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The *Pennyles Pilgrimage* of John Taylor: Poverty, Mobility and Performance in Seventeenth-Century Literary Circles

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Abstract: In this article I ask what it means for cartographical, social, economic and political understandings of poverty and mobility when the 'geography of vagrancy', as A. L. Beier termed it, is re-staged and reconfigured in specific acts of writing and even specific acts of walking. Invoking a range of public performances as well as print and manuscript publications by recognised literary figures of the day, including work by Ben Jonson and John Taylor, I concentrate on one particular literary remaking of the everyday experiences of the mobile poor in Taylor's 1618 published pamphlet *The Pennyles Pilgrimage or The Money-lesse perambulation, of Iohn Taylor, Alias the Kings Majesties Water-Poet*. What Taylor understood when engaging with the 'geography of vagrancy' in his challenging text was that the act of mapping the spatial world of the itinerant poor required considerable thought not only about the spaces inhabited, albeit temporarily, or travelled through, but also the ways in which the mobile poor performed such spaces. In turn, Taylor's own performance can be understood as a contradictory act of commercial enterprise and self-promotion as well as one that gives literary historians significant access to contemporary imaginings of the specific socioeconomic and spatial conditions of poverty and mobility.

In a 1621 pamphlet entitled *The Praise, Antiquity and Commodity of Begging,* the self-styled 'Water Poet', London waterman, bottleman, prolific pamphlet writer, and early modern performance artist John Taylor described the contemporary condition of vagrancy in highly spatialised terms:

> A beggar lives here in this vale of sorrow,
> And trauels here to day, and there tomorrow.
> The next day being neither here, nor there
> But almost nowhere, and yet every where[1]

Taylor captures in this deliberately meandering poetic statement the unfixed nature and perpetual motion of the vagrant that was of such concern to early modern authorities. There was no fixed point or defining 'home' or parish for wandering beggars. It was this very ‘unsettled’ quality of their existence that was the focus of deep anxiety and reaction in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. As Patricia Fumerton has evidenced, there was a strong perception at this time that vagrancy had reached crisis levels.[2]

The real landscape of poverty, mobility, and transience was not, however, solely populated by beggars. As studies by Fumerton, Joan Kent, Paul Slack, A. L. Beier and others have indicated, the category of ‘vagrant’ in reality embraced a wide set of social groupings, including migrant seasonal agricultural labourers, journeymen and apprentices, unbound servants, chapmen and peddlers, soldiers and sailors, maverick clergymen and religious visionaries, the mentally unwell, people with disabilities, and even itinerant actors and entertainers.[3] What bound this group together in the public imagination was what Fumerton terms ‘kinesis’, the perpetual motion and movement of the poor, a group endlessly making shift for the purposes of economic survival.[4]

Wandering and the conditions of homelessness or itinerancy were overt challenges to accepted norms of behaviour in the early modern period, and not least to structures of parish poor relief, almsgiving, and neighbourhood responsibility.[5] In his 1577 *Description of England*, William Harrison observed that the vagabond ‘will abide nowhere but runneth up and down from place to place ... to and fro over all the realm’.[6] Anxiety about perpetual motion and its concomitant condition of homelessness is clearly embodied in this description and such was the level of institutional discomfort provoked and produced by the perceived mutability of the mobile poor that the Elizabethan Vagrancy Acts of 1572 and 1598 were introduced in an effort to prescribe and contain that threat. The cultural geographer Tim Cresswell has suggested that theorists of postmodern mobility have identified in those Acts the origin of contemporary attitudes to homelessness and the unsettling impact of refugee status both on the communities entered into and those whose borders are crossed.[7] That the Acts referred in sweeping generalisations to diverse social groups with little sense of differentiation between them is also indicative of what Barry Taylor has termed the ‘vagrant’s deliberate confusion of categories’.[8] It is a very real signifier of the complex communities that could be seen or encountered on a daily basis on the public highways of the realm.[9]

In his seminal work on early modern vagrancy, *Masterless Men*, A. L. Beier carefully mapped what he described as the ‘geography of vagrancy’ in terms not only of the open road along which individuals travelled but also the fields, meadows, and barns in which the transient frequently found shelter and sometimes an opportunity for piece-work, alongside the various alehouses which provided a shared and identifiable network of known stopping places.[10] What we can begin to produce from a detailed consideration of this cultural cartography of vagrancy is a spatialised understanding of the experience of poverty in the early modern period, one which in turn helps us to understand the relationship of the mobile poor to place in new ways.[11] Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan’s definition of space is helpful here: ‘if we think of space as that which allows movement then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place’.[12] From this definition it follows that alehouses, and indeed the winter barns in which many poor people found lodging, were important coordinates on the national map of poverty: ‘To the vagrant [alehouses] were places of refuge in an ever-changing landscape’.[13] This is a vagrant experience of geography which Beier goes on to describe as 'rootless and transient, haunting alehouses and sleeping rough' and we can find early modern precedents for this 'vagrant geography', not least in that 1621 pamphlet of John Taylor.[14] This particular geography of space and place, one of barns and alehouses and sleeping rough, is directly addressed by Taylor there:

> When nipping Winter makes the Cow to quake
> A begger will a Barne for harbour take.
> When Trees and Steeples are o're-turn'd with winde
> A begger will a hedge for shelter finde.[15]

In a new version of pastoral, then, Taylor constructs the world of the beggar as one of self-sufficiency, as the meadows provide straw to sleep on, corn for bread, and even materials for clothing:

> Each Hedge allowes him Berryes from the brambles,
> The Bullesse, hedge Peake, Hips, and Hawes and Sloes,
> Attends his appetite, where e're he goes.

