Face to face encounters are the essence of dramatic art. This collection shows us that close reading – knowing the score – is the condition of possibility for theatrical performance. The essays here feature some of the freshest and most original writing on Shakespeare I have seen in a long time.

Michael D. Bristol, McGill University

Explores the drama of proximity and co-presence in Shakespeare’s plays

This book celebrates the theatrical excitement and philosophical meanings of human interaction in Shakespeare. On stage and in life, the face is always window and mirror, representation and presence. A distinguished group of contributors examine the emotional and ethical surplus that appears between faces in the activity and performance of human encounter on stage.

By transitioning from face as noun to face as verb – to face, outface, interface, efface, deface, sur-face – chapters reveal how Shakespeare’s plays discover conflict, betrayal and deception as well as love, trust and forgiveness between faces and the bodies that bear them.

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Cover image: Ian McKellen and Judi Dench in Macbeth, at the Other Place, Royal Shakespeare Company, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1976 © Laurence Burns / ArenaPAL

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Reading the Road, from Shakespeare’s Crossways to Bunyan’s Highways
Reading the Road, from Shakespeare’s Crossways to Bunyan’s Highways

Edited by Lisa Hopkins and Bill Angus
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Introduction: Allegories, Economies and Resonances of the Road

*Bill Angus and Lisa Hopkins*

This collection brings together thirteen essays by both established and emerging scholars that examine the most influential meanings of roads in early modern literature. Centred on the period from William Shakespeare’s lifetime to John Bunyan’s, these essays consider how the road is delineated in early modern Britain as both a physical and a metaphorical feature, develop our understanding of the place of the road in the early modern imagination, and thereby assess its contribution to shaping identity and culture.

The idea of the road may by its nature seem passing or trivial but, in an essential sense, the dominant ideas of the road in a given time underlie every journey narrative, every conception of geographical movement, and every personal voyage undertaken, whether dramatic, imaginary or physical. If we were to ask what an early modern road movie might look like, we might begin with the significance of the idea of the road as it has, in more modern times, helped to define the character and self-image of North America. In terms of its national identity, the USA has its own historical mythology of the road, taking in the idea of the great western journey and the exodus from slavery towards the promised land of civil rights, both configured biblically, though essentially opposed. Out of these fundamental tensions, and informed by many other transcontinental journeys from the Cherokee Trail of Tears to Kerouac’s *On the Road*, come the preponderance of American road movies, books and songs, and the idea of America itself configured as movement/a movement. This collection asks how experiences and conceptions of the road might have contributed in a similar manner to early modern identity and culture in and around early modern Britain.

The new historical and literary research presented in these essays both engages with, and instances, the most recent scholarship in this area of critical studies, and draws on the kind of cultural geography established by the influential ideas of Henri Lefebvre and of Michel de Certeau.
This expanding body of work suggests that in any given time and place culture is more ‘about routes than roots’ (Cresswell 2006: 1) and the various ideologies of the road studied here certainly reflect this. The present collection negotiates both Lefebvre’s concept of ‘spatial practice’ and de Certeau’s ‘spatial syntaxes’, where journeys that map on to narrative structures are linked together by defining modalities, in this case those associated with freedom, danger, instability, performance, conversion or salvation (Lefebvre 1976: 31; de Certeau 1984: 115).

In Tim Cresswell’s summary, the word ‘place’ itself is far from innocent, and has come to signify ‘meaningful segments of space – locations imbued with meaning and power’ (2006: 2). In this way, space may be understood as being ‘both topographical and conceptual’ (Dillon 2000: 6). Further in this vein, Lefebvre argues that while space is ‘molded from historical and natural elements’, it is equally ‘literally filled with ideologies’ not only in terms of ‘the trivialised spaces of everyday life’ but also via those ‘made special by symbolic means’ (1976: 31). In its significant ‘turn towards movement’, cultural geography has also produced theories of mobility that aim to comprehend how people move through particular kinds of landscapes. These further suggest that mobility plays a role in shaping those very cultural spaces (Merriman 2007; Urry 2000; Cresswell 2006). Within this understanding of experiential geographies, mobility is something that is ‘practiced . . . experienced . . . [and] embodied’ (Cresswell 2006: 5). To some extent this relatively new work builds upon that of cultural theorists such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who was arguing in this vein as far back as the 1960s that movement is not ‘limited to submitting passively to space and time’; rather ‘it actively consumes them, it takes them up in their basic significance’ (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 102). In this context, the physical landscape is not understood as simply something to be moved through, but rather as a dynamic medium that is itself ‘always in movement, always in making’ (Cresswell 2006: 3). Without doing too much violence to the theory, we might extend this also to the human subject: as Joël Bonnemaison has said, ‘no identity exists without a space that sustains it’ (2005: 81). These sustaining interactions between physical environments and the moving human subject are the grounds upon which these essays consider the roads of early modern Britain as they were conceived of and experienced by contemporaries of William Shakespeare and those of John Bunyan.

