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“Whither will you walke, my lord?”: Promenading, PAR, and place-realist theatre.

During the early 1630s a series of plays appear on the London stage with an extraordinary concentration of the city’s place names in their titles: Shackerley Marmion’s *Holland’s Leaguer* (Salisbury Court, 1631) — named after a famous London brothel — James Shirley’s *Hyde Park* (Cockpit, 1632), Thomas Nabbes’s *Tottenham Court* (Salisbury Court, 1633) and *Covent Garden* (1633), and Richard Brome’s *Covent Garden Weeded* (Cockpit, 1634), *The Sparagus Garden* (Salisbury Court, 1635), and *The New Academy; or, The New Exchange* (1636) — all of which refer to London locales.¹ This set of commercially successful and popular dramas are sometimes referred to as the “place-realist” plays and, while the circumstances of the original productions of *Covent Garden* and *The New Academy* remain unclear, were all first performed in indoor playhouses.² As unprecedented as their quick succession and unparalleled focus on specific metropolitan locations, is their sheer density of references to walking, raising the question of why Caroline playwrights should suddenly wish to show their characters going for a walk. This article aims to suggest some answers through combining PAR with analysis of three of the place-realist plays, *Hyde Park*, *Tottenham Court*, and *The Sparagus Garden*. Its title is taken from the opening line of Act 4 of *Hyde Park* — the most extended scene of promenading in the early modern dramatic canon — which highlights that the staging of walking is very much a practical concern for early modern performers.³

¹ Jonson’s most famous play to be named after a London locale -- *Bartholomew Fair* -- was also printed in 1631, though first performed in 1614. There is a late contender for inclusion in this group of plays in Thomas Jordan’s *The Walks of Islington and Hogsden* but its date of 1641 makes it an outlier.

² The term ‘place-realism’ was seemingly first coined in T. Miles, ‘Place-Realism in a Group of Caroline Plays,’ *The Review of English Studies* 18.72 (1942), 428-440. Matthew Steggle offers the fullest analysis of place-realism among contemporary critics in such publications as *Richard Brome: Place and Politics on the Caroline Stage* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004) and ‘Caroline Politics on the Professional Comic Stage’ in *The 1630s: Interdisciplinary Essays on Culture and Politics in the Caroline Era*, ed. by Ian Atherton and Julie Sanders (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), pp.154-70.

³ J. Shirley, *H[y]de Park* (London: Tho. Cotes, 1637), F4r.

Joseph A. Amato argues that the seventeenth century figures a rupture in pedestrian history, writing that “Increasingly, the carriage rides of aristocrats and the bourgeoisie ended with fashionable promenades on garden pathways, in parks, on large boulevards and refurbished city ramparts, and on palisades.”⁴ While Peter Borsay’s research into the cultural history of promenading focuses on the post-Restoration period and eighteenth century, he similarly argues that promenading emerges as social practice in the early 1600s, claiming that “the habit of public promenading, and the existence of purpose-built urban facilities to service this” dates from this time.⁵ London’s indoor playhouses — in themselves a new and fashionable urban development of the turn of the century — therefore appropriated the cutting-edge cultural activity of promenading for their stages extremely quickly.

⁴ J. A. Amato, *On Foot: A History of Walking* (New York: New York University Press, 2004), pp.17-18.

⁵ P. Borsay, ‘The Rise of the Promenade: The Social and Cultural Use of Space in the English Provincial Town c. 1660-1800,’ *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 9.2 (1986), 125-40, 125.

[Figure 1 near here: Collage 29076 by kind permission of London Metropolitan Archives, City of London Corporation]

According to Julie Sanders, the emergence of promenading in the capital was contingent upon the rapid growth of the city as it expanded westwards at this time.⁶ Londoners had to walk greater distances as they went about their everyday activities, and were also encouraged to stroll as a leisure activity in green spaces that had been recently opened up to the public, such as St James's Park, Hyde Park, and Marylebone Gardens.⁷ While the spaces for walking may have become more democratic, promenading nevertheless evidences the embodiment of early modern class difference in that some Londoners were more welcome to promenade than

⁶ J. Sanders, *The Cultural Geography of Early Modern Drama, 1620-1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 2011, p.173.

⁷ While Hyde Park was not opened to the general public until the later 1630s, limited access had been permitted to the gentility since Jacobean times.

others. To practice this elite form of ambulation presupposed another subject whose gait betrayed their lower class, an observation made by Karen Newman of early modern Paris and London in which “[i]f the promenade was a chief pastime of the early modern urban elite, walking was that of the middling sort or poor.”⁸ Amato elaborates upon his maxim that “walking is talking” to argue that social stratification occurs every time that the subject goes on foot, writing that ambulation “presents the walker to the world. It declares who walks, how, why, in what spirit, under what conditions, and at whose volition he or she walks. Walking expresses itself with varying speed, stride, gait, and associated posture, company, dress [...] place, load, condition, and occasion.”⁹ Walking onto or upon the stage is therefore not merely functional or necessary for an actor; the mode, pace, style, freedom or limitations of the walk enacted by a performer are teeming with social significance.

The gait associated with the staged promenading of early modern players is a clear example of early modern *hexis*, or the aspect of Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus* associated with the physical body and defined by him as “a pattern of postures [...] both individual and systematic [...] charged with a host of social meanings and values.”¹⁰ Principles of practice and mobility are entangled with who has the right to be active and mobile, and how.

Embodying one’s *hexis* depends upon extant knowledge of particular cultural modes and social mores; as Bourdieu says in relation to *habitus*, it is “history turned into nature.”¹¹ The illusion of naturalness is produced by the sublimation of particular histories into bodily

⁸ K. Newman, *Cultural Capitals: Early Modern London and Paris* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), p.17.