There is a stubborn refusal in this consciously literary aestheticisation to acknowledge the real threat of starvation for those categories of society reduced to subsistence living. The poetics serve to occlude the realities of the life of the mobile poor. Despite this tendency to view things through a literary and poetic lens, poverty and mobility were nevertheless topics that Taylor demonstrated considerable interest in throughout his writing career.[16]

What Taylor understood when engaging with the geography of vagrancy was that the act of mapping the spatial world of this group requires considerable thought not only about the spaces inhabited, albeit temporarily, or travelled through, but also the ways in which the mobile poor *perform* such spaces, that is to say the sets of practices and cultural competencies associated with them.[17] Paul Griffiths extends this cartographical understanding of poverty with his poetic riff on the life of the mobile poor as one of 'movements, streets, not being known, being lost, making ends meet, sinking'.[18] We can hear in this observation a lexicon of practice, of doing and being in the landscape, which is crucial to remember when thinking about the poor as a category in this period. It would be all too easy for homelessness and subsistence living to be read in terms of a complete loss of agency, but through this kind of spatialised reading it proves possible to produce alternative notions of agency and effect. Patricia Fumerton is also interested in the cartographies of the unsettled, stressing the need for scholars to look for the poor in their own space, a space which in her account is one of 'itinerary, fragmentation, disconnection, multiplicity' and which in turn produces 'a very different topographical mapping of societal relations than that determined by place'.[19]

In undertaking this kind of spatially aware reading in this article, I want to move the thinking on to another level and to ask what it means for all these understandings, cartographical and social, economic and political, when the 'geography of vagrancy' is consciously re-staged and reconfigured by acts of writing and publication by recognised literary figures of the day like John Taylor and even, as we shall see, by acts of walking and mobility themselves. I want to concentrate in the main on one particular literary remaking of this contemporary social phenomenon of the mobile poor in another published pamphlet text by Taylor, his 1618 *The Pennyles Pilgrimage or The Money-lesse perambulation, of Iohn Taylor, Alias the Kings Majesties Water-Poet* while making reference to other comparable contemporary literary forays into the notion of performing place and the staged journey. A consistent performance of the life of the vagrant or, perhaps more accurately, the 'poor distressed traveller', appears to have been the governing terms of Taylor's literary and theatrical enterprise.[20]

The *Pennyles Pilgrimage* was a narrative and self-proclaimed documentary account (the title-page stresses that, in contrast to much contemporary travel writing, 'all is true'[21]) of one particular journey that Taylor made from London to Edinburgh via a combination of pedestrian and equine travel and accompanied by a servant companion. Taylor's motivations for making such a journey, and with such a precise set of prescriptions as to how it should be undertaken, appear to be multiple. Certainly, his *oeuvre* as a whole presents a man who was fascinated by the journey as public art form. Including the 1618 walk, he conducted and published written accounts of fourteen journeys. These included foreign expeditions in Hamburg and Prague and journeys by paper boat upon the Thames. The latter were undertaken with a companion in 1619 and inevitably the boat began to take on water. He also went further afield to York, described in the 1622 *A Very Merry-Wherry-Ferry-Voyage*, as well as Scotland, the Isle of Wight and East Anglia. Other publications in his canon, while not strictly journey accounts, share kinships and interests with these exercises and enterprises; from a tour of London alehouses to texts on river navigation.[22] The endpoint of all these journeys appears to have been a published account by Taylor, often produced within months of the event and thereby capitalising on public interest. In this respect, his aims were similar to those published accounts of notorious travel adventures in further flung parts of the world by Thomas Coryate and others, although, interestingly, in *The Pennyles Pilgrimage* Taylor takes pains to stress that his account will *not* provide the kind of chorographical writing of the nation to be found in popular works by William Camden and John Speed:

> Of brooks, crooks, nooks, of rivers, boorns and rills,
> Of mountains, fountains, Castles, Towers and hills,
> Of Shieres and Pieres, and memorable things,
> Of lives and deaths of great commanding Kings:
> I touch not these, they not belong to mee[23]

The 1618 journey to Scotland in particular appears to have been underpinned by other kinds of economic compulsion. A form of sponsorship had, it seems, been secured by Taylor from London-based colleagues and cohorts. John Chandler describes it as 'a business venture (albeit a high-risk one) as much as a publicity stunt'; Andrew McRae considers the approach as 'calculating, even entrepreneurial'.[24] In a subsequent pamphlet, *A Kicksey Winsey or a Lerry Come-Twang*, published just a year later, and which assumes the form of a literary suit against bad debtors, Taylor would claim that 4,500 copies of the pamphlet were published at personal cost to himself and berates the fact that half of his 1600 sponsors had failed to pay up.[25] *The Pennyles Pilgrimage* had, then, been a sponsored walk of a kind and this was not at all unusual at this time. It has been suggested that at least one of the motives for the eminent playwright and poet Ben Jonson's 'foot-voyage' to Edinburgh from London in the same year as Taylor's was a wager and Gervase Markham was sponsored to travel to Berwick crossing all rivers and streams by jumping over them and avoiding bridges.[26] What is particularly fascinating about Markham's 1622 journey is that many of his sponsors were actors or were directly connected to the literary world through the publishing trade.[27] We start to gain a sense from this flurry of public performance walks that there was an interest in this kind of performance art within theatrical and literary circles at the time and therefore that walks with particular premises, such as being entirely pedestrian or being effected without financial aid as in Taylor's case, were both fashionable and the subject of considerable commercial activity.