Of recent historical work on the physical early modern road networks, Andrew McRae’s practical approach to the road experience as producing and expressing a kind of communal knowledge may be representative. Janette Dillon and Julie Sanders meanwhile situate these experiences
of the road within the early modern city, the court, and specifically
dramatic contexts, while Alexandra Walsham has charted the shifting
relations between landscape and religion. Drawing on such cultural-his-
torical geographical and literary research, this collection aims to expand
upon and nuance early modern ideologies of the road far beyond simply
describing the experience of road travel in itself. The scope of our chap-
ters takes in a broad range of aspects of the road experience, involving
the intransigent roads of the north, Shakespeare’s allusions to the dan-
gerous and ambiguous nature of crossroads, the equine economics of the
early modern road network, the historical understanding of the (literal)
place of theatres on the roads of early modern London, the changing
resonances and material effects of the physical road in depictions of
Christian allegories of journeying, dramatic depictions of the nature
of travelling communities, masterless wanderers and fools of the early
modern road, the poetry of the staging of roads in early modern drama,
and both literal and figurative roads in gendered perceptions of mobility.
Rooted in the textual and material aspects of the culture’s conceptions
of this space, this collection also sheds new light on perhaps the most
astonishing achievement of early modern plays: their use of one small,
bare space to suggest an amazing variety of physical (and potentially
even metaphysical) locations. It offers insight into the ways that writers
used the typically bare boards of the early modern stage to invite audi-
cences/readers to imagine road journeys and hence the transitional modes
of public and private space.

Our chapters consider a number of indicative texts that reflect upon
such conceptions, including Macbeth, Cymbeline, A Midsummer
Night’s Dream, Hamlet, 1 Henry IV, As You Like It, Twelfth Night,
Titus Andronicus, A Jovial Crew, The Tempest, John a Kent and John a
These diverse studies offer rich suggestions on how such fundamental
geographical features, and their related imaginary milieux, might have
interacted. They therefore open new windows on a peculiarly British
mythology of the road and illuminate our understanding of how this
informs early modern British identity as a whole. The chapters are
grouped under three broad thematic headings: ‘Shakespeare’s Roads’,
‘The Embodied Road’ and ‘Writing the Road’, each of which allows us
a particular angle of insight into early modern historical and cultural
contexts in the depiction of physical and imaginary roads.

The first part, ‘Shakespeare’s Roads’, gathers five essays which
deal with topographical and ideological modalities of the road in
Shakespeare’s work and his historical context, including the perceived
natural and supernatural perils of the roads heading north and elsewhere,
looking at *Macbeth* and *Cymbeline*; the ecological impact of energy and transport crises on transportation networks in *1 Henry IV*; allusions to the crossroads as a site of rituals of transformation and binding in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *Hamlet*; the travelling woman’s experience of gender and disorder in *As You Like It*; and female characters and the transformational properties of roads in *Titus Andronicus*.

Part two, ‘The Embodied Road’, covers the embodied experience of roads, beginning with the relationship between the King’s Highway and contemporary theatres and the distinction between London performances and touring; it considers how early modern folklore shaped perceptions of wandering and the traumatic effects of losing the road in Munday’s *John a Kent and John a Cumber* and *The Tempest*; it examines the subjectivities of vagrancy and the fool, reading narratives of the embodied experience of the road in Kemp’s and Armin’s jestbooks to explain how this affected their perception as performing legends; and it describes the meta-theatrical aspects of the road as a symbol of freedom, renewal and community, and an arena for performance, in Richard Brome’s *A Jovial Crew*.

