

Two Spectators: The Double Vision of Ned Ward's *The London Spy*

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ABSTRACT

Ned Ward's monthly *The London Spy* (1698–1700) maps the life and character of London and exposes "the Vanities and Vices of the Town" (2). Written after the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1694, the work also exemplifies new freedoms of the press that flourished when pre-publication censorship was no longer enforced: *The London Spy* is unabashedly scandalous, and frequently critical of public institutions and the state. Ward profited from the public's interest in his always irreverent, frequently indecorous and salacious tales. However, he aims to be critical and insightful as well as superficial and shallow in *The London Spy*; by capitalizing on the differences between his two characters, the Spy and his Friend, Ward vilifies "Vice and Villany," with one hand while satisfying a voyeuristic appetite for the prurient and scatological with the other.

This study examines how the two perspectives of *The London Spy*, the Spy and his Friend, work together within a highly fragmented and contradictory framework in order to show how Ward attempts to please both the unrefined reader looking for salacious material and, occasionally, the more discerning reader who understands the underlying problems and appreciates satire. Ward uses two differences between the Spy and his Friend to negotiate the balance between these two perspectives. First, The Spy is a naive and ignorant spectator and tourist, while the Friend is a cynical and experienced guide. The second difference is that the Spy is curious and at times compassionate where the Friend is diagnostic in his approach and unaffected on a personal level by the troubles of other people. The Spy and his Friend also distance themselves from the crowds and spectators they encounter, acting as observers or "spies." The two perspectives of *The London Spy* are central to Ward's negotiation between voyeuristic and knowing audiences.

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Introduction

Ned Ward's monthly *The London Spy* (1698–1700) maps the life and character of London and exposes “the Vanities and Vices of the Town” (2). Written after the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1694, the work also exemplifies new freedoms of the press that flourished when pre-publication censorship was no longer enforced: *The London Spy* is unabashedly scandalous, and frequently critical of public institutions and the state. Despite their popularity, the works of “jovial, brutal, vulgar, graphic Ned Ward” have, perhaps not surprisingly, occupied a peripheral space in the literary canon (Troyer, 30; Sala, 13). Indeed, Ward's biographer Howard Troyer noted that, as a satirist, he was “not to be taken too seriously,” and dismissed his talent as “a superficial one, essentially casual and shallow” (210). He profited from the public's interest in his always irreverent, frequently indecorous and salacious tales. “All that I propose,” he wrote somewhat disingenuously in his Preface to the 1700 edition, “is, to Scourge Vice and Villany” (ii). However, Ward aims to be critical and insightful as well as superficial and shallow in *The London Spy*; by capitalizing on the differences between his two characters, the Spy and his Friend, Ward vilifies “Vice and Villany,” with one hand while satisfying a voyeuristic appetite for the prurient and scatological with the other.

Despite the fact that “Ward and many of his contemporaries were interested more in the sale of their material than they were in the trenchancy of their satire,” Howard Troyer concedes that “The assumption of the satiric role . . . led occasionally to the performance of the satirist's function” in Ward's writing (207). Ward's writing is calculated to both amuse his readers and move them “to disgust and anger” (Troyer, 207). In *The London Spy*, these two goals are achieved by capitalizing on two primary differences between the Spy and the Friend which recur throughout *The London Spy* and are used as strategies to further Ward's Tory politics, but often the more political comments are paired with prurient and scandalous stories. First, The Spy is a naive and ignorant spectator and tourist, while the Friend is a cynical and experienced guide. As part of this difference, the new sights and people fascinate the Spy, while the surgeon, who has “laid down the *Gown*, and took up the *Sword*,” sees through the surface of people and places and explains the problems and vices of common people to the Spy with a clinical and analytical tone

(2). The second difference is that the Spy is curious and at times compassionate where the Friend is diagnostic in his approach and unaffected on a personal level by the troubles of other people. At times people are described with both contempt and pity. The contradiction in such descriptions is how Ward negotiates between a spectator's gaze, where the Spy is a tool that allows him to show the vices of the town to his readers, and the more clinical gaze of a surgeon who sees the ills of society and the underlying social causes.