The question remains to be posed as to why foot travel was such a particular focus of these staged events, Taylor's not least, and why this was expected to attract public interest. Mark Brayshay has suggested that walking as a mode of transport was more common for ordinary people in Tudor and Stuart Britain than is sometimes assumed and that 'covering fifteen miles a day was not uncommon'. He makes the point that many touring players would have travelled on foot.[28] Nevertheless there was an obvious 'feat' involved in a large man like Jonson, who was nearly 20 stone at the time, completing such a lengthy journey entirely on foot and Taylor too obviously recognised commercial potential in his assumption of the on-foot vagrant persona of his 'pilgrimage': 'I speake not of the Tide; for understand / My legges I made my Oares, and rowed by land'.[29] In the extant records of their respective journeys, both Taylor and Jonson appear anxious to stick to the original premise of their trips; this would seem to confirm the understanding of them as wagers to be completed satisfactorily and indeed witnessed in order for the financial outlay to be realised.[30]

Intriguingly, Jonson had set out on his foot-voyage only a few weeks earlier than Taylor, although the two go by distinctly different routes, and the Water Poet is at pains to stress in his pamphlet that his journey was not intended as a parody of the eminent writer:

> Whereas many shallow-brain'd Critickes doe lay an aspersion on me, that I was set on by others, or that I did undergoe this proiect, either in malice, or mockage of Master Benjamin Jonson, I vow by the faith of a Christian, that their imaginations are all wide, for he is a Gentleman, to whom I am much obliged for many undeserued courtesies.[31]

Both men could also be said to be imitating another recent journey to Scotland undertaken in rather grander circumstances, which was the self-proclaimed 'salmon-like return' of King James VI and I to his Scottish homeland in 1617.[32] The ways in which both men's journeys interact with the conventions and practices of royal progress is a subject of much fascination.[33] There was another more obvious literary and indeed specifically theatrical precedent for their journeys, however, in the unemployed King's Men actor Will Kemp's nine days' morris dance from London to Norwich in 1599, about which he published a pamphlet account in 1600, the *Nine Daies Wonder*, and which Daryl Palmer has interpreted as an inspired reworking of monarchical progress.[34]

Jonson and Taylor encountered one another at Leith in Scotland, when Jonson notably gave Taylor 'a peece of golde of two and twenty shillings to drinke his healthe in England'.[35] This was no deliberate sabotage of Taylor's journey on Jonson's part since the 'penniless' aspect of the pilgrimage only pertained to the journey to and from Scotland, but it is of note that some of the bad debtors that Taylor railed against in *A Kicksey Winsey* claimed that he had transgressed the terms of the original wager. We are beginning to account, then, for the 'penniless' aspect of Taylor's title but, before examining his performative assumption of the role of the wandering vagrant in greater detail, it is important to acknowledge the second key term mobilised in relation to his walk: 'pilgrimage'. Alexandra Walsham has written of the ways in which the experience of the physical environment in post-reformation Britain and Ireland relied in part on 'mental mechanisms' for practising the landscape.[36] This is particularly true of the concept of pilgrimage in the context of what she describes as a 'reformed landscape'.[37] Andrew McRae has certainly interpreted *The Pennyles Pilgrimage* as 'an extended play on [. . .] Catholic mendicancy' but I would argue that what we get with Taylor's walk is the sense of achievement and spiritual reward implicit in the practice of pilgrimage now consciously recast as a performative and professional act for economic gain and that the ironic effects of this in the text should not be underestimated.[38]

The penniless pilgrimage's itinerary of hospitality received from innkeepers, civic officials and some pre-established social contacts, ranging from joiners such as John Piddock in Lichfield to members of the gentry, also reconfigures the age-old association of pilgrimage with required or expected acts of hospitality towards common wayfarers.[39] Secularised pilgrimage is only one way of thinking about the significance of the journey undertaken by Taylor in 1618, however. The opportunity for experiential learning and education on the road should not be discounted as a motive. By travelling on foot at this time and in this way, both Taylor and Jonson opted to place themselves to varying degrees in the shoes of the less well off. Through such performances they also sought to experience the landscape of the complex country and communities which such groups inhabited or with which they interacted. The disciplines of geography, performance studies, art history, and anthropology have all taken an interest of late in the act of walking and its capacity to remake place and it is logical to associate the pedestrian aspects of Taylor's 1618 trip with a desire to imitate and perhaps even to understand the 'malleable' space of the vagrant.[40] Most migrant poor had no choice other than to travel by foot, the occasional few raising just enough money to be carried by carts for short stretches or being afforded parish support for the same.[41] Taylor, in turn, strives to maintain this pattern of travel for his 'pilgrimage'. There are several passages of observation about the physical impact of stony surfaces and long days of walking on his body, such as 'From thence that night, although my bones were sore, / I made shift to hobble seau'n miles more'.[42] The discursive turn of 'making shift' is deployed to invoke Taylor's role as itinerant vagrant. There are puns on the 'hard' road surface in Stony Stratford and he describes the welcome rest he gets in Daventry after hobbling in there after several hours longer on the road than planned:

> Whilest I was lame as scarce a leg could lift,
> Came limping after to that stony Towne,
> Whose hard streetes made me almost halt tight downe'.[43]

When he provides a helpful moniker in the text by which his audience, whether reading or otherwise, might identify him in the future, he describes himself in terms of walking poverty. He is 'perambulating, poor Iohn Taylor'.[44]

As already observed, Taylor's sponsorship deal does not seem to have required that he be consistent throughout in the foot-based aspect of his journey. Taylor has access to a packhorse to carry provisions. He gets his horse from the Bell Inn at Aldersgate and travels with a knapsack full of bacon, brisket, neat's-tongue, cheese, and conserves.[45] At one stage of the return leg to the English capital, he is given a further horse by an old seafaring acquaintance he has been reunited with during the sojourn in Scotland.[46] There are certainly some touching descriptions of the pack-horse's experience of the journey in the midst of the narrative account. He becomes almost a fellow poor person, sleeping rough and taking his meals where he can, as part of the collective 'we' in Taylor's sentence formations: 'We made a breach, and entred horse and man, / There our pauillion, we to pitch began'.[47] At one point the travellers leave St Albans where they have been generously lodged at the Saracen's Head Inn by a Mr Taylor but then find themselves travelling along the Dunstable highway for twelve miles with neither food nor drink:

> When Puddle-hill I footed downe, and past
> A mile from thence I found a Hedge at last.
> There stroke we sayle, our Bacon, Cheese and Bread
> We drew like Fidlers, and like Farmers fed
> And whilst 2 houres we there did take our ease;
> My Nagge made shift to mump greene Pulse and Pease.[48]

Taylor is careful to stress that he crosses the symbolic border between England and Scotland with no additional aid: 'Without Horse, Bridge, or Boate I o're did get / On foote, I went yet scarce my shooes did wet'. But overall the 'walk' appears to have been inconsistent at best in its practices.[49] On the way out of London, Taylor's network of close friends and acquaintances serves him well. He names and thanks Mr Dam of the Green Dragon near Gray's Inn Gate, for example.[50] But as he travels farther from known circuits and neighbourhoods, he encounters greater difficulty in finding a welcoming face at inns in random market towns and is glad therefore when he finds unexpected company. For example, he fully intends to pass through the town of Stony Stratford and 'find some Lodging in the Hay or Grasse', but a familiar voice cries out from a window at the Queen's Arms: 'There were some friends, which I was glad to see, / Who knew my Iourney; lodg'd and boorded me'.[51] And then when it begins to rain heavily the following day, the Host of the Queen's Arms offers him additional stay at no extra cost. Taylor promises to reward his kindness in due course and duly does so by recording his hospitality in the published account, providing some positive publicity. By the time he reaches Coventry and the Midlands counties Taylor is increasingly eager to seek out known friends and acquaintances from his London life with whom to lodge rather than face more nights sleeping beneath the stars and under hedges.[52] By comparison, Ben Jonson stuck doggedly to the pedestrian aspect of his walk throughout the trip to Edinburgh and this seems to have been vital to its overall success. Taylor's journey is, then, far more mixed in terms of the modes of transportation used but it shares the same sense as Jonson's of adhering to pre-determined rules of engagement. In Taylor's case, however, the key driver is not consistent pedestrianism but sustaining the state of poverty he has willed himself into.

The title-page details that the text will recount: 'How he travailed on foot from London to Edenborough, not carrying any Money to or fro, neither Begging, Borrowing, or Asking Meate, drinke or Lodging.'[53] It is interesting to note how keen Taylor is to stress that it is the role of the perambulating pauper rather than that of a beggar *per se* that he is adopting. At the inn in Highgate Hill where he encounters people studiously eating and ignoring his presence, he stresses that 'I neither Borrow'd, Crau'd, Ask'd, Begg'd or Bought, / But most labourious with my teeth I wrought'.[54] As scholars including Beier and William Carroll have demonstrated, the beggar as a specific social type was viewed by many as the lowest of the low in the complex category of vagrancy, associated as s/he was with pretence and with the physical and psychological invasion of personal space through aggressive begging tactics.[55] Counterfeit beggars were also the subject of legal retribution and punishment, commonly arrested by constables in parishes where they had illegally entered and held in local workhouses, bridewells and jails. Taylor hints at this world through parodic versionings of that experience. When he travels to Hockley, for example, we are told the following:

> I found at Hockley standing at the Swan,
> A formall Tapster, with a Iugge and glasse,
> Who did Arest mee, I most willing was
> To try the Action, and straight put in bale,
> My fees were paide before, with sixe-pence Ale.[56]

There are obvious puns here on the normal expectation of the travelling migrant: of being arrested on arriving in a parish other than their own without a passport and struggling to find bail. Once again on this secular pilgrimage, forms of local government are reconfigured in terms of alehouse hospitalities and reckonings of a rather different kind.

Similarly, later in the narrative, Taylor is given a formal welcome in Preston, despite terrible weather. The mayor visits him in his lodgings and allows the water poet to lodge for three nights at his expense.[57] At the end of the stay, the mayor arranges to join Taylor for the two miles journey out of the town to the edge of the parish jurisdiction. By transporting Taylor back to the parish boundaries, the action of the mayor both recalls the treatment to which an illegal migrant would be subject and echoes the formal acts of departure that were the regular rhythm of royal progress.[58] Taylor then meets and travels onwards in the company of the under-Sherrif of the county, who in turn delivers him unto the care of the Sherrif:

> Much cost and charge the Mayor vpon me spent,
> And on my way two miles, with me he went,
> There (by good chance) I did more friendship get,
> The vnder Shriefe of Lancashire, we met,
> A Gentleman that lou'd, and knew me well,

And one whose bounteous minde doth beare the bell.
There, as if I had beene a noted thiefe,
The Mayor deliuered me vnto the Shriefe.
The Shriefes authority did much preuaile,
He sent me vnto one that kept the Iayle.
Thus I perambulating, poore Iohn Taylor,
Was giu'n from Mayor to Shriefe, from Shriefe to Iaylor.[59]

Once again, this sequence wittily restages the constant movement of poor transients, perpetually handed on as they were by local government officials and subject to what McRae calls 'the legislative gaze'.[60] In reality, the treatment Taylor receives is the exact opposite. The 'jaol' into which he is thrown is a comfortable inn with bed, board and lodgings: 'The Iaylor kept an Inne, good beds, good cheere, / Where paying nothing, I found nothing deere.'[61]