Part three, ‘Writing the Road’, combines spatial grammars with physical and metaphorical topography and examines the use of prosodic feet and ‘gestic’ verse to stage roads in early modern theatre; it explores how contemporary physical roads inform ideas of spiritual journey, and what resonances accrue to them, for instance in the conversion narrative of Saint Paul or Margaret Cavendish’s *The Blazing World*, where the experience of road space undermines spiritual certainty; it probes the boundaries of confessional fidelity and conversion in *The Renegado* and addresses the notion of pilgrimage in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, where Bunyan’s symbolic road may also be literal, Britain’s Great North Road, its allegorical movement inflected by the physicality of contemporary transportation, drainage and fairs.

Beginning the first part, ‘Shakespeare’s Roads’, Lisa Hopkins considers the perils posed by roads in *Macbeth*. She argues that roads in early modern Britain were not only arteries of communication but also possessed something of the inviolability of sanctuary. However, when Shakespeare represents roads in Celtic countries he figures them as also potentially haunted, dangerous or misleading, as in *Cymbeline*, where roads prove longer than expected. In Scotland, the chapter illustrates, it is even harder to find the way, and the roads hold danger of a not merely physical kind.

Putting a green twist on an old Marxist formula, Todd Borlik’s chapter is an ecomaterialist study of mobility in the Shakespearean history play that aims to ‘follow the energy’. The increasing complexity
of road networks may be seen in the chorographical scope of the Second Henriad. This reflects the central role that road-building played in the development of modern nationhood, leading to the passing of the feudal demesnial system and laying the path for a more complex mercantile economy. These transformations had profound environmental effects. Composed during a period of dire scarcity, Shakespeare’s 1 Henry IV traces a link between political and ecological instability. In this, Shakespeare anticipates Lefebvre’s understanding of the fundamental unity of space-time-energy by reminding us of the absolute necessity of oats and other crops to the movement of goods and persons, and the fact that access to such fuels could be easily disrupted by the variable English climate. The play’s subversion of chivalric heroism initiates a corresponding interrogation of the horse’s role on the roads of a post-chivalric society, raising prescient questions about the ethics of transportation. Here Borlik sees Shakespeare imagining English history from the point of view of an inadequately victualled horse. During the Great Dearth, at the time Shakespeare was writing 1 Henry IV, the price of oats skyrocketed, exacerbated by a boom in personal mobility. In such a climate, it should not be surprising that the overconsumption of fodder might be a subject of moral concern. In the context of a late Elizabethan energy crisis, the play’s insistent critiques of Hotspur’s and Falstaff’s over-reliance on horse-power carry an unmistakably ecocritical message.

Next, Bill Angus explores the idea that, in Shakespeare’s lifetime and long after, to die as a traitor or in suicide meant, in burial, to be treated as refuse and interred in or by a roadway. It is probable that between the formative ages of eighteen and twenty-two, Shakespeare himself knew at least five people who were buried in unconsecrated ground, in a ceremony designed to arrest the unquiet spirit, and whose traditional elements were the night, the crossroads and the stake. The crossroads, a nexus where paths, movement and points of decision simultaneously converge and part, has long been the site of religious and magical rituals of transformation and binding. As the tri-via, the crossroads is literally one of ‘the trivialised spaces of everyday life’ but also one ‘made special by symbolic means as . . . benevolent or malevolent’ (Lefebvre 1976: 31). For Shakespeare and other early moderns, crossroads were haunted places, echoing with folk memory, but also spoke of new possibilities. When A Midsummer Night’s Dream’s Puck refers to restless spirits that ‘in cross-ways . . . have burial’ (3.2.381), Shakespeare is therefore perhaps unwittingly referencing a history of crossroads as places whose function was to arrest the movement of unquiet spirits, of suicides, executed murderers and traitors, who might otherwise walk the roads of the night home to the scenes of their particular traumas. Here at the
crossroads they may be fixed, sometimes literally staked, their movement arrested, paradoxically, in a place of permanent transit and transition. Although what happens at such places is largely unacknowledged in Shakespeare’s imaginative world, the question of outcast burial in the roads of early modern Britain nevertheless emerges in hints and allusions found in the plays, like the shadowy revenants of unquiet thoughts. This chapter considers these hints from the edges of Shakespeare’s imagination to argue that, despite the urge to exorcise such delinquents, they are often surprisingly inscribed into lasting cultural and geographical forms.

