: Longman, 1986. 37-59.

Gordon, Andrew. "Overseeing and Overlooking: John Stow and the Surveying of the City." *John Stow (1525-1605) and the Making of the English Past.* Ed. Ian Gadd and Alexandra Gillespie. London: British Library, 2004. 81-88.

Gowing, Laura. "'The freedom of the streets': women and social space, 1560-1640." *Londinopolis: Essays in the Cultural and Social History of Early Modern London.* Ed. Paul Griffiths and Mark S. R. Jenner. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2000. 130-53.

Griffiths, Paul. "Overlapping circles: imagining criminal communities in London, 1545-1645." *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, places, rhetoric.* Ed. Alexandra Shephard and Phil Withington. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2000. 115-33.

Harding, Vanessa. "City, capital, and metropolis: the changing shape of seventeenth-century London." *Imagining Early Modern London: Perceptions and Portrayals of the City from Stow to Strype, 1598-1720.* Ed. J. F. Merritt. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001. 117-43.

--. "London, Change and Exchange." *The Culture of Capital: Property, Cities, and Knowledge in Early Modern England.* Ed. Henry S. Turner. New York: Routledge, 2002. 129-38.

Heal, Ambrose. *The Signboards of Old London Shops.* London: Batsford, 1947.

Helgerson, Richard. *Adulterous Alliances: Home, State, and History in Early Modern European Drama and Painting.* Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2000.

Heywood, Thomas. *Troia Britanica.* London, 1609.

Hoenselaars, A. J. "Italy staged in English Renaissance drama." *Shakespeare's Italy: Functions of Italian Locations in Renaissance Drama.* Ed. Michele Marrapodi, A.J. Hoenselaars, Marcello Cappuzzo, and L. Falzon Stantucci. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1993. 30-48.

Holbrook, Peter. *Literature and Degree in Renaissance England: Nashe, Bourgeois Tragedy, Shakespeare.* Newark: U of Delaware P, 1994.

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/genre/article-pdf/40/1-2/1/413172/040001.pdf by guest on 16 October 2021

Hopkins, Lisa. "*A Yorkshire Tragedy* and Middleton's Tragic Aesthetic." *Early Modern Literary Studies* 8.3 (2003): 2.1-15.

Horton, Craig. "'...the Country must diminish': Jacobean London and the Production of Pastoral Space in *The Winter's Tale*." *Parergon* 20.1 (2003): 85-107.

Howard, Jean E. *Theater of a City: The Places of London Comedy, 1598-1642*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2007.

Hutchings, Mark. "'Tis a pageant / To keep us in false gaze': *Othello*, Virtual History and the Jacobean Audience's Turkish Expectations." *Shakespeare and his Contemporaries in Performance*. Ed. Edward J. Esche. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000. 211-37.

James I. *The Political Works of James I*. New York: Russell and Russell, 1965.

Jameson, Frederic. "Cognitive Mapping." 1988. *The Jameson Reader*. Ed. Michael Hardt and Kathi Weeks. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000. 277-87.

Korda, Natasha. "'Judicious oeillades': supervising marital property in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*." *Marxist Shakespeares*. Ed. Jean E. Howard and Scott Cutler Shershow. London: Routledge, 2001. 82-103.

Lake, Peter with Michael Questier. *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat:Protestants, Papists, and Players in Post-Reformation England*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2002.

Levith, Murray J. *Shakespeare's Italian Settings and Plays*. New York: St. Martin's, 1989.

Lillywhite, Bryant. *London Signs*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1972.

Lynch, Kevin. *The Image of the City*. Cambridge, MA: MIT P, 1960.

Maddern, Philippa C. *Violence and Social Order: East Anglia, 1422-1442*. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1992.

Marshall, Cynthia. *The Shattering of the Self: Violence, Subjectivity, and Early Modern Texts*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2002.