Throughout his restless kinetic narrative, Taylor appears keener to record the unprovoked acts of kindness and charity he encounters en route than to mimic the experience of an aggressive beggar. In the process he identifies with the larger social grouping of the destitute poor whose presence on the Midlands highways has been mapped in some detail. In a study of the years between 1611 and 1640, and thus encompassing the exact moment of Taylor's performative journey, Joan Kent observes that 'chastised vagrants in fact formed a small subset of a much larger pool of destitute travellers who often received alms rather than punishment'.[62] While alms and almsgiving are not terms that Taylor actively deploys in his text, he makes repeated efforts to invoke the traditional virtues of charity, piety and hospitality by noting either their presence or absence at various sites en route. While in the environs of Lichfield in Staffordshire, Taylor notes the distinct lack of hospitality he encounters: 'with here and there a pelting scatter'd village / Which yielded me no charity or pillage'. On the other hand, Sir Urian Legh of Adlington near Macclesfield serves as a model of the 'compleat Gentleman', someone who performs 'deeds of Piety, / Good hospitable works of Charity'.[63] For these reasons, Felicity Heal regards Taylor's text as in part an investigation into practices of seventeenth-century gentry hospitality, noting that Taylor relies in the first part of his journey on the help of friends and a known network of innkeepers and lodgings houses who hoped to benefit from the publicity potential of the experiment:

> Descriptions of the realm were popular, and there was the additional advantage that Taylor could support himself by flattering those with whom he had contact on his journeys with the promise of fame. With this inducement, he hoped to open doors on his travels, and benefit from the supposed desire of the gentry and others to be hospitable and to win honour through generosity to a stranger.[64]

Heal is right to highlight the theme of fame in this text and in the premise of the journey overall. Advance notice of Taylor's journey appears to have reached certain villages and towns and in some sustenance awaits him:

There had my friend performed the words he saide,
And at the doore a Iugge of liquor staide

> The folks were all informed, before I came,
> How, and wherefore my Iourney I did frame.[65]

In this particular instance someone encountered on the road has ridden ahead with the news of the moneyless enterprise.[66] Elsewhere, news seems to have travelled through wider networks of communication. In one instance, Taylor compares himself to an exotic item of display in the streets, heightening the sense of this journey as an act of public performance and its appropriation of transient poverty as a piece of carefully choreographed public theatre. Spectators, we are told, crowd the streets to catch a glimpse of him:

> As if some Monster sent from the Mogull,
> Some Elephant from Affricke I had beene,
> Or some strange beast from th'Amazonian Queene.[67]

From all these angles and perspectives, it might seem that Taylor's text and the motives of his trip are moving far away from a direct relationship to contemporary notions of poverty and mobility. Nevertheless, his experiment is governed by a sense that hospitality must be given and not coerced. This constitutes an attempt to read the landscape from the vantage point of those in society who have to exist without formal agency, those unable to leverage financial support or patronage. In this respect, Taylor's Scottish walk differs considerably from Jonson's, which enacts a map of gentrified encounters and experience as he moves from civic welcome to lodgings with significant nobles of the day.[68]

Heal has noted the importance of 'reciprocity' to early modern concepts of hospitality: 'In all its varied forms the notion of hospitality in early modern England seems to be bound to that of reciprocity, of the exchange of gifts and rewards to which value not simply articulated in money terms attaches.'[69] Taylor's walk rests on an identical premise. He may only accept hospitality, for example, in the form of food, wine, lodging, laundry services, the provision of haircuts and personal grooming, and access to horses, provender, and stabling, but no real cash gifts. We are therefore witness to different kinds of commercial, economic and social transactions being performed throughout this quirky narrative. Taylor's deliberate adoption of the mantle and rhetoric of the poor pilgrim cannot simply be understood as enacting the reciprocal operations of the upper orders. Instead, Taylor's 'progress' brings into dialogue the world of gentrified patronage support networks and the complex matrices of poor relief and almsgiving that existed side by side in early modern society. And, to return to where we began, with the 'geography of vagrancy', the locations that remain crucial on the spectrum of hospitality that is tested by the penniless pilgrim in general, and by Taylor's performance in particular, are those stopping places central to Yi-Fu Tuan's sense of how space makes place: inns, alehouses and households.

We perhaps get closest to comprehending the ways in which Taylor's performance abuts with the real experiences of the mobile poor when we place one particular contemporaneous narrative of the experience of life on the road alongside the structure and movement of Taylor's text. Beier cites the peripatetic experience of a vagrant recounted in a legal deposition of 1612. This documentary source not only draws for us a now familiar cartography of motion punctuated by 'tippling houses', but seems to pre-empt the descriptive style of Taylor's hybrid verse-prose pamphlet with its carefully mapped itinerary of sleeping places:[70]

> First night, the Saracen's Head in Farringdon;
> Second night, the Star in Abingdon,
> Third night, an unnamed alehouse in Wallingford;
> Fourth night, the Hand in Reading;
> Fifth night, the Shoemaker's Last in Newbury;
> Sixth night, the Black Boys in Andover;
> Seventh night, the Chequers in Winchester;
> Eighth night, an unnamed alehouse in Amesbury;
> Ninth night, a barn five miles from Amesbury;
> Tenth night, The White Horse in Fisherton Anger.[71]

Compare this redacted list to a passage of Taylor's, one of several I could have selected for the purpose of comparison:

> And went that night as farre as Islington
> There did I find [. . .]
> A Mayden head of twenty fiue yeeres old,
> But surely it was painted, like a whore,
> And for a signe, or wonder, hand'd at dore,
> [. . .]
> At High-gate hill to a strange house I went
> And saw the people were to eating bent
> [. . .]
> The Sarazens head at Whetstone entring straight
> I found an Host, might lead an Host of men,[72]

The poetic embellishments aside, there is a parallel experience taking place. There is an interest in Taylor's text, even at the level of form, in the choreography of poverty, mapping a life on the road and its encounters, audiences, pauses, staging posts and salient events.