I will be focusing on the walking tour section of *The London Spy*, sections III-XVI, where Ward moves the narrative forward with the Spy's fast-paced movement throughout the city and education of London. Topographical movement is more prominent in these sections than descriptions of character, and the Spy's ignorance of the history and use of public buildings provides a justification for the Friend's social and political criticism under the guise of enlightening the Spy. The walking tour is where the Friend and the Spy interact, and where public spaces are used for Ward's satire. Ward uses the Spy's education in the walking tour to teach readers about London while scandalizing them with the corruption of the institutions. In the later sections, formal character writing takes prominence over the relationship between the Spy and his Friend, which negotiates fascinating balance between tourist and guide, and facilitates the contradictory descriptions of people and places. In the walking tour, Ned Ward capitalizes on the differences between the Spy and his Friend, first using the tourist/guide relationship to discuss buildings, and later draws on the Spy's relative willingness to listen to common people in order to illustrate the miserable condition of the impoverished.

The importance of *The London Spy's* descriptions of topography and of London manners and customs has been long established (*The Gentleman's Magazine*, 365). *The London Spy* has been compared to John Gay's *Trivia* and Daniel Defoe's *Tour of the Whole Island of Great Britain*, and is distinguished by its vivid descriptions of the sensory experience of walking and living in London (Brant; Huck, 201-218; O'Byrne, 94-107). Still, no attention has been given to the Spy and Friend as separate voices and strategic tools for Ward's writing, voices which are used to the greatest effect in the walking tour portion of *The London Spy*. W. Matthews' analysis of Ward's character-writing focuses on his descriptions in the latter four parts of *The London Spy*. Peter M. Briggs' more recent analysis of Ward's London writing focuses on his characters

and satire, but points to the number of courts the Spy visits in order to ask, "If Ward was quite consistently critical of the courts and possessed a positive, ethically informed vision of how the law might function more constructively, why did he not write a systematic satire of the machinations of the law?" (86). The *London Spy* has been recognized as an important source of social criticism and description of London, but read as a fragmented collection of descriptions of people and places. *The London Spy* was published serially, and Ward was likely scrambling to create material, thinking more about his reading public than a systematic satire. I will trace how the double vision or two perspectives work together within this highly fragmented and contradictory framework in order to show how Ward attempts to please both the unrefined reader looking for salacious material and, occasionally, the more discerning reader who understands the underlying problems and appreciates satire.

The Spy and his Friend

The first encounter with a constable in *The London Spy* defines the Friend's role for the rest of the novel and is the exception to his relative silence as they travel from Islington in the outskirts of the city to Billingsgate in the centre. The Spy and his Friend are stopped walking home after a night drinking, and the Constable uses intimidation to elicit a bribe while questioning the Spy and his Friend. He refuses to believe the Friend is a Surgeon, but when the Friend bribes the stubborn and petty Constable without hesitation, he says, "I believe they are Civil Gentlemen" and offers to light their way (37). Ward satirizes both the Constable's opinion of people and the status of a "gentlemen" by showing the cost of both is one shilling. During the encounter, the Spy remains silent, watches the exchange, and lets his more knowledgeable Friend bribe the Constable. The Friend is experienced with this type of petty use of power, but also powerless to do anything but comply and call the constable names afterwards. He calls him an "Inquisitive Coniwable," which relies on "coney" as a sexual pun that compares the Constable to a whore walking the streets, paired with the suggestion of clumsiness or fumbling in the term "wable". The Friend also calls him a "Grey headed lump of Grave Ignorance," (38) among other names in an extensive vocabulary of derisive names for the constable, which are meant to be entertaining for the reader but also constitute the only restitution available to the Spy and his Friend after being coerced into giving a bribe. The Friend suggests the Constable would have lied about them, "Swore abundance of Oaths," and sent them to the compter. "In short," he says,

“it is reasonable enough to believe, they play more Rogues Tricks than ever they detect, and occasion more Disturbances in the Streets than ever they hinder” (38). This encounter establishes the Spy’s role as spectator of situations he doesn’t know how to handle or interpret. The Friend becomes invaluable to the Spy through his role as both a knowing guide and as a source of information about the vices and moral decay of the city.

The Spy’s role as a spectator is twofold. While taking in the sights of the city, the Spy is a tourist and serves the appetite of the reader in the process. At other times, the Spy adopts the role of a spectator, as part of a crowd, in order to see from their perspective and criticize what passes for entertainment. The elaborate description of smells, sounds, and ignorant questions in the first section are signs of the Spy’s innocence. For instance, Ward has the Spy question the usefulness of the Fleet and The Monument to provide an opportunity for the Friend to criticize these public projects, and in Bridewell and Bedlam the Spy begins to take on his Friend’s perspective by criticizing people and behaviours as his Friend does. The surgeon’s role is to act as a guide, on the surface, but he also analyzes what he sees with a clinical tone. The spectator and surgeon perspectives are used in tandem toward a critical end in the walking tour, where the corruption, waste, decay, and poverty are visible in the public spaces they visit.

