

Literary and Scientific Cultures of Early Modernity

Series editors:

Mary Thomas Crane, Department of English, Boston College, USA
Henry Turner, Department of English, Rutgers University, USA

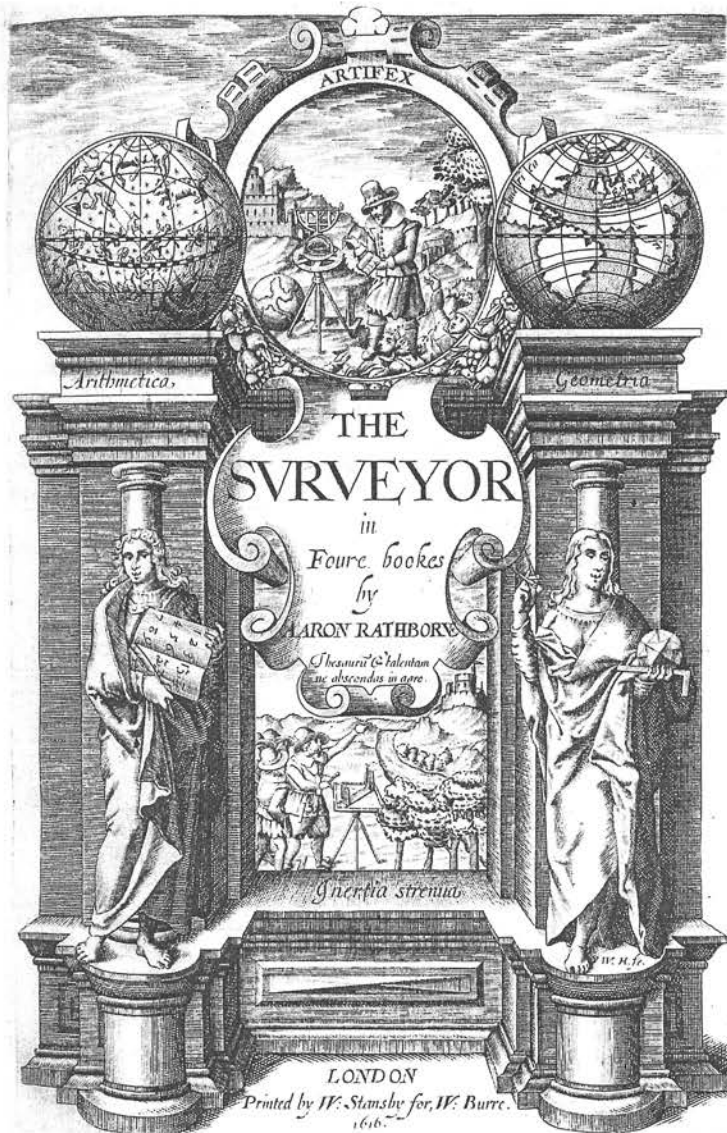
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John Norden's *The Surveyor's Dialogue* (1618) A Critical Edition

Edited by
MARK NETZLOFF
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, USA

ASHGATE

Introduction



Frontispiece 'Competing models of surveying': Title Page from Aaron Rathborne, *The Surueyor in four bookes* (London, 1616).

Surveying and Social Dialogue

The frontispiece of Aaron Rathborne's *The Surueyor* (1616) (see Frontispiece) presents what may be the best-known image of an early modern surveyor. Despite its currency, however, its depiction of the social role and professional training of surveyors differs significantly from that of a contemporary surveying manual, John Norden's *The Surveyor's Dialogue*.¹ In the portrayal of 'Artifex' that appears at the top of Rathborne's title-page, the surveyor is defined primarily in relation to his mastery of the technical aspects of his craft. He is therefore shown at work with the most advanced surveying instrument of the time, the azimuth theodolite. And even though the surveyor is represented in the act of writing, his labor is merely one of transcription, as he provides a record of the labor performed not by him but by his instruments. The survey thus attains a status as fact, as objective and reproducible, because its accuracy is no longer dependent on the individual conducting it.

It is appropriate that this image from Rathborne's title-page is often reprinted in studies of early modern surveying and cartography, for it reproduces key assumptions about the place of technology in these fields. A focus on technological innovation and specialized expertise provided a framework through which an increasingly professionalized group could emphasize the theoretical principles underpinning its practical form of knowledge.² In his inclusion of allegorical figures representing arithmetic and geometry at each side of his frontispiece, Rathborne follows other early modern mathematical practitioners, such as Leonard Digges, in presenting classical Euclidian geometry as the theoretical foundation of surveying. Classical precedents conferred intellectual legitimacy to surveying while also countering perceptions of its disturbing innovativeness. This concern emerges early in the first dialogue of *The Surveyor's Dialogue* as well, with the character of the Farmer dismissing surveying as an 'upstart Art' (p. 27).³

Possessing a specialized body of knowledge also served as a marker of social distinction for surveyors, a foundation of professional identity that differentiated them from practitioners lacking this level of expertise. Norden refers to this latter group as 'intelligencers' (p. 19), a category that includes surveyors who fail to uphold the standards of the profession—by accepting bribes to alter land

¹ Three editions of *The Surveyor's Dialogue* were published in Norden's lifetime (1607, 1610, 1618). Book 6, the final dialogue between the Surveyor and a Purchaser of Land, first appeared in the 1610 edition.

