of books on the Renaissance will need to include this book, and it will be referred to by a wide range of scholars for many years to come.

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Ian Munro

The Figure of the Crowd in Early Modern London: The City and Its Double

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Ian Munro's *The Figure of the Crowd in Early Modern London: The City and Its Double* is a wide-ranging and well-argued study of the complex relations among the city, the crowd, and the theatre in early modern London. "What is the city but the people?" asks the tribune Sicinus in *Coriolanus*. Munro asks us to take this question seriously. The book's introduction and first chapter outline his position in broad terms. The rapid population increase in early modern London, Munro argues, pushed England's capital city into a crisis in signification or legibility. In texts like Elizabeth's 1580 building proclamation and Stow's *Survey of London*, royal and civic authorities sought nostalgically to preserve the idea of a London that was ordered, rational, and knowable. The swelling urban population, housed in new and labyrinthine tenements whose construction threatened to efface the symbolic stability of the city just as their occupants' riotous potential posed an ever-present threat to royal and civic hierarchies of authority, rendered such ideas of the city incoherent.

In his approach to London as a symbolic construct, Munro links his work to such scholarly landmarks as Gail Kern Paster's *The Idea of the City in the Age of Shakespeare* and Lawrence Manley's *Literature and Culture in Early Modern London*. However, Munro is not just interested in the ideas (ideal or demonic) of the city, but also its physical bodies and spaces—in early modern London, ever more bodies in increasingly opaque spaces. Moreover, Munro conceptualizes the relationship between city and crowd in more sophisticated and productive terms than simple opposition. His primary conceptual model is that of deconstructive supplementarity: the space of the crowd is "a multivalent space that supplements the space of the city, disrupting, reinforcing, or otherwise transforming the social and symbolic dynamics of urban meaning." He also turns for conceptual models to Deleuze and Guattari's distinction between arborescent (hierarchically organized) and rhizomatic (heterogeneous and conglomerative) systems. "In the context of London," Munro writes, "and particularly in the context of London's sporadic but persistent unrest, arborescent models of population are superseded by rhizomatic models: the urban

crowd is invisible and ungraspable until reaching a certain level of intensity, gathering and scattering and gathering again.” He rejects the civilizing teleology of Manley’s “fictions of settlement,” though: there is no resolution to the tension between the city and the crowd, no progressive taming of wild urban spaces.

Munro is as interested in the way the crowd’s rhizomatic movements theatricalize the space of the city as in the way they politicize it. Here, he differentiates himself from earlier articulations of new historicism: if new historicists such as Greenblatt and Tennenhouse focused on power’s theatrical expression, Munro focuses on the tension between this arborescent theatricality and the rhizomatic theatricality of the common and the everyday. The book’s second chapter shows how in such ceremonial moments as royal entries and Lord Mayor’s pageants, London became the stage of difficult negotiations over the theatrical definition of its own urban space. Royal entries and civic pageants attempted to render urban space legible, whether as *camera regis* or the ideal civic space; the bodies of the crowd, simply in their excessive, stinking, disorderly presence and regardless of their politics, disrupted that legibility and made its fictionality all too apparent—as it was to outside observers such as the Venetian Horatio Busino and to the pageant writers themselves, who as a response devised antimasque-like segments for the pageants in an effort to incorporate and control the crowd.

The concluding four chapters build upon the first two to address the position of the early modern English stage in London. The theatre, Munro argues, was uncomfortably caught between the city and the crowd. On the one hand, as he amply demonstrates, the writers of the period’s snowdrift of anti-theatrical pamphlets repeatedly single out the theatre’s relationship to the urban crowd for castigation. The theatre is a manifestation of the crowd, a site of its unruly gathering and a point from which it disperses, taking a subversive theatricality with it into the inscrutable nooks and crannies of the city. On the other hand, the stage had an uneasy and even antagonistic relationship to its audience. If the city and the crowd mirror each other, so too do the crowd and the theatre, in a strange mimetic circuit out of which a number of dramatists Munro examines, such as Shakespeare and Jonson, try to break, through a variety of theatrical tactics. Mapping the space of the court onto the space of the city is one tactic, which Munro examines in depth in his chapter on Shakespeare’s second tetralogy and *Henry VIII*. Troping the crowd as “the many-headed multitude” alien to ordered civic space is another, a strategy that, as Munro documents in his fourth chapter, a surprisingly wide range of playwrights took over from the anti-theatricalists who wanted to close them down. The following chapters, however, suggest the failure of attempts such as these to contain the supplemen-

tarity of the crowd. The fifth chapter offers readings of *Julius Caesar* and *Sejanus*: Shakespeare's play participates in the theatricality of the crowd in order to display its own theatrical power, but ultimately offers flight from urban space as the only escape from the dangerous crowd; as might be expected, Jonson is more hostile to the crowd than Shakespeare, and *Sejanus* offers no escape from the crowd's destructive theatrical supplementarity. The book's final chapter explores the connections between the crowd and the plague by reading Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* alongside Dekker's plague pamphlets. "The presence of plague," Munro argues, "mirrors the crisis of meaning catalyzed by London's prodigious population growth." What is the city but the people, and what are the people but the plague? "For *Coriolanus*, as for London, the city is the plague, the city of kites and crows, the city only of crowds," the book concludes. This conclusion, along with the arrangement of the book's chapters, might seem to belie Munro's opening rejection of teleology. But if there is one thing that the book's fine analyses teach us, it is that the "is" in such statements as "the city is the plague" is always unstable, that its supplementary logic is always in *play*.

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