The Walking Tour

Public Projects

When the Spy calls a building a “Stately Edifice” or similar term, any shortcomings, frauds, or faults are exposed soon after. The term is used with a great degree of irony, and often signals a critical dialogue where the Friend brings the structure’s purpose or use into question. The Monument is called a “Towering Edifice” and said to be “Erected thro’ the Wisdom and Honesty of the City; as a very high Memorandum of its being laid low” (53). The Monument was built as a memorial to the 1667 Great Fire of London by Act of Parliament in that year, and designed by Christopher Wren (Wren, 321-2). The irony here is that the “stately” qualities of the monument are exterior only. Once his Friend tells him about Christopher Wren’s failure in the practical design of the Monument, the Spy no longer considers it “stately” at all.

In order to understand Ward’s criticism of The Monument, its history and symbolic function require some explication. Charles Welch’s *History of the Monument* reveals the failure of The Monument to perform its practical function: “In accordance with Wren’s original intention, the column was at first used as a place for certain experiments of the Royal Society;

but the vibration caused by the ceaseless traffic proved too great to allow of the experiments being successfully carried on” (29). Ward’s representation of The Monument capitalizes on this failure and the delayed construction time. In her analysis of Hogarth’s *The South Sea Scheme*, Clare Walcot discusses The Monument’s importance as an unstable symbol of cultural memory, onto which Hogarth inscribes his dedication on the monument not to the Great Fire, but to the “Memory of the Destruction of this City by the South Sea in 1720” (417). Hogarth’s Monument is a contested site of memory, where the financial loss after the South Sea financial crisis is re-inscribed over the physical destruction of the City. In *The London Spy*, The Monument is “associated with the corruption, self-interest, and profligacy of the incumbents of Guildhall” (Walcot, 420), but its symbolic status is also contested. Ward undermines the legitimacy of The Monument by satirizing how it is presently used, then contests its status as a symbol of restoration.

The Friend’s criticism of The Monument targets the City’s vain, self-interested, and wasteful spending of public funds it represents. The Spy’s Friend mocks The Monument by saying it causes sore necks, but continues to suggest a more serious problem with the use of public funds: “To the Glory of the City, and the Everlasting Reputation of the worthy Projectors of this high and mighty Babel; it was more Ostentatiously than Honestly Built, by the poor Orphans Money; many of them since having beg’d their Bread; and the City have here given them a Stone” (53). The religious allusions here are twofold. Ward likens the City to the Devil, by suggesting they have given the Orphans a stone after the fire instead of bread, just as in Christ’s temptation he was offered a stone after fasting in the desert (Matt. 4:3-4; Luke 4:4-5). More cogent is Ward’s comparison of The Monument to Babel. When read as a vain project, Babel’s construction after the Great Flood, and subsequent abandonment, is a more apt comparison to The Monument, which was built after the Great Fire and abandoned as an observatory (Genesis 11:4–9). Ward’s comparison of The Monument to Babel suggests it is self-interested and vain; the last lines of its inscription, added 1681, “But Popish frenzy, which wrought such horrors, is not yet quenched” are testament to a religious antagonism the Monument came to stand for that can also be compared to the confusion of languages in the story of Babel (Welch, 30). Ward’s satire targets the failure of The Monument to be useful for its intended purpose as an astronomical research centre. The physical height of The Monument takes on a moral weight and Ward demonstrates the disparity between the heights achieved by

the monument and the moral “lows”; The King’s image is engraved in self-interest while Orphans are neglected and starved. The plight of Orphans is not exaggerated in this criticism of public spending; orphans relied on parish donations to the women entrusted with their care, but starvation due to misuse or inadequacy of those donations was a common problem (Marshall, 92-100). The Friend views The Monument as a morally bankrupt project that used funds which would have been better spent restoring the health of citizens.