We must not lose sight of the fact that real poverty and social disenfranchisement are always at one stage of remove in *The Pennyles Pilgrimage*. Even if, unlike Ben Jonson, Taylor does on occasion subject himself to the genuine hardships of sleeping rough, what we never locate in his text is an encounter with a real figure of poverty. In the recently discovered manuscript account of Jonson's pedestrian journey, there are several identifiable occasions when he and his as yet unidentified companion encounter madwomen, gypsies and, indeed, ranting clergymen, in particular in the early stages of the journey as they travel out of London and through nearby provincial villages and market towns.[73] By contrast, Taylor's text is noticeably silent on this topic. We get no glimpses of the complex community of the highway, as if he and his companion, and indeed their horse, must necessarily substitute entirely for that ephemeral world. It is as if, were the real world of poverty and mobility allowed to intervene in the text, it would be too destabilising; Taylor resists realistic portrayals of poverty in order to protect the comic tone of his commercial publication. There are as a result no 'real' voices of the poor in Taylor's text and it would be wrong to hold it forth as a functioning socio-historical document for this reason. While Taylor may describe the ways in which his arduous journey physically wracks his body, there is no sense at all that he endures the kind of tangible hardships of the individual bodies we encounter, albeit fragmentarily, in other kinds of records.[74] Nevertheless, there remains a value in looking more deeply at *The Pennyles Pilgrimage* as one helpful point of access to contemporary ideas about poverty and mobility. The places Taylor visits and the various scrapes he gets into can tell us much about the ways in which poverty and transience were imagined in this period and the spatial and cultural geographies with which they were associated.[75]

It bears remembering that Taylor's performance in *The Pennyles Pilgrimage* was Janus-faced. His conscious acknowledgment of hosts and hostesses and their various kindnesses can be understood as a direct imitation of published accounts of Elizabethan and Jacobean royal progresses.[76] The bounty of hosts was regularly recorded in these narratives in what Daryl Palmer suggestively describes as a mapping exercise that tested the English landscape at the level of hospitality and welcome, inscribing and producing a 'cartography of civil obedience'.[77] Taylor's conscious intertext, Will Kemp's *Nine Daies Wonder,* has been read as an inventive appropriation of the royal progress and certainly the dancing actor took great pains to record each gift given to him.[78] Kemp's morris won him food and income and was highly entrepreneurial in that, like Taylor, he sought to generate additional income from the published version. While we can register all these kinships with Kemp's text, such is the nature of the particular wager that Taylor undertook, to travel penniless, that, despite recording the hospitality encountered in a manner similar to his precursor, he is forced to return gifts of money almost immediately. When Sir Urian Legh is keen to give him financial aid during the stay at Adlington, for example, he notes: 'He would haue giu'n me Gold or Siluer either, / But I with many thanks receiued neither.'[79]

To conclude, then, there is a duality to the purpose and effects of the hybrid narrative of *The Pennyles Pilgrimage*. By performing poverty in his walk, Taylor draws quite knowingly on a series of real-life and literary precedents and models. These precedents complicate the picture in that they frequently blend discourses of monarchy with nuanced understandings of poverty and mobility.[80] What we have is thus not a text that constitutes a simple or monolithic effort to perform poverty, but one that brings different discourses of mobility and charity into a witty, and often uncomfortable, dialogue with one another. This is at the heart of Taylor's experimentation as he performs a conscious and sometimes tense test of hospitality in the landscape. In this examination, some communities and individuals are found to be failing, while others happily exceed expectation. Taylor's performance of poverty and the condition of the distressed traveller is, therefore, designed to achieve the complete opposite of the condition it enacts. Through mobility, and through the performance of mobility, Taylor ironically staves off the very condition that he alludes to. His text avoids literal poverty through the figurative staging of it.[81] Taylor performs the role of both progressing monarch and poor migrant, sometimes even within the compass of the same geographical sites and locations. At other times, contrasts are drawn between the resting points of progress, the castles and noble households, and the alehouses and hedges that form the dominant sites of practice for the penniless pilgrim. There is a fascinating circularity in all of this. Taylor's performance of the role of both vagrant and monarch within the single text, and sometimes along the same routes and notional geographical itineraries, performs the English countryside back to its population in deliberately confusing and contradictory ways.[82]

In his pedestrian and pamphlet performance events of 1618, Taylor captures something of what Patricia Fumerton has termed the 'speculative subjectivity' of the mobile poor.[83] To return to the different categories of vagrancy catalogued by the Elizabethan Vagrancy Acts, for this modern reader of Taylor's strange and thought-provoking text, it is ultimately the figure of the itinerant actor that comes most stridently to mind, both in the water-poet's conscious re-performance of Will Kemp's entrepreneurial 1599 dance and his decision to follow so closely in the footsteps of theatrical giant Ben Jonson in 1618. In a conscious work of theatre, Taylor performs the role of mobile poverty and stages a vagrant experience of geography in order to make ends meet in the most impressive and ingenious ways.