⁹ Amato, p.4

¹⁰ Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p.87. *Habitus* refers to Bourdieu’s framework of practice to consider how certain environments produce certain forms of behaviour among classes of people, and can be broadly defined as an array of cognitive and affective configurations that orient the individual - including tastes, attitudes, preferences, perceptions, habits, and abilities. Bourdieu’s key point is that these are usually unconsciously assimilated by the subject but express class difference through quotidian acts.

¹¹ Bourdieu, p.78

behaviours to forward particular dispositions: “In fact it is their present and past positions in the social structure that biological individuals carry with them, at all times and in all places, in the form of dispositions which are so many marks of social position and hence of the social distance between objective positions.”¹² So while *hexis* may enable people to move, it also keeps people in their place. Bourdieu’s latter idea of differential bodily *hexis* is key to analysing walking; he argues that it is not just the mode and manner of gait, but differences *between* forms of pedestrianism, which inscribe subjects into social positions.

Pedestrian differentiation was as much spatial and architectural as it was bodily or conceptual however, built in to the very fabric of the city. Borsay, citing John Wood, writes that, until the 1730s, the Walks at Bath “consisted of two promenades, the upper, ‘a paved walk of two hundred feet in length, and twenty seven feet in breadth’, and the lower, formed by ‘three rows of tall sycamore trees [. . .] parallel to the former, which were spread with gravel, for the use of the common sort of people.’”¹³ Access to particular surfaces for ambulation was therefore fundamental to the class signification of leisurely walking, something that Amato recognises when he writes that promenading was inextricable from the building of suitable spaces: “Opulent courts, lavish country homes, city squares, wide boulevards, and spacious gardens furnished ample space and smooth surfaces for superior people to promenade and stroll, to see and be seen.”¹⁴ Both smoothed surfaces and public space were conditions for a depiction of promenading that indoor stages were able to provide.

¹² Bourdieu, p.82

¹³ Borsay, p.128.

¹⁴ Amato, p.70

[Figure 2 near here: Collage 311712 by kind permission of London Metropolitan Archives, City of London Corporation]

Despite place-realist plays foregrounding the relationship between drama, mobility, and city space, the choreography of their instances of walking nevertheless remains an under-explored area. The ‘Walking the City in the Indoor Theatre’ workshop — produced in the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse on 4th July, 2016 as part of their Research-in-Action programme — aimed to focus attention back onto the concepts of walking and promenading at the level of performance, as well as to consider the difficulties of manifesting London’s changing urban geography onstage. Taking its inspiration from Sanders’s chapter title ‘Writing the City: emergent spaces’ (pp.213-235) the workshop extended and applied her insights to the restricted space of the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, using scenes from *Hyde Park*, *The Sparagus Garden*, and *Tottenham Court* to practically explore how performers might stage an amble on the limited stages of the Cockpit and Salisbury Court theatres. Working alongside

director, Jenny Eastop, and actors Beth Park, Peter Wicks, Jonathon Reed, Benjamin Garrison and Monty d’Inverno, as well as Will Tosh (Lecturer and Research Fellow at Shakespeare’s Globe), we conducted PAR to examine urban space, theatrical space, dynamism, bodies, and buildings in relation to these plays.

In the first place, the RiA workshop sought to understand how walking as a cultural practice manifested in place-realist drama, exploring some of the theatrical strategies that may have been used to stage promenading, and how walking ‘effects’ might have been produced on stages which actors had to, of necessity, walk. In the second instance, it aimed to explore how the growth of early modern London — as embodied through the promenading citizen — was in tension with the material limitations of the indoor theatres opening during this time, especially very small stages such as the Cockpit. An account of the workshop will therefore address how the interiors of indoor playhouses related to the outdoors of their imagined environments, and also how stage space informed and constrained actors’ performances of walking. As the city expanded, the stage contracted, and the PAR undertaken investigated how promenading works practically with such circumscribed spaces.

Early modern walking as performative event

Prior to the overt staging of the promenade in Caroline drama, walking can be seen to emerge as an event or spectacle in other early modern publications. The printed travels of Thomas Coryate (*Coryat’s Crudities*, 1611), Fynes Moryson (*Itinerary*, 1617) and William Lithgow (*Rare Adventures & Paineiful Peregrinations*, 1632), among others, show that accounts of foot-journeys were desired by early modern readers. But the idea of walking as a staged or creative event associated particularly with poets, performers, and playwrights, emerges most strongly in the early seventeenth-century, via Ben Jonson’s infamous 450-mile ‘Walk to

Scotland' in 1618 for instance, but also via the multiple accounts of the journeys undertaken by the poet, John Taylor.¹⁵ As Johann Gregory has shown, Taylor — a London ferryman — was unique among writers during the early modern period in that he used his many publications to transgress the expectations of his humble beginnings in order to become a popular and famous author. Much of his fame derived from the “publicity stunts” of his travels and adventures.¹⁶ The most renowned of these journeys was his so-called *Pennyles Pilgrimage* (1618) in which he followed Ben Jonson’s route to Scotland but without any money, food, or indeed plan, getting by on the charity of strangers, some of whom he simply stared at until they paid him attention.¹⁷ The staging of pilgrimages was borne of Taylor’s need to “make a spectacle of himself” as much as the walking itself and legitimated his rise from ferryman to self-styled “Water Poet”.¹⁸ The event-ness of staged walks such as Taylor’s and Jonson’s belies the spontaneity and freedom usually associated with perambulation as a form of mobility. Indeed Jonson’s ‘Walk’ demonstrated that ambulation was often subject to underlying generic expectations; his own endeavour mimicked both the wager journey and the royal progress in its structure.¹⁹

Of course, the profession of acting was by its very nature pedestrian with actors having to tour their plays when plagues closed down the playhouses, as John Kerrigan reminds us: “Early modern actors walked. Even before they strutted and fretted their hour upon the stage they tramped the roads looking for work like the travelling players in *Hamlet*.”²⁰ But

¹⁵ Though centred on a different form of movement, Will Kemp’s 125-mile Morris dance to Norwich in *Nine Daies Wonder* (1600) is embroiled in this nexus of para-theatrical events.