The Spy’s primary concern is the purpose of the monument. Capitalizing on the inadequacy of the monument for astronomy, the Friend says “the chief use of it is for the Improvement of Vintners Boys and Drawers, who come every Week to Exercise their Supporters . . . which fixes them in a Nimble Step, and makes ’em rare Light-heel’d Emissaries in a Months Practice” (54). Instead of being used for Royal Society experiments, or their more noble goals to further “the Glory of God, the Honour and Advantage of these Kingdoms, and the Universal Good of Mankind,” (*Phil. Trans.*, 2) in Ward’s satire The Monument is used to train waiters. The Spy agrees The Monument is a shameful way to spend public money and imagines that the King’s image was placed on the monument “to prevent the high flown Loyalists to Reflect upon their Treachery to the poor Orphans, since they may pretend (tho’ they cheated them of their Money) ’twas with a Pious Design of setting up the Kings Picture” (54). The King’s image, then, was placed on The Monument out of self-interest and to justify the project. The Friend’s equally cynical suggestion is that the primary purpose of The Monument was “the opportunity of putting two Thousand Pound into their own Pockets, whilst they paid one towards the Building” (55). This suggestion of corruption and profiteering leads the Friend to say, quite ostentatiously, “’Tis a Monument to the Cities Shame, the Orphans Grief, the Protestants Pride, and the Papists Scandal” (55). The Monument is not a valuable commemoration to the fire or a useful astronomical research tower, but a self-interested project used to shamelessly line the pockets of those in Guildhall.

Ward sees The Monument as a means to a political end, where public works are used as favours in the form of contracts that allow officials to pad the pockets of their friends. By pointing to a “Towering Ediface” the Spy plays the role of a spectator. Ward then uses the more knowledgeable Friend to uncover the moral and political problems associated with publicly funded projects in the city, showing the irony of his statement that The Monument was “Erected thro’ the Wisdom and Honesty of the City” (53). Built with self-interest and profit in mind

instead of the restoration of the city after the Great Fire, it is called a monument “to the Cities Shame” (55). The spectator/guide dynamic becomes a formula for interactions between the Spy and his Friend as they examine buildings around London.

While not all public spaces are addressed in as much detail as The Monument is, the Friend is often critical of other projects in brief remarks, which are an easily overlooked but important part of the Friend’s nonchalance and indifferent cynicism. For example, when the Spy asks why widening the River Fleet justified the cost of £74,000 he is told the project made no difference. The brevity of his answer does not lessen the Friend’s concern about the inequality of the benefit from widening the Fleet, criticizing the merchants who sell coal “never the Cheaper to the Poor for such a Conveniency” (131). The Spy’s question about the expense of the project is leading, and is inconsistent with his relative ignorance to the cost and history of previous buildings; however, the Friend is ready to point out that the benefits are all for the merchants, who are too greedy to reduce the price of coal for everyone else. Thus, a brief comment from the Friend redirects the Spy’s concern about the cost to the more relevant issue that those who would benefit most from reduced coal prices receive no benefit from the widening of the Fleet.

In one of these brief comments, Ward provides a deft counter-example to The Monument in a brief observation about a broken clock tower at Westminster Hall. The Friend is a dry-humoured and cynical tour guide, but he routinely draws attention to injustice and vice associated with the buildings and projects using public funds and is nostalgic for parts of London which have been destroyed by careless mobs. He begins a monologue about vandalism and corruption in courts, saying, “There’s nothing . . . concerns me more, than to see any piece of Antiquity Demolish’d. It always puts me in mind of the Ignoble Actions of the Sanctified Rebels in the late Domestick Troubles, who made it their Business to deface Old Images” (186-7). The Friend takes issue not with vandalism, but a defacement of what the clock tower stood for and the social role it played. The Friend explains by telling the origin story of the Bell, which is said to have been made with funds from a fine levied on a Judge who took bribes (187). The judge in question is Ralph de Hengham, Chief Justice of the Court of King’s Bench, who “for . . . the venial offence of altering a record by diminishing a fine, is said to have been devoted to the erection of a clock-house on the north side of New Palace Yard, furnished with a clock to be heard in Westminster Hall (*Memories*, 6). While The Monument remains standing, in the

Friend's opinion, as a monument to "the Cities Shame," the Bell, a constant reminder that corruption in the courts will be punished, was destroyed when the clock tower was pulled down.

Bridewell and Bedlam: Spectatorship in the City

The Spy seems to engage in spectatorship during his trips to Bridewell and Bethlem that works in cross-purposes to his criticism of other spectators. In fact, the Spy and his Friend act as "spies" during these visits. They are careful to distinguish themselves from the rabble in their behaviour and act as observers only. This strategy was outlined at the outset, when the Spy says the purpose of his journey to London is "that the Innocent might see by Reflection, what I should gain by Observation and Intelligence, and not by Practice or Experience" (2). Though this purpose was stated early on, it comes to fruition only when the Spy and his Friend become part of the crowds in Bridewell and Bedlam, and Ward uses the Spy to criticize both the spectators and prisoners in Bridewell and the patients of Bedlam.

