

subject, nor a monograph putting forward a strong argument, but it is a collection of rich, evocative essays on late medieval Flemish history.

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**Darryll Grantley**, *London in Early Modern English Drama: Representing the Built Environment*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. 248pp. 1 map. £50.00.

**Karen Newman**, *Cultural Capitals: Early Modern London and Paris*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007. 224pp. 30 figures. £30.95 hbk; £16.95 pbk.

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Provincial visitors to early modern London and Paris may have felt like time-travellers, entering fast-paced worlds in which the possibilities of consumption, transport and social interaction were far more advanced than in the provinces. In these two highly readable works Darryll Grantley and Karen Newman use literary and cultural material to construct narratives of metropolitan modernization influenced by spatial theorists such as Michel De Certeau, Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Henri Lefebvre and Edward Soja. Grantley draws on an impressive selection of dramatists, and one of the most useful features of this book is the extensive bibliography of play titles and modern editions. Newman utilizes drama, but also surveys, travel journals, romance novels, pamphlets and ballads, and *Cultural Capitals* contains 30 wonderful illustrations of London and Paris.

Grantley traces the increasing preoccupation with urban locations and audiences in London theatre between the 1570s and the early 1640s, a period when dramatists began to assume audience familiarity with metropolitan locations, as well as depicting modes of living and self-definition that were distinctive to the capital. Before the 1570s interludes depicted London in vague terms as a place of risk and danger, of moral temptations, economic exploitation and potential social breakdown due to migration and demographic growth. From the mid-Elizabethan period London began to be depicted as possessed of a mind and life of its own with dramatists displaying a sense both of local geography and of London's dominance and representation of the English nation populated by feisty and independent-minded citizens. Jacobean drama marked a further shift to yet more local, realistic settings. The unique and separate nature of London was emphasized, with the Thames, prisons and shops depicted as distinctively metropolitan locations. Geographical environments frequented by characters determined their social standing and moral outlook, and intelligence rather than class determined one's standing in the metropolitan hierarchy. The notion that sharp-wittedness and sophistication were needed to survive connected Jacobean drama to the emergence of cony-catching pamphlets and 'a capacity for trickery becomes an acceptable part of the texture of London life as dramatization, and even a source of urban self-congratulation' (Grantley, p. 121). The growing dominance of private theatres such as the Cockpit and Salisbury Court catering for a more elite clientele, as well as the growth of the West End, resulted in locations such as Hyde Park and Covent Garden becoming more prominent. The growth of a sophisticated culture of theatrical consumption meant that Caroline drama increasingly promoted classical notions

of 'civitas' and 'civilitas'. The plays depicted a desire for worldliness, knowledge and news as means of social advancement as part of the development of the idea of 'town' life, and even contained elements of the sexual libertinism which was to be so prominent after the Restoration. Indeed, a chapter on Restoration drama and the new uses of urban space after the Great Fire would have made this marvellous book even better.

Newman seeks to expand the boundaries of metropolitan literature, using literary and cultural texts to write about urban subjectivity. She argues that the features of modernity located in the nineteenth-century industrial cities by historical sociologists existed much earlier, and argues that new configurations of time and urban space produced modern discursive figures of address and modes of subjectivity in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century London and Paris. Although both cities are discussed in equal measure across the book as a whole, this is not a comparative survey, with each capital receiving a different level of attention in specific chapters. Spatial knowledge could be obtained either by travel or private study, although travel writers sought to conflate the two categories by claiming to write from experience. The manner in which people experienced London and Paris was changing as the *flâneur* replaced the medieval *badaud* and new forms of transport such as coaches and sedan chairs provided a solution to the elite problem of how to maintain civility by avoiding filth, stench and noise. The Parisian shopping galleries frequented by the young urban elite were venues of courtship and consumption, whilst streets were widened to accommodate the flow of traffic, also providing more room for markets and hawkers.

Newman is keen to examine London and Paris both from above and below, but whether her work provides much access to plebeian experiences of the two cities is questionable. Greater use might have been made of cheap print when discussing the experiences of vagrants and prostitutes. Moreover, Newman's critique of the manner in which historians have used legal records is only partly successful, failing to engage fully with the subtlety with which Laura Gowing, Garthine Walker, Bernard Capp and Malcolm Gaskill have used such sources. Attention not just to representations of plebeian experience, but also greater consideration of what forms of evidence the lower orders may have created would have strengthened *Cultural Capitals*.

Overall historians of London and Paris will enhance their knowledge by reading these works. In terms of readership *London in Early English Drama* would provide a useful introduction to early modern playwrights for undergraduate historians whilst *Cultural Capitals* is more suited to an advanced undergraduate or postgraduate audience.

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**David J. Cox**, *A Certain Share of Low Cunning: A History of the Bow Street Runners, 1792–1839*. Oregon: Willan Publishing, 2010. 280pp. £45.00.  
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That the term 'Runner' – which carries with it overtones of menial subservience – is still used so widely to describe the forces that operated from London's famed Bow Street magistrate's office says much about our present misunderstandings of this