¹⁶ J. Gregory, ‘The Publicity of John Taylor the Water-Poet (1578-1653): Legitimizing a Social Transgression,’ IN *Transmission and Transgression. Cultural Challenges in Early Modern England*, ed. By Sophie Chiari and Helene Palma (Aix-en-Provence : Presses Universitaires de Provence, 2014), pp.139-52, pp.142-3.

¹⁷ Gregory, p.144

¹⁸ Gregory, p.151

¹⁹ See A. Groundwater, J. Loxley, and J. Sanders, *Ben Jonson’s Walk to Scotland: An Annotated Edition of the ‘Foot Voyage’* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014) pp.109-33.

²⁰ J. Kerrigan, *Shakespeare’s Originality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p.44

Kerrigan also argues that the stagecraft of walking should be counted among the early modern theatre's suite of special effects, contending that in a society in which "almost all journeys were taken, exhaustingly and even lamingly, by foot, this was the magic of theatre, traversing and transforming space," that, contrary to earthbound everyday pedestrianism, "on stage walking can leap."²¹ In its reconfiguration of the long and laborious journeys that touring actors and most early modern subjects would have undertaken, Kerrigan speculates that techniques of mobility onstage would have been guided by "compression, of jump-cut shifts to location and switches between inside and outside created by short walks. The actors' paths crissed and crossed on the planks and rushes of the stage."²² In this way, the limited spaces of performance venues were illusorily enlarged.

Plays such as *Hyde Park*, *Tottenham Court*, and *The Sparagus Garden* feed into this growing sense of walking as a spectacular event, but they also expand it, not only in terms of their engagement with emergent cultural forms such as promenading but also via the gender of their pedestrians. All of those publishing perambulatory accounts are men, for instance, making the representation of female pedestrianism on the early modern stage invaluable contributions to walking history (albeit evidence both fictional and filtered through the pens of male playwrights). Nevertheless, the playhouses remained hampered by their material conditions. The questions that we considered during the RiA workshop were similar to those that preoccupy Robert Stagg in his recent chapter on road-travel in drama which he begins by asking, "How do actors and characters walk roads onstage? And how, even in a theatre uncommitted to absolute realism, are actors supposed to travel along an onstage road without it appearing ludicrously foreshortened or abbreviated? How, that is, did the early modern

²¹ Kerrigan, p.50

²² Kerrigan, p.49

stage handle the problem of representing pedestrian travel?”²³ Citing the numerous instances when the theatre clearly avoids the issue of representing mobility and asks its audience to instead imagine scenes of travel, Stagg concludes that, very often, “it didn’t.”²⁴ However the scenes of promenading investigated during the RiA workshop all demonstrate playwrights capitalising upon the re-creation of this modish outdoors pursuit for their fashionable indoor theatre audiences, rendering it unlikely that the crux posed by staged walking would simply have been brushed over.

The spatial constraints of indoor stages would certainly have limited what could be represented nonetheless, placing the onus on both playwrights and performers to innovate stagecraft in order to depict the event and ‘genre’ of the promenade. Early modern theatre practitioners must have developed metonymic walking behaviours in order to condense what of necessity requires a very large area, into a very small one. But how were emergent forms of walking, such as the promenade, codified for early modern audiences? And how might performers have used their bodies, the theatrical space, and the relationship between the two to distinguish the portrayal of walking as a cultural event, from the walking that inevitably takes place on a theatrical stage? To what extent, too, is the issue of arranging of bodies in performance space to signal ‘walking’ intensified when the form of ambulation involves two or more people, as is often the case when staging a promenade? Finally, in what ways do issues of audience, spectatorship and theatregoing intersect with the social values placed upon promenading, defined earlier by Amato as the imperative to “to see and be seen”? These were the foremost questions explored during the RiA workshop.

²³ R. Stagg, ‘Staging the Road: Walking, Talking, Footing’ in *Reading the Road: From Shakespeare’s Crossings to Bunyan’s Highways*, ed. by Lisa Hopkins and Bill Angus (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), pp.185-201, p.185.

²⁴ Ibid.

‘Walking the City in the Indoor Playhouse’: Practice-as-Research at the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse

While walking has been extensively theorized in performance studies — particularly in relation to site-specific theatre and contemporary performance — it has largely escaped the purview of theatre studies scholars, for whom the complex relationship between walking and stagecraft within theatre buildings remains under-researched.²⁵ Kris Darby, building on Michael Kirby, has partly attributed this neglect to the liminal space that onstage walking occupies between “acting and not-acting”, writing of the difficulties in ascertaining walking’s “presence in performance as an *action* or *movement*. Its familiar existence as an everyday practice, in contrast to the ritualistic extra-daily practices in which performance resides, have in part contributed to such uncertainty.”²⁶ A facet of this difficulty is that of distinction: how does the staging of ‘going for a walk’ differ from the movement across the stage essential for performance — if indeed it does?