The Spy pays to tour Bethlem Hospital, which he considers ostentatious. Ward uses the Spy's innocence to call the Lord Mayor's sanity into question when the Spy makes an "Innocent Conjecture" that Bedlam is the Lord Mayor's palace, which the Friend corrects before the Spy criticizes Bedlam for similar reasons to those used by the Friend against The Monument:

In truth, said I, I think they were Mad that Built so costly a Colledge for such a Crack-brain'd Society . . . It was pity so fine a Being should not be possessed by such who had a Sense of their Happiness; . . . it was a Mad Age when this was Rais'd, and the chief of the City were in a great danger of losing their Senses, so contriv'd it the more Noble for their own Reception; or they would never have flung away so much Money to so foolish a purpose: (60)

Underneath the jest that the elegance of Bedlam was a design of the authorities "for their own Reception" upon admittance and the issue of waste is the primary issue of Bedlam for the Friend: Bedlam has fallen from its charitable purpose of rehabilitating patients unsuited to the other hospitals into self-aggrandizing and ignoble purposes.

Ward cannot resist the opportunity to turn Bedlam's use as a mad hospital into a description of the "Mad Age" it was built in. Implicit in his criticism of the spectators in Bedlam is a political comment on the decline of Bedlam as a hospital and its fall into a place of entertainment and vice. Thomas Bowen attributes the beginnings of Bethlehem Hospital to

Simon Fitz Mary, a sheriff in 1247 who founded the original religious house in what he calls “Old Bethlehem” in St. Botolph (2). The lands were seized by Henry the Eighth in 1547 and given to the City of London as a hospital for the mentally ill and undesirables not dealt with in other hospitals (2). Work on a new building began in 1675 and cost at least £17,000 (5). The Friend echoes his earlier criticism of the monument, saying it “stands upon the same Foundation as the Monument, and the Fortunes of a great many poor Wretches lie Buried in this Ostentatious piece of Vanity; and this, like the other, is but a Monument of the Cities Shame and Dishonour, instead of its Glory. Come let us take a walk in, and view its inside” (60). After criticizing the excess and shameful usage of the building for entertainment, they take the tour with everyone else. When the Spy tells a man he deserves to be hanged for treason for the things he is saying, the man’s reply suggests his incarceration allows him more freedom of speech than anyone else:

we Madman have as much Priviledge of speaking our Minds, within these Walls, as an Ignorant Dictator, when he spews out his Nonsense to a whole Parish. Prithee come and Live here, and you may talk what you will, and no Body will call you in Question for it: Truth is Persecuted every where Abroad, and flies hither for Sanctuary, where she sits as safe as a Knave in a Church, or a Whore in a Nunnery. I can use her as I please, and that’s more than you dare do. I can tell Great Men such bold Truths as they don't love to hear, without the danger of a Whipping-Post, and that you can't do: For if ever you see a Madman Hang'd for speaking the Truth, or a Lawyer Whip'd for Lying, I'll be bound to prove my Cap a Wheel-Barrow. (63)

The madman describes truth as a whore taking sanctuary in Bedlam he can “use” how he pleases, and he can do so without fear of violence or death. Ward would later learn the truth of his own madman’s words when, after writing *Hudibras Redivivus* in 1705, he was ordered to stand twice in the pillory (Luttrel, 107). The madmen’s freedom to speak the truth criticizes control of speech by reversing the Spy’s expectations of confinement in Bedlam. Bedlam is criticized by the Spy as a self-aggrandizing, self-interested, and wasteful establishment, but the madman suggests the problem is not in the building but outside, where “Truth is Persecuted every where Abroad.” The madman helps Ward locate madness that is outside Bedlam, not confined in its walls.

Though they continue to tour Bedlam, the Spy and his friend consider themselves separate from the others, criticizing the “Looseness of the Spectators” and calling Bedlam a “Alms-House for Madmen, a Showing Room for Whores, a sure Market for Leachers” (64-5). Bowen documents a change in the practice of visiting Bedlam as entertainment, a practice which brought in £400 each year to the hospital, but which “tended to disturb the tranquility of the patients” (11). Only in 1770 was the practice of admitting visitors for a fee stopped, and admission given only by invitation or with a ticket given to each patient (11-12). Long before the visitations were stopped, Ward criticizes the practice by drawing attention to the open doors of Bedlam and the type of visitors it encouraged. It was used as a Brothel and had become “a dry Walk for Loiterers” (65). The Spy is possibly complicit in the spectacle of Bedlam as one of its visitors, but he and his Friend are also acting as “spies” more than tourists at this point. They are critical of the other visitors, and are well behaved during their visit. Still, in the Spy’s visit to Bedlam and criticism of the other visitors, Ward provides a vicarious visitation to Bedlam for his readers, even as he criticizes the practice.