Karalyn Dokurno then investigates how Shakespeare’s travelling heroines illustrate and complicate ideas about women’s mobility and early modern road travel in general. She reads *As You Like It* to discover an enduring fascination with the constructive or reparative potential of the travelling woman, despite early modern censure of women’s travel as culturally, politically and religiously disruptive. Given McRae’s argument that ‘roads had always coupled a promise of connection with a threat of disorder’ (McRae 2009: 90), this chapter considers the conflicting social implications of Celia and Rosalind’s recourse to the road in their travel to Arden. Building on work on mobility, vagrancy and female transgression, it explores how women’s recourse to ‘the common road’ allows them to veer from prescribed gender, class and domestic roles. While their journey does this, it simultaneously helps to repair patriarchal structures within the play, thus reflecting the double nature inherent within early modern British road travel. Considering that Celia and Rosalind’s habitation of ‘the common road’ is anything but easy or straightforward, and drawing on Lefebvrian notions of space as socially constructed, the chapter pays close attention to the ways in which the road opens a contradictory space in which Shakespeare’s heroines move.

Sharon Emmerichs’s chapter offers an ecofeminist analysis of the transformational properties of roads in Shakespeare’s plays. Lefebvre describes urban spaces as transformative objects and this is certainly true of the circulatory system of the roads. Crime, vagrancy, the public nature of roads, and anxieties regarding how roads can facilitate invasion and vulnerability all serve to demonstrate their transformative power. Emmerichs shows how, in Shakespeare’s plays, roads act not only as conduits for movement and change of place and action, but as a way to move characters from one state of being to another. Her chapter takes an ecofeminist approach to the meanings of roads and argues that in Shakespeare, interactions with roads cause a transformation from innocence to corruption. Roads then may represent potentially malign spaces that ultimately produce gendered monstrosities by the end of one’s journey. She identifies a dual-gendered tension of the road that
survives in many of Shakespeare’s works, where the road, both physical and metaphorical, becomes a space of physical, moral, economic and legal danger, particularly for female characters, as in *Titus Andronicus* when Aaron chooses the location for the assault upon Lavinia based on its roads. As Shakespeare negotiates both the power and the peril of the early modern road, these patterns serve to demonstrate the dangers inherent every time a woman leaves the private domestic sphere and ventures out into a public space.

Laurie Johnson begins Part II: The Embodied Road with the contention that roads have been largely invisible in the histories of the Elizabethan playhouses. A London-centric bias at the core of these histories tends to position roads as a key element in the lives of the travelling players, but roads disappear from the story of the rise of the purpose-built ‘permanent’ playhouses around London. Such a focus oscillates between what Lefebvre called ‘paradigmatic’ and ‘symbolic’ approaches to space: the playhouses are understood either as an expression of a binary opposition between travelling and permanence, or as symbols of the ‘golden age’ (Lefebvre 2009: 230). This chapter seeks to understand these playhouses according to Lefebvre’s third term, the ‘syntagmatic’, by considering the movements of both players and audiences as key factors in decisions about where they were located. Importantly, the earliest playhouses (Red Lion, Newington Butts and Theatre) were all located on thoroughfares leading to the nearby fields in which archery was practised. With Elizabeth’s mandate for all men to maintain skill with bows, the roads to the fields surrounding London provided a regular flow of potential customers. Both *Hamlet* and *Titus Andronicus* evidence the link between the players and the archery fields adjacent to their playing venues. By thinking of the playhouses as syntagmatic, that is, as links on a nodal sequence, it is possible to shift our view of the playhouses away from the image of a terminal location to which audiences flocked. The emergence of the permanent playhouses on both sides of London, alongside sites accommodating a state-mandated martial practice, therefore seems more of an inevitability than a bolt out of the blue.

Alice Equestri’s chapter then explores ways in which the concept of folly interacts with vagrancy and mobility on early modern roads. Looking at the road through this lens enables us to see space as ‘multi-level’, as Bonnemaison has suggested, and this chapter illustrates how early modern ideas of folly work at different levels to expose a space that is formed of subjective and symbolic or cultural dimensions. In this world, Equestri argues, ‘fools’ were not only seen as luxury entertainers in rich households or as professional performers on London stages, and those termed ‘idiots’ were often free to roam the
roads and possibly even to beg for alms. Both Erasmus and Alexander Barclay’s *Ship of Fools* give such beggars a special prominence in their categorisation of the sins of humanity, in that they make ‘imitation’ their pitfall, a notion bound up with the performance of folly on the Elizabethan stage. Also, itinerant clowning had existed since the vices of medieval pageants and some Elizabethan and Jacobean stage clowns resituated this tradition to commercialise their artistic personae outside the playhouses on the roads to the provinces. The chapter thus contextualises William Kemp’s and Robert Armin’s work as itinerants: Kemp’s nine-day morris dance from London to Norwich, and Armin’s travel on the roads of England with Lord Chandos’s Men. In these ways, it examines an image of the space of the roads that had both subjective and wider cultural qualities.