And yet modes of walking have been crucial for both performers’ and audiences’ interpretation from the ancient Greek theatre onwards. Tiffany Stern’s work on tragic walking, for instance, confirms that generic difference was embodied in the very shoes that classical actors wore: “Greek actors of tragedies had performed wearing raised boots known in English as ‘buskins’; actors of comedies had played in low thin shoes known in English as ‘socks’. As a result, tragedians and comedians had, of necessity, walked in genre-specific ways: there was literally a tragic and a comic pace.”²⁷ Specific forms of gait were also

²⁵ There is a wealth of work on walking and performance produced by contemporary practitioners and scholars including Tim Creswell, Tim Ingold, Deirdre Heddon, Carl Lavery, Hayden Lorimer, Misha Myers, Deborah Pearson, Mike Pearson, Iain Sinclair, Phil Smith, Fiona Wilkie, John Wylie, and others.

²⁶ K. Darby, ‘Treading the Boards: the Significance of Walking on the Stage.’ *New Theatre Quarterly* 30.4 (2014), pp.365-378, p.368.

²⁷ T. Stern, ‘Early Modern Tragedy and Performance’ in *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespearean Tragedy*, ed. by Michael Neill and David Schalkwyk (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016) pp.489-504, p.492.

deployed during the early modern period by playwrights and players to signify both character and dramatic genre. Walking as an element in the repertoire of characterisation is evident from the earliest English texts pertaining to drama, as Nicholas Udall's *Floures for Latine spekyng* makes apparent. In discussing the phrase from Terence's *Eunuchus*, "*Parmenonem incedere video*" or "I see Parmeno come jettinge like a lorde," *incedere* refers to a particular type of dramatic gait, as Udall expands:

Incedo, dis, inessi, dere, incèssum, incessu, is *ambulare* to walke, that is to go. But proprely *incedere* differeth from *ambulare*. For *incedere* proprely is to go with a stately pace, as who shulde saye, to shewe a greatte gravitye or majesty in goinge, as princes doo whanne they shewe them selves in their astate.²⁸

The word "jetting" therefore invokes a style of walking particularly associated with the genre of early modern tragedy, with "jetting", "stalking" and "strutting" all indicating "a stiff, pompous gait, with, analogies suggest, bird-like prinking—perhaps in its careful placing—about it."²⁹ Such walking has class implications: we can see this in the perception of the ghost of Hamlet's " martial stalk" as "stately," for example (1.1.65, 1.2.202).³⁰ At the other end of the social scale, as Tom Bishop has shown, 'socks' or *soccus* would have encouraged particular modes of mobility among clowns and comic actors for whom "there was not a stately lateral motion, but a bouncing up-and-down, a leaping rise and fall of energetic action, requiring athletic skill no doubt, but suggesting also the indecorous and rude, the socially low."³¹ Such material conditions do not only affect gait, but also, pace. Clowns and servant characters are repeatedly associated in early modern plays with hasty entrances and exits, and

²⁸ N. Udall, N. *Floures for Latine spekyng selected and gathered oute of Terence* (London, 1534), Nn2v-Nn3r. The early modern i/j, y/i, and u/v have been modernised in the transcription.

²⁹ Stern, p.493

³⁰ W. Shakespeare, *The Complete Works*, gen. eds. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, G. 2nd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). All subsequent references taken from this edition.

³¹ T. Bishop, 'Boot and Shtick,' *Shakespeare Studies* 43 (2015), 35-49, 37.

with quick movement such as running, and it is easy to see how the conventional aspects of their costumes, discussed by Stern and Bishop, aid their generic mobilities. A slippery word, pace of course refers to both the way one walks and the speed: it has a further theatrical sense insofar as it marks the rhythm of playing the play too.

The association of particular types of walking with particular types of performance therefore gestures towards a bodily semiotics of class in early modern performance which audiences were expected to decode and interpret. Theatrical walking conventions would have been married to extant and emerging social understandings of pedestrianism, expressed through the body but also embedded in language and etymology. Thus Amato writes that “The curious word *saunter* in the seventeenth century referred to a self-reflective form of walking. It had its origin in the Middle English word *santer*, which meant “to muse.” Amble, “to move slowly and even leisurely,” has its source in the Latin verb *Ambulare*, “to go.” Peripatetic, which meant “to walk around” and was aptly derived from a school of Greek philosophers who walked as they philosophized, came to refer to itinerant traders and travellers.”³² In each instance the form of walking — mode, gait, pace, and stride — is allied to a quality suggestive of class or occupation or some other aspect of social identity. Gender is of course a part of this matrix. One need only think of Richard III’s misogynistic dismissal of women as “wanton ambling nymph[s]” to realise that the qualities associated with forms of walking frequently mutate when allied to female bodies and the misogyny of early modern thought (1.1.17).

However the site as well as the manner of walking would have been significant for the early modern audience’s understanding of the walking being presented. Richard Mulcaster

³² Amato, pp.6-7

delineates a range of health benefits or adverse effects that are contingent upon walking in certain environments, suggesting how particular locations might have been read by early modern spectators. Meadows, walled gardens, and arbours are favoured – with especial attention given to the health benefits of walking among myrtle and bay trees and sweet herbs (L4r).³³ However, rough, bushy or brambly ground is to be avoided because it can “stufte the head” (L3v), his injunction against particular environments perhaps reminding us of the “dank and dirty ground” in the less-than-bucolic woods beyond Athens in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. (2.2.81). Mulcaster's text shows that it is not just the style and manner of walking that is interpreted by an audience, but also the context of movement which offers clues as to what is being represented. It demonstrates that place is as much of an event as the performance, something that became clearer when attempting to realise the park, the garden, and the road as scenic locales during the RiA workshop.