The Spy and his Friend also act as “spies” in Bridewell prison. The spectators they join there treat the punishment of women as a spectacle. In his history of Bridewell, E. G O’Donoghue traces the growth of houses of correction or “Bridewells” and their intention “to reform the vagrant, and not to send him into penal servitude for life” (203). However, during the eighteenth century, houses of correction “degenerated into common gaols” and conditions were much worse (205). Therefore, with a great degree of irony, the Spy calls Bridewell a “Stately Edifice.” Ward was concerned with the transformation of the Bridewell Palace to a prison and house of correction:

’Twas once the Palace of a Prince,
If we may Books Confide-in,
But given was by him, long since,
For Vagrants to Reside-in.

The Crumbs that from his Table fell,
Once made the Poor the Fatter;
But those that in its Confines Dwell

Now Feed on Bread and Water.

Where once the King and Nobles sat,
In all their Pomp and Splendor;
Grave City Grandeur Nods its Pate,
And Threatens each Offender.

Unhappy thy Ignoble Doom,
Where Greatness once Resorted;
Now Hemp and Labour Jills each Room,
Where Lords and Ladies Sported. (137-8)

Despite once being a place of great wealth, where the scraps from the table would at least feed some, it is now part of the “Grave City Grandeur” that threatens and starves “Offenders” in Bridewell. The Spy considers Bridewell a failure: “Bless me! Thought I, what a Rigorous Uncharitable thing is this, that so Noble a Gift, intended, when first given, to so good an End, should be thus perverted! (133). The perversion is the failure of Bridewell to reform and aid work that pays petty debts. Instead, “what was design’d to prevent Peoples falling into Misery, thro’ Laziness or Ill-Courses should now be so corrupted by such Unchristian Confinement as to Starve a Poor Wretch, because he wants Money to satisfie the demands of a Mercenary Cerberus” (133). The grandiose and “Stately” structure has degenerated and become undermined by “low” morals and extreme poverty for the purpose of punishing and starving people for petty debts instead of allowing debtors to work off what they owe.

The Spy and his Friend act as “spies” who visit Bridewell like the other spectators, but they are well behaved and disagree with the spectacle of watching the women. The Spy registers a shock at the difference between the sight of Bridewell’s grandeur, which seems “rather a Princes Palace, than a House of Correction” and the reality of the punishments taking place inside its walls, where “in a large Room a parcel of Ill-looking Mortals Strip’d to their Shirts like Hay-makers” (131). The women have been stripped of their shirts for punishment and are being watched by an audience of men. The Spy’s focus is on the severity of the punishment and the shameful way the audience uses the punishment for entertainment: “Such Severe, nay Barbarous

Usage, is a Shame to our Laws, an Unhappiness to our Nation, and a Scandal to Christianity” (133). The Spy considers the spectacle of punishment shameful, and they become “both tired with, and amazed at, the Confidence and Loose Behaviour of these Degenerate Wretches” (135). They watch the proceedings of a trial in the Prison, where a young woman is “forc’d to shew her tender Back, and tempting Bubbies, to the Grave Sages of the Grave Assembly” (135). As a tourist, the Spy is often more of a spectator than a Spy in London, but the Spy and his Friend make a point of separating themselves from the spectators as they watch the trial and punishment in Bridewell.

After the trial, the Spy is angered by the fact that the woman was made to stand naked in front of a room of men, and proceeds to make a series of suggestions for changes: he suggests that young girls should be corrected at home or by other women, not publicly and in front of men; he also suggests that a lesser punishment should be provided for women, unless the crime is a capital offence (146-7). The Friend mocks the Spy for his sensitivity by saying he is “aiming to curry Favour with the fair Sex” (147). He does not share the Spy’s sensitivity, but agrees about the problem and ultimately agrees that the punishment is extreme. The Spy is angered by the indecency of Bridewell’s treatment of women; however, there are multiple misogynistic sections in *The London Spy*, including thoughts on the women in Bridewell that immediately preceded the Spy’s criticism of this woman’s treatment, so it would be a mistake to suggest that Ward is a champion of the treatment of women. To the Spy, despite the contempt he has for women in Bridewell, the spectacle made of punishment, and the decline of Bridewell as an institution are the more pertinent wrongs. The Spy’s outrage is aimed at the men who are spectators of the punishment of women, yet the Spy and his Friend are also participating, even if only as “Spies.”