Notes

1. John Taylor, *The Praise, Antiquity and Commodity of Begging* (London, 1621), sig. C4r.
2. Patricia Fumerton, *Unsettled: The Culture of Mobility and the Working Poor in Early Modern England* (Chicago, 2006), p. 6.
3. Fumerton, *Unsettled*, p. xi; Joan R. Kent, 'Population, Mobility, and Alms: Poor Migrants in the Midlands during the Early Seventeenth Century', *Local Population Studies*, 27 (1981), 35–51, 35; Paul Slack, 'Vagrants and Vagrancy in England, 1598–1664', *Economic History Review*, 2nd edn, 27:3 (1974), 360–79; A. L. Beier, *Masterless Men: The Vagrancy Problem in England, 1560–1640* (London and NY, 1985).
4. Fumerton, *Unsettled,* p. xi.
5. Steve Hindle, *On the Parish: The Micropolitics of Poor Relief in Rural England, c. 1550–1750* (Oxford, 2004).
6. Cited in Beier, *Masterless Men*, p. 69.
7. Tim Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 110–11.
8. Barry Taylor, *Vagrant Writing: Social and Semiotic Disorders in the English Renaissance* (London, 1991), p. 2.
9. See, for example, Mark Brayshay, 'Waits, Musicians, Bearwards, and Players: The Inter-Urban Road Travel and Performances of Itinerant Entertainers in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 31:3 (2005), 430–58.
10. Beier, *Masterless Men*, pp. 79–80.
11. My work is indebted to complementary arguments about 'spatial knowledges', mobility, and the particular understanding and practice of roads at this time in Andrew McRae, *Literature and Domestic Travel in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2009), especially chapter 2.
12. Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis, 1977), p. 6.
13. Beier, *Masterless Men*, p. 80. On the spatial connection of vagrancy and alehouses see also Paul Griffiths, *Lost Londons: Change, Crime, and Control in the Capital City, 1550–1660* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 345 and McRae, *Literature and Domestic Travel*, chapter 3.
14. Beier, *Masterless Men,* p. 85.
15. Taylor, *Praise,* sig. B2r.
16. cf. McRae, *Literature and Domestic Travel,* p. 211.

17. For similar reasons, McRae describes Taylor as someone who was not only fascinated by but actually 'experienced traffic', *Literature and Domestic Travel*, p. 212.
18. Griffiths, *Lost Londons*, p. 21.
19. Fumerton, *Unsettled,* p. xiv.
20. This phrase appears frequently in the Coventry constables' accounts; see WRO W1026/7; see Slack, 'Vagrants', 368.
21. John Taylor, *The Pennyles Pilgrimage or The Money-lesse perambulation* [. . .]. (London, 1618), sig. A1r.
22. For reflection on this aspect of Taylor's career, see John H. Chandler, *Travels through Stuart Britain: The Adventures of John Taylor the Water Poet* (Stroud, 1999), espcially p. vii. On Taylor's interest in navigation, see McRae, *Literature and Domestic Travel*, pp. 49–51.
23. Taylor, *Pennyles Pilgrimage,* sig. A3v. Coryate's travels were recounted in *Coryats Crudities* (London, 1611).
24. Chandler, *Travels*, p. 3; McRae, *Literature and Domestic Travel*, p. 162.
25. John Taylor, *A Kicksey Winsey; or a lerry come-twang wherein John Taylor hath satirically suited 800 of his bad debtors, that will not pay him, for his returne of his journey from Scotland* (London, 1619), sig. A1r.
26. 'Ben Jonson is going on foot to Edinburgh and back for his profit', George Garrard to Sir Dudley Carleton, 4th June 1617, *CSP Dom.,* 1611–18, 472. For further discussion of this letter, see Ian Donaldson, *Ben Jonson* (Oxford, 2011), p. 34. Jonson's 'foot-voyage' is now better known about following the discovery of a manuscript in 2009: 'My Gossip Joh[n]son his foot voyage and mine into Scotland', Aldersey Family Collection Manuscript: Cheshire Record Office MS ZCR 469/550; see James Loxley, 'My Gossip's Foot Voyage: A recently discovered manuscript sheds new light on Ben Jonson's walk to Edinburgh', *Times Literary Supplement*, 5554, 11th September 2009, 13–15. This manuscript is now the subject of an Arts and Humanities Research Council project held jointly between the Universities of Edinburgh and Nottingham. *Ben Jonson's Walk to Scotland*, an edition with essays, co-authored by the project team, James Loxley, Anna Groundwater and Julie Sanders, is forthcoming from Cambridge University Press in 2014. For early findings, see Donaldson, *Ben Jonson*, pp. 34–43.
27. See Matthew Steggle, 'Markham, Gervase (1568?–1637)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edition, October 2006 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18065, accessed 28th January 2012]. Steggle notes that Markham too suffered from defaulters, many of them among a group of Red Bull actors who had performed in his plays. Bernard Capp makes a related point in *The World of John Taylor the Water Poet, 1578–1653* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 19–20. He notes that amongst the sponsors in Markham's case were the playwright and entertainment writer Thomas Heywood and the booksellers Gosson and Trundle, as well as other Bankside and Clerkenwell figures. See also C. W. Wallace, 'Gervase Markam, Dramatist', *Jahrbuch der Deutschen Shakespeare Gesellschaft*, 46 (1910), 347–50.
28. Brayshay, 'Waits', p. 450.
29. Taylor, *Pennyles Pilgrimage*, sig. A4r.
30. Markham brought certification back from the Berwick mayor as proof of successful completion (see Steggle, 'Markham').
31. Taylor, *Pennyles Pilgrimage*, sig. A3r.
32. James used the phrase in his December 1616 correspondence with the Scottish Privy Council; cited in Donaldson, *Ben Jonson*, p. 29.
33. For parallel observations on the Taylor and Jonson walks, see McRae, *Literature and Domestic Travel*, p. 162 and Julie Sanders, 'Domestic Travel and Social Mobility' in *Ben Jonson in Context*, edited by Julie Sanders (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 271–80, especially 277–8.
34. Daryl W. Palmer, *Hospitable Performances: Dramatic Genres and Cultural Practices in Early Modern England* (West Lafayette, 1993), p. 120, suggests that Kemp takes the progress pageant

and substitutes clown for king. We might argue that Taylor does something akin, substituting beggar for monarch; for a comparison of Kemp's and Taylor's projects informed by Palmer, see McRae, *Literature and Domestic Travel,* pp. 161–4.