Our main research concern for the workshops concerned walking and space. While there are further interesting questions to be asked about the influence of candlelight and costume on staged pedestrianism in early modern drama, our PAR was specifically focused on how to produce the illusion of walking outdoors within the restricted area of the indoor theatre. The workshop had two stages; an afternoon rehearsal, followed by an evening showing where the day's findings were performed before an audience and feedback could be received. The final section of this article outlines the contours of the spatial conundrum that each play posed, the possible solutions found through performance, as well as the further questions that the PAR raised. While this research may not have been able to produce definitive evidence about how

³³ R. Mulcaster, *Positions [...] for the training up of children* (London, 1581), L4r. The early modern u and v have been modernised in the transcription.

promenading was realised on the early modern stage, it did identify a number of speculative starting points for thinking about how walking materializes in performance.

The Sparagus Garden

Context: The Sparagus Garden is a play which explores the city of London through the story of a country bumpkin, Timothy Hoyden, who is stripped of his money and dignity by its vicious inhabitants during the course of the drama. The workshop explorations centred on Act 3 and its fundamental problem of representation — how to turn the highly decorated interior of the indoor playhouse into the outdoor promenading environment of a pleasure garden. It is an Act which requires unity of space, and we explored a section in which three courtiers come into the temporarily vacated garden, meet its keepers, and then continue on their way. What must the performers do to show that they are in the midst of a promenade, and how can they suggest the varying distances implied by the text during this scene?

Matthew Steggle has identified that “a strong interest in place, in various senses, is one of Brome’s most distinctive characteristics as a dramatist”, and Act 3 of *The Sparagus Garden* is one of his key scenes in this respect, with its vivid depiction of a pleasure garden, which may well refer to the real London location of Spring Garden.³⁴ The play’s central act concentrates its concern with the ceaseless movement and circulation that constitutes the city, whether walking, dancing, or transportation via sedan chair. During Act 3, for instance, the courtiers invite three ladies “To exercise your numerous feet, and tread/ A curious knot upon this grassie square,” engaging them in a courtly dance that will make the garden more fecund, — “doubl[ing] the encrease, sweetnesse and beauty/Of every plant and flower throughout the garden” — and so exposing the interrelationship between the performance of movement and

³⁴ Steggle, 2004, p.8, pp.71-4.

the creation of place in the play.³⁵ In her critical introduction to the play on the *Brome Online* website, Sanders suggests that in fact the whole act is akin to a dance and that “There is a careful symmetry both to this particular moment and the flow of circulation of different characters and concerns in this staged space.”³⁶ However pedestrianism is equally as important to *The Sparagus Garden*’s depiction of London and the locations and neighbourhoods within it, and Sanders writes that from its earliest scenes it is suffused with “images of walkers and references to walking [...] Walking for the sake of walking; for display; to experience the new streets and layouts and connected networks of the emerging and expanding city.”³⁷ The various forms that ambulation takes in *The Sparagus Garden* therefore provide access to early modern versions of what Michel de Certeau calls ‘the pedestrian speech-acts’ that constitute urbanity.³⁸

The opening of Act Three depicts three gallants who are not admitted to the house run within the garden by Martha and her husband, the Gardener, as they have not brought female companions with them, raising the question of exactly what sort of house this is. Sanders writes that “What is being consumed in the rooms just offstage in the central act of this play is, of course, the human body, male and female, in all manner of sexual liaisons.”³⁹ The implication connects promenading as a form of elite recreation with other activities such as sex and sex-work – suggesting that purposeless ambulation may lead the walker along sinful paths towards other, more vicious, forms of recreation. In lieu of female company, Martha instead invites the gallants to “bestow your selves in the garden [...] you shall have the best

³⁵ R. Brome, *The Sparagus Garden* (London: J. Okes, 1640), F4r.

³⁶ J. Sanders, ‘Critical Introduction: *The Sparagus Garden*,’ *Richard Brome Online* <http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/brome>, <8.4.2020>, para 22.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, para 8

³⁸ M. de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp.97-100.

³⁹ Sanders, para 34.

cheer the house can afford yee,” leading one gallant to suggest they “walke about gentlemen” as they wait for wine and asparagus to be brought to their chosen arbour.⁴⁰

The first thing that we noticed when rehearsing the scene was the expansion and contraction of space that it calls for; the requirement for the audience to imagine that physical space is altering its dimensions within a short space of time. In the gallants’ initial attempts to flatter Martha and her husband, they refer to the asparagus garden in terms that indicate its expansiveness, as a “plantation”, a “province” and an “island of two acres” for instance.⁴¹ As with the dance, the colonial terms that Brome deploys point up the degree to which the performance of place is concomitant with its construction. The instance illuminates Sanders’ contention that the “place-realism” of plays of the 1630s consists not only in their reflection of spaces but also in the way in which they “actually produce them or at least produce ways of understanding and interpreting them and therefore also produce the ways in which those spaces are practised.”⁴² By invoking the language of the travellers’ narratives emerging from America, Brome connects staged walking with the walking occurring in the ‘New World’, in which accounts of pedestrian exploration also lay claim to indigenous lands spatially, economically and rhetorically, indicating once again that place is inextricable from practice.

Using their voices to indicate the scale associated with vast areas like plantations, provinces and islands, the actors therefore spoke these words as if at a distance from their potential hosts upon entering the garden. The requirement for actors to use their bodies and voices to signify distance would have been paramount given the dimensions of the Salisbury Court theatre in which the play was originally performed. John Astington notes that the stage’s

⁴⁰ Brome, Fr

⁴¹ Brome, E4v

⁴² Sanders, para 7.

smallness and shallow depth of about 12 feet would have lent itself to “a chiefly lateral grouping of figures” making the challenge of depicting the leisurely amble especially marked.⁴³ The material limitations of the indoor stage of the Wanamaker were equally apparent when the time came for the gallants to perform their perambulation. This section compelled the actors to use their bodies rather than their voices to indicate distance or closeness. We discovered that precision in the relationship between the actors’ bodies and the stage was vital to the credibility of this leisurely amble. Imagining their walk around the garden as a single circuit of the stage, we found that when the actors were grouped closely together, the stage space looked bigger, but if they became disparate then the space shrank. The proxemics of the three actors’ bodies were thus key to creating the scale of garden in which they walked.