Marshburn, Joseph H. "'A Cruell Murder Donne in Kent' and its Literary Manifestations." *Studies in Philology* 46 (1949): 131-40.

Moryson, Fynes. *An Itinerary*. 1617. 4 vols. Glasgow: MacLehose; New York: Macmillan, 1907-08.

Munro, Ian. *The Figure of the Crowd in Early Modern London: The City and Its Double*. Houndsmills, England: Palgrave, 2005.

Nelson, Alan H. *Monstrous Adversary: The life of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford*. Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 2003.

Orlin, Lena Cowen, ed. *Material London, ca. 1600*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2000.

Orlin, Lena Cowen. *Private Matters and Public Culture in Post-Reformation England*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1994.

Owens, Margaret E. *Stages of Dismemberment: The Fragmented Body in Late Medieval and Early Modern Drama*. Newark: U of Delaware P, 2005.

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/genre/article-pdf/40/1-2/1/413172/040001.pdf by guest on 16 October 2021

Parolin, Peter Alexander. "'Not so Fitte a Place': English Identity and Italian Difference in Early Modern England." Diss. U of Pennsylvania, 1997.

Paster, Gail Kern. *The Idea of the City in the Age of Shakespeare*. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1985.

Patenaude, Anne Weston. "A Critical Old Spelling Edition of Robert Yarington's *Two Lamentable Tragedies*." Diss. U of Michigan, 1978.

Pepys, Samuel. *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*. Ed. Robert Latham and William Matthews. 11 vols. Berkeley: U of California P, 1970-83.

Richardson, Catherine. *Domestic Life and Domestic Tragedy in Early Modern England: The material life of the household*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2006.

Rogers, Kenneth. *Signs and Taverns Round about Old London Bridge*. London: Homeland Assn., 1937.

Rose, Jacqueline. *States of Fantasy*. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1996.

Rowley, William, Thomas Dekker, and John Ford. *The Witch of Edmonton*. Ed. Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1999.

Schofield, John. "The Topography and Buildings of London, ca. 1600." Orlin, *Material London*. 296-321.

Shakespeare, William. *The Norton Shakespeare*. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, and Katharine Eisaman Maus. New York: Norton, 1997.

Sharpe, J. A. "Domestic Homicide in Early Modern England." *The Historical Journal* 24.1 (1981): 29-48.

Slack, Paul. "Perceptions of the Metropolis in Seventeenth-Century England." *Civil Histories: Essays Presented to Sir Keith Thomas*. Ed. Peter Burke, Brian Harrison, and Paul Slack. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000. 161-80.

Stow, John. *A Survey of London*. Ed. Charles Lethbridge Kingsford. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1908.

Symonds, John Addington. *Shakespeare's Predecessors*. London: Smith, Elder, 1906.

Turner, Henry S. "Plotting Early Modernity." *The Culture of Capital: Property, Cities, and Knowledge in Early Modern England*. Ed. Henry S. Turner. New York: Routledge, 2002. 85-127.

Wall, Wendy. *Staging Domesticity: Household Work and English Identity in Early Modern Drama*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002.

Walsham, Alexandra. *Providence in Early Modern England*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999.

*"A Warning for Fair Women": A Critical Edition*. Ed. Charles Dale Cannon. The Hague: Mouton, 1975.

*A Warning for Faire Women*. London, 1599.

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/genre/article-pdf/40/1-2/1/413172/040001.pdf by guest on 16 October 2021

Whigham, Frank. *Seizures of the Will in Early Modern English Drama*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996.

Yarington, Robert. *Two Lamentable Tragedies*. London, 1601.

*A Yorkshire Tragedy*. Ed. A. C. Cawley and Barry Gaines. Mancester: Manchester UP, 1986.

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/genre/article-pdf/40/1-2/1/413172/040001.pdf by guest on 16 October 2021

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/genre/article-pdf/40/1-2/1/413172/040001.pdf by guest on 16 October 2021