Outside the Wall: Poverty in the City

I have focused on the first half of the walking tour because it illustrates the spectator role the Spy and his Friend act out, both as tourists throughout London and “spies” in Bedlam and Bridewell. The visits take place primarily in The City of London and Westminster; however, Ward’s Spy travels outside the walls of London as well. The second half of the Spy’s walking tour takes place around the perimeter of London in Bartholomew-Fair, Chancery-Lane-End, Tower-Hill, Goodmans-Fields, St. Catharines, Rag-Fair, White-Chappel, etc. On the way to Bartholomew Fair, the Spy says, “For he that is a Mountebank, its no matter whether he keeps his

Stage over-against White-Hall Gate, or at Cow-Cross; for if the means to Live be the same, it signifies little to his Credit in what Place they are put in Practice” (229). As the Friend widens the scope of the walking tour outside of central London, this statement is both about frauds and the place itself. Ward uses this important transition in the walking tour to indicate that, although the people and places will become more commonplace, the vices will be the same and those responsible still culpable. The change from central areas of London to external and vaguely defined spaces is a way for Ward to keep his audience interested by varying content and expose “Vice and Villany” outside London’s core.

Ned Ward’s Spy both pities and scorns people in hopeless situations, and both responses play an important narrative role that precipitates social commentary on the cause of misfortune. The Friend, on the other hand, criticizes abuses of power instead of pitying the problems of common people. When the Spy meets a group of sailors, he admits he can “not but reflect on the unhappy Lives of these Salt-Water kind of Vagabonds, who are never at Home, but when they’re at Sea, and always are Wandering when they’re at Home; and never contented but when they’re on Shore: They’re never at ease till they’ve receiv’d their Pay, and then never satisfied till they have spent it” (325). The Spy keeps these thoughts to himself, and they go unchecked by his Friend, but when the Spy relates the story of a man who could not pay for his care when he was sick his Friend makes “light of it, as if they were such Practical Abuses as were scarce worth listening to” (270). While the Spy pities the unfortunate, his Friend is of the opinion that the world is subject to Fortune’s Wheel, which spins “for the Interest of him that Governs the Wheel; and the Politick Motion of Affairs for Publick Safety, require some to be Rising, and others Falling” (263). He explains, “the Winding Up of one, must be the Letting Down of another,” implying that the powerful only rise to the top at the expense of others (263). As part of this mindset, he describes poverty not as misfortune and circumstance but part of a process where those with political power maintain it by governing Fortune’s wheel.

The Spy’s interest and pity of helpless people is exhibited again when he sees a common foot-soldier just outside of Westminster in the famous Scotland Yard. Not as attuned to the political and social context of what he sees as his friend is, the Spy frequently pauses to reflect on common people and occurrences that are strange to him. Character-writing is incorporated

into the narrative as the silent musings of the Spy, as is the case when, walking through Scotland Yard, the Spy considers the foot-soldiers there:

I stood a little while Ruminating on the great Unhappiness of such a Life, and could not restrain my Thoughts from giving a Character of that unfortunate Wretch, who, in, time of War, hazards his Life for Six-pence a Day, and that, perhaps, ne'er paid him; and in time of Peace has nothing to do, but to mount the Guard and Loiter. (189)

Seeing the nearby ruins at Whitehall, a reminder of the legacy of past monarchs, has depressed the Spy, which is part of the reason for the sympathetic undertones of the foot-soldier's introduction. The ruins of Whitehall are a direct comparison to the fallen glory of the foot-soldier, who when fighting with a battalion may have been considered one of "the Just, the Wise, the Brave and Beautiful," terms which are used to describe the previous occupants of Whitehall, but who is also "now huddled in Confusion" (189). Ward critiques the foot-soldier's vices, but the Spy's contempt is tempered by pity.