We also tried to introduce the changeful interrelationships that signify walking, such as two actors conversing, while one walked ahead, or having all three walk in single file. However, we found that one actor could not move too far physically from the others without disrupting the sense of togetherness that produced promenading. The illusion of walking was thus largely created through the interrelationship between bodies and theatrical space. In addition, we found that meandering or pottering during this circuit of the stage also broke the spell — the representation of promenading required a dedicated focus on maintaining and stabilising the distance between the performers at all times. Although what is being staged is an informal wander through a garden, what was required was highly choreographed movement in terms of speed, pace, proximity, and interplay of bodies. The casual nature of the walk was instead transmitted through various aspects of walking behaviour, such as stopping to take in the

⁴³ J. H. Astington, ‘The *Messalina* Stage and Salisbury Court Plays,’ *Theatre Journal* 43.2 (1991), 141-156, 148. Astington also estimates that the stage was only 20 feet wide, tapering to 15 feet at the forestage.

scenery, walking backwards while speaking, or looking up at a potentially drizzly sky — though we also found that stopping too frequently to deliver lines also impeded a sense of the process or progress of moving forward.

While our initial work on *The Sparagus Garden* highlighted the need for accuracy and exactness of movement when performing the promenade of the seventeenth-century elite, it also emphasised the heightened attention to blocking needed to show that actors have gone ‘somewhere else’ when attempting to theatricalize walking, as with the stage circuit. In fact this became an issue of some debate among creative and research teams. One of our actors felt strongly that there was no need to actually *show* walking even when it was referred to dramatically. However, when we tried not walking during the evening workshop performance of *The Sparagus Garden* — having our actors deliver their dialogue on the forestage rather than during a loop of the stage — the audience felt equally strongly that this did not signify that the characters were actually doing anything. Why specify that the gallants “walke about” only for them to stay static? And given the emphasis that Brome has placed on the need to practice spaces in order to give them meaning — in relation to both the transformative powers of the courtiers’ dance and his invocation of ‘New World’ rhetoric — it seems likely that walking the stage is what transfigures it imaginatively for the audience from ambiguous space into the localised place of a pleasure garden.⁴⁴

Hyde Park

Context: Like Brome, Shirley uses Act 3 of Hyde Park to bring his comedy of manners into a specific locale, this time the former royal hunting ground of Hyde Park. In doing so he provides

⁴⁴ This notion could potentially be related to ancient practices such as ‘beating the bounds’, the walk of the perimeter of a parish at Rogantide in order to define its limits.

indoor theatre-goers with a sneak preview of what might await them when access to the park is granted to the general public in 1637. Shirley uses the site and spaces within Hyde Park to resolve the series of romantic intrigues that he has established in the first two acts. Sanders speaks convincingly of the verbal construction of size and scale in Hyde Park.⁴⁵ But how can the magnitude of park space be staged in the small indoor theatre? She alights upon key spatial moments in the text, such as the injunction to “walke a little further” for instance, but how much further is it possible to walk on a stage that had already been traversed?⁴⁶ With regard to the new cultural practice of promenading that Sanders identifies, what does perambulation for pleasure look like? These questions were explored through staging the opening of Act 4.⁴⁷

We took the lessons from *The Sparagus Garden* into our exploration of excerpts from Act 4 of *Hyde Park*. In order to stage the expanse of the park, we would need to use every inch of the stage. There was also a requirement for the actors become more vocally ‘open’ and louder to indicate that they were in a large space. Our director’s first instinct was to use areas beyond the stage to try to create the park’s vaster scope, and have characters enter the stage through the vom. This was really an instinct to escape the limitations of the stage and shy away from the theatrical crux of staging a promenade. As researchers, Will and I were keen to try and test the boundaries of the stage itself rather than use a theatrical practice for which there is little historical evidence (as far as we know, early modern actors did not enter or exit through the auditorium). However, we did open up the stage doors to incorporate the backstage area and to increase the amount of space available to the performers.

⁴⁵ Sanders, p.166

⁴⁶ Shirley, F4v

⁴⁷ Shirley, F4r-Gr

As with the circuit of *The Sparagus Garden*, we developed a specific logic of space for *Hyde Park*, which involved the actors entering through the central arch of the discovery space, and leaving through the door stage left to indicate that they were exiting the park, or stage right to show that they were heading deeper into it. The structure of the playhouse's *frons scenae* took on the physical nature of the park when treated by the actors as if it represented arbours or tree trunks. The creation of promenading was partly about the quality of the movement, about the actors not seeing their transition from backstage to the stage itself as an 'entrance' through a door, but as a continuation of walking through green space. Jenny recognised that this flow of movement related equally to exits. When the actors demonstrated a tendency to move offstage too purposefully — "marching" as Jenny called it — she directed them to rather "waft" offstage, noting that promenading implies a different register of action than we usually expect of entrances and exits.⁴⁸

During the evening workshop performance we explored using areas beyond the stage by having one character (Fairfield) enter through the stage right gallery on his lines "Frank Tryer, I ha beene seeking thee / About the Parke."⁴⁹ The use of a meta-layer of stage space did provide a solution for the onstage limitations while helping to create a sense of the amorphousness of the park and aleatoric movement within it, in that social encounters can occur from various directions. However, there remained a concern that this was 'cheating'; that the playwrights of the 1630s are throwing down a particular representative gauntlet which is ours to take up.