In Chapter 8, Jennifer Allport Reid asserts that religious belief and practice must be recognised as critical agents in the construction of the early modern road. She argues that folklore had a significant role in shaping perceptions of the landscape, and the roads which intersected and constituted it. The precise relationship between contemporary imaginings of the early modern road system and the lived practicalities of traversing it – what Lefebvre describes as ‘the fragmented and uncertain connection between elaborated representations of space . . . and representational spaces’ (Lefebvre 1991: 230) – is never more equivocal than in the motif of the unwary traveller being led astray by supernatural tricksters, the malicious spirits more or less synonymous with the uncanny presences at crossroads examined in Chapter 3. Although local roads were often forged by local requirements, popular and folkloric depictions of the road indicate peril rather than utility or comforting familiarity. In their literalisation of the lived experience of getting lost, these will-o’-the-wisps embody everyday anxieties about wayfinding, casting disorientation as resulting from a purposefully deceptive external force, and the road as an active agent. This chapter reads a number of comedies concerning magic and the supernatural: *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *The Tempest*, and Anthony Munday’s *John a Kent and John a Cumber*. These plays’ largely benevolent magical figures and trickster spirits tellingly remove their subjects’ agencies, suggesting an equivalence to the misled traveller. This chapter therefore asks what it meant to wander from the road in early modern folklore, in the process recapturing, in Lefebvre’s words, the experiences and representations of subjects that ‘come together within a spatial practice’ (Lefebvre 1976: 31).

Kim Durban then reads Richard Brome’s *A Jovial Crew* (1641) to describe a road play in which the road is a symbol of freedom, a place
to get money, an escape from parental control, a space of adventure for women, an arena for performance and a seductive natural environment apparently free from constraints. Or so the leading characters think, that is, until they run away to live with the beggars, leading them to ask, ‘Is this the life that we admired in others, with envy at their happiness?’ (3.1.349). This chapter explores the ways in which Brome’s seminal play is rich in contemporary relevance, as the road provides a place where different communities can come together, their statuses intermingled. Durban investigates Brome’s dramaturgical openness and generosity to suggest the ways that this seminal play is rich in contemporary relevance due to its characteristically democratic dramaturgy. She argues that the glossing over of Brome’s repertoire may constitute a significant omission in understanding the early modern canon since importantly, as Christopher Hill suggests, *A Jovial Crew* articulates a view of the world seen from ‘below’ (Hill 1996: 4). Through an examination of a production of *A Jovial Crew* mounted in Ballarat, Australia, in 2013, this chapter also suggests that Brome’s perception of the road as a place of play and renewal creates a complex example of early modern meta-theatre.

Robert Stagg’s chapter in Part III: Writing the Road tracks how actors and characters walk roads on stage, and how, in a theatre uncommitted to absolute realism, characters travel onstage roads without those roads appearing ludicrously short, foreshortened or abbreviated. It shows early modern drama practising how to stage a road, and how it may often do so through the ‘road’ of metre. This, he argues, forms part of what Sanders calls the ‘cultural geography’ of the road (Sanders 2011), thinking with McRae about how both theatre and travel forge communal experience. In verse drama, characters walk roads not only on their physical feet but on their metrical feet too. If a foot can speak (*Troilus and Cressida*, 4.5.56), or can be a verb as well as a noun (*The Tempest*, 1.2.382), then playwrights can aspire to a drama of walking that effaces the need for a road to be staged according to the conventions of (something like) realism. The prosodic foot can sport a sense of distance which the physical stage lacks. This chapter dwells upon what de Certeau calls the ‘poaching’ of territory in *Coriolanus*, and how this is achieved through the play’s feet (both metrical and material). It concludes by wondering whether we might think of plays as a sort of journey, as well as featuring kinds of journey – with the two hours’ ‘traffic’ of a stage instancing not only a kind of ‘bargaining’ or ‘trade’ but also a ‘voyage or expedition’.