The soldier's shortcomings, vices, habits, dress, and speech are given in an anecdote, followed by a short verse, a formula Ward uses in his character-writing throughout *The London Spy*. The Character of the Foot-soldier is someone who "is Coax'd from a Handicraft Trade, whereby he might Live Comfortably, to bear Arms, for his King and Country, whereby he has the hopes of nothing but to live Starvingly" (189). From the soldier's introduction, his situation is hopeless. After coming home from war, he has no other choice of work and is likely to be living hand to mouth. But the Spy is also highly critical of the foot-soldier. Derisively criticizing the foot-soldier for living by the sword, the fact that he is working "for King and Country" is not a redemptive quality (190). He cannot "pass a Brandy-Shop with 2d. In his Pocket" and his only companions are "Whores and Lice" (190). He is obedient through fear alone, and his best hope is that he'll be able to die comfortably in a Hospital (190-1). The Soldier's inability to gain credit, and his constant hunger, drunkenness, and short life expectancy criticize his state of being, and the final verses characterize him as lazy:

To a Coblers Aul, or Butchers Knife,
Or Porters Knot, Commend me;
But from a Soldiers Lazy Life,
Good Heaven, I pray, defend me. (191)

The unenviable position of the lazy foot soldier is tempered by intermittent hints of sympathy with his cause that fall in line with the introductory lines. He is both contemptible for being unable to keep his wages without spending them on drink and pitiable for being “Coax’d” into his position. This double-sided description, which comes with equal measures of contempt and pity is part of the way Ward negotiates between a spectator’s gaze, where the Spy is a tool that allows him to show the vices of the town to his readers, and the more clinical gaze of a surgeon who sees the ills of society and the underlying social causes.

The Friend’s response to those the Spy calls “unfortunate” requires a brief example. The Spy sees a group of “Vagabonds” immediately before they meet with the Constable and tells his Friend “What a shame is it . . . that such an infamous brood of Vagabonds should be train’d up in Villany, Ignorance, Laziness, Prophaness, and Infidelity, from their Cradles” (36). As the Friend recounts the inevitable progress of their life, he quickly discerns who is culpable for the dismal life they are doomed to lead:

They are poor Wretches . . . that are drop’d here by Gipsies and Country Beggars, when they are so little, they can give no Account of Parents or Place of Nativity; and the Parishes caring not to bring a charge upon themselves, suffer them to beg about in the Day-time, and at Night Sleep at Doors, and in Holes and Corners about the Streets, till they are so harden’d in this sort of Misery, that they seek no other Life till their Riper Years (for want of being bred to Labour) puts them upon all sorts of Villany: Thus thro’ the neglect of Church-Warden and Constables, from Beggary they proceed to Theft, and from Theft to the Gallows. (36)

Ward does not mention the connection between the “vagabonds” making hemp in Bridewell and the Friend’s statement about the number driven to Theft from poverty, but the implication is that they are making the rope for their own nooses. Where the Spy’s response to the foot-soldier and sailors is mixed with pity, he is also shocked with the sight; he “can not but reflect” on their lives and says, “to me ’tis very strange” (36). The Friend’s account of the life of a vagabond is an account of the facts that traces blame back to parish authorities. He diagnoses the misery of the vagabonds’ lives from infancy to death as a symptom of the neglect and callousness of London’s parish authorities, who will not take in an orphan who cannot be proven to be from their own parish. Instead, they are content to watch them beg on the street and perhaps even see them hang at Tyburn.

Conclusion

Ned Ward capitalizes on the differences between the Spy and his Friend throughout *The London Spy* in order to illustrate the miserable condition of the impoverished and expose vice and corruption in positions of power. During the Spy's walking tour, his Friend is clinical and objective, but quite cynical. Ward uses the physical features Bridewell, The Monument and the Fleet, to prompt the Spy and his Friend into criticism of corruption and power. Immediately before the Friend leaves, in part XV, Ward announces the end of the walking tour in order to "Treat more upon Men and Manners; opening the Frauds and Deceits practicable in many Trade" (344). In the last four parts, Ward becomes more interested in characterizations of people instead of places and buildings, a transition that begins at the end of the walking tour. When the Spy's Friend leaves in Part XVI, after giving "the common Civility of a London Inhabitant to a Country Friend or Acquaintance," the Spy adopts his Friend's cynicism and insight into people (368).

Ward's Spy captures the difference between a voyeuristic and a knowing audience while watching a play in Bartholomew Fair. "'tis a very Moral Play," The Spy says, "if the Spectators have sense enough to make use of it . . . it will serve to let us know how familiar a Priest, notwithstanding his Holy Orders, may be with the Devil" (250-251). The Spy's sentiments about the play speak to the number of seemingly contradictory elements that Ward uses as he tries to moralize salacious stories, laugh at the miserable with compassion, and point out injustice with indifference. Ned Ward's *The London Spy* is equally moralizing and tantalizing, and is written for both spectators and like-minded cynical readers. It is a work with two personalities and two audiences that attempts to appeal to the naive and the knowing.

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