⁴⁸ In a performance of the play produced by students of the Department of Theatre, Film, and Television at the University of York on 9-11 June 2016 (dir. Michael Cordner) going deeper into the park was suggested by exiting via one of the two bridges at the front of the stage – enabling a forward momentum of movement precluded by the Wanamaker stage. A film of that production is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7fX6tw5cMyk>

⁴⁹ Shirley, F4v

Tottenham Court

Context: Another Caroline comedy that depicts Londoners enjoying their leisure, Nabbes' drama imagines a day spent in the semi-rural environs of Tottenham Court. Walking is mentioned thirteen times during the play, with references to "early walking", "walking softly", and "healthful" walking, for example.⁵⁰ From Act 3 onwards, much of Tottenham Court's action takes place inside an alehouse, however there is a concentration of pedestrian stage business in the first two acts as characters run into each other on their approach to the tavern, and the relationship between walking, talking, and social encounter is brought to the fore. It is a commonplace of early modern performance that movement has to be purposeful otherwise it can detract from dramatic action. However Act 2 of Tottenham Court opens with the stage direction: "Enter FRANKE and GEORGE, as walking to TOTENHAM-COURT."⁵¹ The stage direction presumes that the actors travel during the scene — but how much walking actually takes place during their talking? How can the space be maximised during a lengthy section of dialogue to give the impression of ground being covered, and at what points is it judicious for the actors to stand still? The scene bleeds into 2.2, in which the opening stage direction "To them CHANGLOVE, STITCHWELL, and his WIFE", is followed by George saying, "But who comes yonder?"⁵² "Yonder" suggests distance, and the actors are challenged again to give the impression of space. How far away is "yonder", and how long does it take the characters to reach them? The final part of the workshop therefore focused on the crossover between 2.1 and 2.2.

Tottenham Court explicitly foregrounds walking and the social encounters that it occasions from its first moments. An interesting mixed-rank encounter occurs early in the play when

⁵⁰ T. Nabbes, *Tottenham Court* (London: Richard Oulton, 1638), B3v, C4v, H4r, I3r. The long s has been modernised in the transcription.

⁵¹ Nabbes, C3v

⁵² Nabbes, C4v

the audience see the escaping gentlewoman, Bellamie, lost in a park, and rescued by Cicely, a (disguised) milk-maid, and the park's keepers. The form of pedestrianism associated with these agricultural workers is far removed from the leisurely ambles to Tottenham Court that the audience will shortly witness as the higher-class characters take to the stage. Walking is an occupational, not a recreational, activity for the man known only as Keeper and his assistant, Slip, who agree to take care of the distressed Bellamie, but only after they have completed their work. The Keeper says that they will return after they have "walkt the round", ordering Slip to "round you the south side oth' Parke, and meet me at the Great Oake. I'le this way."⁵³ Slip prepares to do so, but implores Cicely to be prepared for their return and to "neglect not my Breakfast. Rising early and walking gets us good stomacks."⁵⁴ The scene provides a vignette of how urban or semi-urban space was negotiated through competing interests, illustrating clearly Bourdieu's notion of *hexis* and the fact that some walking is invested in economic and not cultural capital. PAR into this particular scene could be usefully guided by Amato, Stern, and Bishop's insights that differences in rank were registered through gait and stride, partly conditioned through costume and/or load-bearing, noted earlier in the article.

However, the section of the text that the RiA workshop focussed on was the one that presented the most intriguing and challenging practical prospect of all three texts explored. The crossover between Act 2.1 and 2.2 requires a range of characters to embody a journey from London to its outskirts, into what was then the semi-rural area of Tottenham Court. The action begins with Frank and George entering "*as walking*" to Tottenham Court; the characters then proceed to engage in a long section of dialogue of some 85 lines. This is a very long stretch of theatrical

⁵³ Nabbes, Cr, Cv.

⁵⁴ Nabbe, Cr. His assertion is endorsed by early modern texts which expound the health benefits of early walking, such as Mulcaster's *Positions*, in which he claims that "The *morning walke* looseth the belly...and provoketh appetite" (L4r). The early modern u and v have been modernised in the transcription.

time to make stage-walking appear believable, particularly when the journey presumes that the characters are walking lineally along a road from A to B. In staging a road, Nabbes draws attention to one of the most difficult types of pedestrian performance, for in a theatre building a path cannot be “a linear or even a continuous one, as the restrictive dimensions of the stage often necessitate a re-treading of the same space.”⁵⁵ The difficulty is compounded by the very concept of the road as ‘place’; it is a setting perhaps more accurately defined by its placelessness given that the emphasis tends to fall more on destination than passage during the process of road travel. Indeed, roads themselves were entangled in problematic ways with concepts of early modern selfhood, as Andrew McRae has shown, writing that they became associated with the “mobile commoner, unmoored from traditional coordinates of place and identity” during the period.⁵⁶ Hence there is perhaps an implied critique of all of the characters presented by Nabbes as on the road to Tottenham Court, a site increasingly connected with pedlars, beggars, and rogues in the early modern imagination. As a space of enhanced mobility and forward momentum, the road can also be seen to relate to concepts of social mobility, as having the time to engage in a stroll to a suburban alehouse for daytime drinking suggests.

In staging the road, we found that there was no option but to stylise the action, to forego any linearity and instead try to create the ‘phases’ of a walk, incorporating rests, detours, and other sorts of walking behaviours which were not reliant upon verisimilitude. Here, perhaps the part of the stage direction which specifies “*as walking*” is instructive, suggesting ‘as if’ rather than pedestrian authenticity. A variety of walking directions and styles were therefore employed in the staging of 2.1 including walking in diagonals, looping, the use of backstage areas, walking together, walking apart and catching up, weaving between door spaces, and temporarily

⁵⁵ Darby, p.367

⁵⁶ A. McRae, *Literature And Domestic Travel in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.68.

stopping to pick fruit from the trees. The findings of the earlier rehearsals came into play, including the idea that walking in pairs required togetherness of movement, and that creating scale involves using the whole breadth and depth of the stage and backstage. However actors had to be wary of the tendency to stop and deliver lines at the stage's corners which drew attention to its edges and limits, detracting from the illusion of smooth, continuous movement.