35. Taylor, *Pennyles Pilgrimage*, sig. F3v.
36. Alexandra Walsham, *The Reformation of Landscape: Religion, Identity and Memory in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford, 2011), p. 49.
37. 'The landscape traversed by [. . .] pilgrims was in turn envisaged as a kind of remembrancer itself', Walsham, *Reformation,* p. 78.
38. McRae, *Literature and Domestic Travel*, p. 163.
39. Felicity Heal, *Hospitality in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 236–7. Heal writes specifically on Taylor's pilgrimage on pp. 210–16.
40. Fumerton, *Unsettled*, p. 54.
41. Brayshay argues the same for itinerant players in 'Waits', p. 450; cf. Kent, 'Population, Mobility, and Alms', 41, on parochial support for travel by cart in certain instances.
42. Taylor, *Pennyles Pilgrimage,* sig. B3r.
43. Taylor, *Pennyles Pilgrimage*, sigs. B2r-v.
44. Taylor, *Pennyles Pilgrimage*, sig. C3r.
45. Taylor, *Pennyles Pilgrimage,* sig. A4v
46. It may be that this decision infringed the terms of his sponsorship and led to the high number of defaulters.
47. Taylor, *Pennyles Pilgrimage*, sig. B4r.
48. Taylor, *Pennyles Pilgrimage*, sig. B1v.
49. Taylor, *Pennyles Pilgrimage*, sig. C4r.
50. Taylor, *Pennyles Pilgrimage*, sig. B2r.
51. Taylor, *Pennyles Pilgrimage,* sig. B2r.
52. In Coventry he lodges with the translator Dr Philemon Holland and in Lichfield he is greeted by a joiner he knows from London trade networks; see *Pennyles Pilgrimage,* sigs. B3r-v.
53. Taylor, *Pennyles Pilgrimage*, sig. A1r.
54. Taylor, *Pennyles Pilgrimage*, sig. B1r
55. Beier, *Masterless Men,* p. 6; William C. Carroll, *Fat King, Lean Beggar: Representations of Poverty in the Age of Shakespeare* (Ithaca, 1996), p. 3 and chapter 2 passim.
56. Taylor, *Pennyles Pilgrimage*, sigs. B1v-2r.
57. Taylor, *Pennyles Pilgrimage,* sigs. C2r-v. Intriguingly, the Preston Mayor is anxious to recall a previous royal progress to the town when one member of the community had apparently let them down and displeased the monarch. There seems to be an assumed opportunity for reparation of sorts through the Taylor trip which is fascinating and suggests the national publicity that the walk was receiving. On the expectations of local communities during progress, see Mary Hill Cole, *The Portable Queen: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Ceremony* (Amherst, 2000).
58. On the established rhythms and conventions of progress, see David Bergeron, *English Civic Pageantry, 1558–1642* revised edn (Tempe, AZ, 2003); summarised in Palmer, *Hospitable Performances*, p. 121.
59. Taylor, *Pennyles Pilgrimage,* sig. C3r.
60. McRae, *Literature and Domestic Travel*, p. 92.
61. Taylor, *Pennyles Pilgrimage*, sig. C3r.
62. Kent 'Population', p. 35.
63. Taylor, *Pennyles Pilgrimage*, sig. B3v.
64. Heal, *Hospitality,* p. 210.
65. Taylor, *Pennyles Pilgrimage,* sig. B2v. Jonson's journey has similar accretive effects as news of the walk appears to increase as it continues and the presence of welcoming audiences and spectators increases exponentially on the route (see CRO MS ZCR 469/550, e.g. fols. 5v, 12r). The relative celebrity of Jonson and Taylor in 1618 should not be collapsed into one another

however. Jonson had published a major folio edition of his *Works* in 1616 and received an annual payment from the King as a virtual Poet Laureate, whereas this was the first of Taylor's forays into print as a travel writer and some of his more extravagant claims may constitute an attempt to emulate Jonson.

66. Taylor, *Pennyles Pilgrimage*, sig. B1v.
67. Taylor, *Pennyles Pilgrimage,* sig. B2v.
68. CRO MS ZCR 469/550, e.g. fols. 6v, 7v where Jonson visits Belvoir Castle and Welbeck Abbey respectively.
69. Heal, *Hospitality,* p. 19.
70. Beier, *Masterless Men,* p. 80.
71. Wiltshire CRO QSR h:1 1613/154; this is Beier's summary of a longer document, *Masterless Men*, p. 80.
72. Taylor, *Pennyles Pilgrimage*, sigs. A4v-B1r
73. CRO MS ZCR 469/550, e.g. fol. 5r.
74. Griffiths, *Lost Londons*, describes 'scores of bodies in Bridewell at any one time, working, suffering, and resting' and many were regularly beaten and whipped (p. 253).
75. As a waterman, Taylor would have been acquainted with the real world of vagrancy. Water traffic from Gravesend into the City was regularly checked for the number of vagrants abroad and watermen were actively discouraged from ferrying vagrants from Southwark and Bankside into the city proper (see Griffiths, *Lost Londons,* p. 91). Taylor also talks of vagrants he has seen, not least at playhouses, in the 1621 *Praise* pamphlet.
76. Palmer, *Hospitable Performances*, p. 128, makes a connection between specific royal progresses and publication of narrativised accounts of the same, with Kemp's *Nine Daies Wonder*.
77. Palmer, *Hospitable Performances*, p. 123. In this way, Palmer suggests, the monarch consciously engaged 'the beneficial dynamics of live performance' (p. 126).
78. Palmer, *Hospitable Performances*, p. 120.
79. Taylor, *Pennyles Pilgrimage*, sigs. B4v-C1r
80. McRae describes Taylor's text as 'multiply parasitic' and observes the 'peculiar, paradoxical status of the venture', *Literature and Domestic Travel*, pp. 162, 164.
81. A similar argument can be made for Kemp who was an out of work actor at the time he undertook the dance to Norwich in 1599.
82. On the 'beggar-king' tradition more generally, see, for example, Linda Woodbridge, *Vagrancy, Homelessness and English Renaissance Literature* (Champaign, 2001).
83. Fumerton, *Unsettled*, p. 50.