In the next chapter Paul Frazer explores how the metaphor of the road was used in early modern Britain in relation to religious and
political identity by exploring the conversion of Saint Paul on the Road to Damascus. He reads this in relation to Philip Massinger’s *The Renegado* (1623–4), a play famed for its portrayal of Christians converting to Islam, or ‘turning Turk’, and vice versa. Analysing the play’s interest in the mobility and transformation of Saint Paul, he argues that the conversion of Paul is not only an important indication of Massinger’s understanding of Protestant and Muslim belief, but also inflects the early modern experience of the road.

Marion Wynne-Davies’s chapter quotes John Speed’s *A Prospect of the Most Famous Parts of the World* (1627), which asserts that ‘Heaven was too long a reach for man to recover at one step and therefore God first placed him upon the earth’ (Speed 1627: 1). Maps, and the roads they depicted, were therefore not only useful for navigation on earth, but also a guide on the spiritual road to ‘heaven’. For Speed and his readers, the material and spiritual spheres merge inextricably on the page. This chapter considers Margaret Cavendish’s fictional accounts of road travel which are derived not from scientific exploration or a quest for spiritual truth, but from political necessity and harsh personal experience. Wynne-Davies argues that in order to understand the roads and journeys of Cavendish’s ‘blazing world’, it becomes necessary to consider her material experience of space in both its political and personal evocations. The Duchess’s fantastical narrative alludes to a host of material journeys: Willem Barentsz’s attempt to discover a North-East passage; the protective delta of Antwerp; and the journeys to London and to Welbeck Abbey. The final confluence of the worlds occurs on the road through Nottinghamshire, as the Empress and the Duchess – in spirit form – fly above what is the A60 today. While Speed claims that ‘Heaven was too long a reach’, Cavendish’s ‘blazing world’ both challenges and undermines any certainty, political, spiritual or gendered, on the roads of early modern Britain.

Finally, Martha Lynn Russell’s chapter builds on those of Paul Frazer and Marion Wynne-Davies by focusing on another religious road of the early modern period: John Bunyan’s road to the Celestial City in *The Pilgrim’s Progress, Part I*. Instead of viewing this road as merely allegorical, this chapter argues that Bunyan’s road, from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City, also follows a literal journey – of the topography and spatial grammars of England’s Great North Road. Russell considers three cultural conceptions of early modern road infrastructure – transportation, drainage and fairs – alongside Bunyan’s political and Anabaptist theology and contemporary government roads policy. During the seventeenth century, England’s dilapidated, deteriorating roads could not hold travellers’ carriages and merchandise and
the lack of drainage made fields unproductive and town flooding frequent. Throughout the course of Bunyan’s life, he witnessed the English government attempt to fix these problems with various acts, which, though good for the roads, were not received well, since the Turnpike Act of 1663 imposed tolls and the Drainage Act of 1600 required land from citizens. *The Pilgrim’s Progress* directly rejects tolls at gates, and the unfixable Slough of Despond reflects England’s unfixable wetlands and correlates there with Anabaptist understandings of salvation and doubt. Furthermore, Vanity Fair parodies fairs of the time to demonstrate the belief that Christians must experience alienation before entering the Celestial City. Contextualising it alongside roads, drainage and fair systems is crucial to this chapter’s understanding of Bunyan’s unique religious and political vision.

Collectively, these essays show that early modern roads are associated with danger, vagrancy, beggary, thieves and prostitutes, but also with freedom from social constraints, the idea of the travelling and wandering, and the masterlessness of a world without boundaries or limits. They could carry a sense of social rejection but also confer a cast of legitimacy that we seem to see reflected in the self-confidence of various travelling groups, including actors in their peripatetic wanderings around areas outside London. The road at this time suggests ominous illegitimate otherness and locates this in very particular geographical locations, local and national, with international implications. Contradistinctively, it supports both a conventional site for Christian conversion and a fundamental rejection of the conventions of the Christian worldview. Its use as a religious metaphor could reflect the status of the pilgrim, which in itself was somewhat ambiguous at the time, but it was also inflected by the sense of the likelihood of, or even necessity for, a crisis-encounter on the road, with perhaps even Jesus playing a kind of highwayman waiting to waylay you on the route of your legitimate business. The early modern road can also be understood in terms of a wider geographic network which may be in crisis from an economic perspective, or in disrepair from a legislative one, but nevertheless functions powerfully in terms of its cultural resonance, and is freighted with symbolism.

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