Maintaining a distinction between walking and not-walking was fundamental to these two complex scenes. In order for the act of walking to look believable required deliberate performance choices by the actors, without the bleeding of 'walking action' into 'non-walking action' or vice versa. Another interesting discovery occurred when Frank and George had to conceal themselves in order to eavesdrop on the conversation of Will Changelove, Master Stitchwell and Mistress Stitchwell who enter at the beginning of 2.2. The actors playing Frank and George went to hide behind one of the doorways, but Jenny suggested that this was characteristic of more covert indoor space, serving to highlight the interior architecture of the stage rather than the outdoor expanse we sought to evoke. Hiding in plain sight — though 'unrealistic' — helped to keep the openness of space that had been produced during 2.1.

These scenes required the most abstraction and stylisation of walking of all the excerpts explored. And yet, once the logic was established, the audience at the evening workshop invested in the outdoor worlds of walking that we had created. These worlds were dependent on sustaining precise grammars of walking: the relationship between the individual body and stage space; between the body of one actor and another; between walking with purpose and finding the right quality of movement, whether 'marching' or 'wafting'; through avoiding fidgeting or non-progressive movement; and by maintaining carefully the separation between

walking and non-walking behaviour. We found that, in general, realist approaches to walking did not work as well as more abstract representations, and that a strictly logical use of space hindered rather than helped the illusion of the promenade.

Findings and Conclusion

The performances of ‘Walking the City in the Indoor Playhouse’ demonstrate that scenic settings of parks, pleasure gardens, and roads are not objects to be looked at but dynamic spaces that are created through practices such as walking. The workshop did not provide definitive solutions to the problem of staging promenading in place-realist dramas of the 1630s however. As some of the actors articulated, making a stage business out of walking feels ‘wrong’ — it can, and often does, look awkward to perform walking. Perhaps the fact that promenading is difficult to theatricalize helps to account for the relatively short lifespan of the place-realist plays and their formal innovations. Perhaps, too, Stagg’s speculation that “early modern dramatists may have found a means to combine walking with talking which allowed the latter to distract from the potential absurdity of the former, or to somehow realise the act of walking in the art of talking” has purchase, and is a direction that future PAR into staged pedestrianism could go on to explore.⁵⁷ Nevertheless the issue remains that plays which draw attention to the social event of ‘going for a walk’ require decisions to be reached about how performers will manipulate their bodies and/or voices in space to achieve the effect of walking, whether or not they actually enact ‘walking’ itself.

The RiA workshops went some way to addressing the conundrum of ‘Walking the City in the Indoor Playhouse’ by showing that pedestrianism is a performative crux that should be addressed rather than glossed over when staging citizen comedy of the seventeenth-century.

⁵⁷ Stagg, p.186

While it is impossible to reconstruct the precise embodiment of the elite Caroline walker, the problem of staging a long or continuous mode of walking on an indoor stage remains the same. And while we may not have found the exact metonymic walking behaviours which encoded early modern promenading for playhouse spectators, we did find some possible solutions to the problems of scale and action that staged walking produces, showing that the relationship between walking and talking in specific spaces, and also bodily proxemics onstage, are central to achieving walking effects. Work on these scenes could be developed through examining how differentiation between characters' gait and pace is suggestive of the social stratification and differential *hexis* that underlies walking during the period.

The workshop also gestured towards an important connection between the practices of promenading and playing in early modern society. Peter Burke has argued that the era saw an increased separation between the realms of work and leisure in the lives of early modern subjects, writing that "As free time was increasingly organized, and institutionalized, people became more conscious of it as a separate domain, rather than as a pause between bouts of work. As work became less playful and working hours were more sharply defined, there was more need for the non-utilitarian activities we have come to call 'leisure.'"⁵⁸ It is therefore notable that changing attitudes to walking occur simultaneously with the growing influence, and ultimately respectability, of theatregoing as a pastime. The emergence of promenading and commercial theatres can be seen as analogous events; both evidence the greater organisation of early modern peoples' recreational activities and the changing notion of leisure itself at the time. As such, the development of both regular and regulated spaces for theatre as well as the building of gardens, galleries, palisades and promenades specifically for walking, are correlative.

⁵⁸ P. Burke, 'The Invention of Leisure in Early Modern Europe,' *Past and Present* 146 (1995), 136-150, 149-50.

In addition, theatre-building and the carving out of spaces for recreational walking evidence processes by which social space was increasingly segregated to create a leisured class, amply demonstrated by the upper and lower levels of the Bath Walks recorded by Borsay. The provision of a smooth surface for promenading finds its parallel in the wooden planks of the indoor theatre. When the playhouses restage emergent and fashionable forms of walking, the correlation between theatregoing and walking as forms of recreation becomes overdetermined. That scenes of promenading should have been particularly associated with the more exclusive and expensive indoor playhouses, amplifies this multi-layering effect, revealing that the relationship between promenading and theatre-going is in fact governed by a circular logic. Only certain subjects were permitted to or had the means to promenade, and only certain subjects had the economic means to spectate upon promenading, and the consequent ability to imaginatively connect themselves to those entitled to walk in royal parks even if they were not, or tie themselves to those with enough leisure time to amble in pleasure gardens or suburban resorts, or, indeed, attend the theatre itself.