² For extended discussion of this point, see J.A. Bennett, *The Divided Circle: A History of Instruments for Astronomy, Navigation and Surveying* (Oxford, 1987) and Bernhard Klein, *Maps and the Writing of Space in Early Modern England and Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2001), p. 51.

³ All references to *The Surveyor's Dialogue* are drawn from this edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text.

boundaries, for example—as well as those usurping the prerogative of trained specialists, such as tenants who pass on information regarding the value and features of neighboring properties. What unites this suspect class is the mode of information they circulate. ‘Intelligence’ is subjective knowledge, information deriving from the contestations and competing interests of social relations. The mathematical surveyor, by contrast, offers an ‘indifferent’ account, one seemingly devoid of subjective interest. It is his mode of knowledge, even more than his technical expertise, which establishes the results of the survey as ‘fact’.⁴

But this emergent model of the professional surveyor is offset by a second image located at the bottom portion of Rathborne's frontispiece. Titled ‘Inertia strenua’, a tag from Horace referring to ‘masterly inactivity’, this section depicts a surveyor who has misplaced confidence in his technological acumen. Pointing with one hand to his plane table, a fairly basic surveying instrument, with his other arm he makes a sweeping gesture over the hilly landscape in front of him. Ignorant of the technical limits of his instrument, he assumes that he can plot out the land in a simple act of transcription. Norden similarly critiques the privileging of technology in his text, dismissing ‘ingenious geometrical conclusions’ as nothing more than ‘curiosity’ (p. 111). Instrumentation, for Norden, is not so much a goal unto itself or a guarantee of accuracy as much as a means for helping the surveyor in a competitive marketplace by speeding up the pace of his labor (p. 133).⁵ The instrument featured in Rathborne's first image, the theodolite, was indeed so innovative that it was rarely used by surveyors in the field, a fact that even Rathborne concedes in his appraisal of it.⁶ In Norden's text, the Surveyor uses far simpler instruments, most especially the plane table, which was often dismissed as primitive and favored by the ‘vulgar’.⁷ In addition, Norden's discussion of the technical aspects of surveying is limited to Book 4, an 18-page section that is the

⁴ My discussion is indebted to Mary Poovey's *The History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society* (Chicago, 1998).

⁵ A similar emphasis on speed and efficiency can be seen in Norden's commission for a survey of the King's woods in Surrey, Berkshire, and Devonshire: see British Library, Egerton MS 806 f. 42.

⁶ See Rathborne, *The Surueyor in Four bookes* (London, 1616), p. 124.

⁷ The plane table was fairly simple to use: a large sheet of paper would be placed on a flat and level (‘plane’) board mounted on a tripod and accurately oriented to the compass. The surveyor established two points from which he could see all the features of the landscape he was surveying. With the tripod at one of those points, he sighted to the features along an alidade, marking their direction (not distance) on the paper. When he repeated this form of polar measurement at the other point, the points of intersection marked on the paper provided a scaled outline of the plot of land. Because the surveyor did not have to measure distances with his plane table, he could survey a large area relatively quickly (J.A. Bennett, ‘Geometry and Surveying in Early-Seventeenth-Century England’, *Annals of Science* 48 [1991] 347).

shortest of *The Surveyor's Dialogue's* original five books.⁸ The comparative length of the remaining sections attests to the emphasis Norden places on other topics: the social role of the Surveyor (Book 1, 26 pp. in 1618); the history and components of manors (Book 2, 37 pp.); the manorial court system, especially procedures for conducting a Court of Survey (Book 3, 47 pp.); and land management and improvement techniques (Book 5, 46 pp.). Moreover, whereas Rathborne's text includes over 100 geometrical images, Norden's depicts only six figures, and these are fairly rudimentary by the standards of his contemporaries.⁹

All of these choices demonstrate that Norden's text—unlike Rathborne's—was intended more for a general audience than a readership of fellow or aspiring surveyors, and Norden emphasizes not the specialized, technical aspects of the craft but instead the social, legal, and agricultural components of surveying. For Norden, the surveyor possesses a social role that is inextricably linked to the management and preservation of agrarian life. As the Surveyor points out early in his first dialogue with the Farmer, ‘plotting’, while necessary, is not the ‘chief part’ of surveying practice:

for besides the former faculty of measuring and plotting, he must have the understanding of the Latin tongue, and have some sight in the common Laws, especially of Tenures and Customs, and must be able to read and understand any ancient deeds or records, French and Latin, and to judge of the values of land[.] (p. 27)

In the early modern period, surveys were conducted under the jurisdiction of the manorial court system, the Court baron, and were typically known as Courts of Survey in reference to their authorizing body and institutional context. The survey was not primarily a technical endeavor conducted by an individual surveyor that produced a visual document in the form of an estate map. On the contrary, as Norden's passage indicates, it was instead a textual process that entailed the collection and interpretation of deeds and other legal documents. The result of a survey was not a ‘map’ *per se* but a textual inventory of land boundaries and features.¹⁰ It is appropriate that when *The Surveyor's Dialogue* was republished in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Books 4 and 5 were deleted, an

⁸ At 14 pages, Book 6 is the only section shorter than Book 4. As a point of contrast, Rathborne devotes most of his text to explaining the geometric foundations of surveying and the use of instruments, with a consideration of the social and legal aspects of surveying relegated to the last of his text's four sections (*The Surueyor*, pp. 175–228).

⁹ For discussion of the use of such graphic figures, alternately described as ‘plots’ or ‘plats’, see Henry S. Turner, *The English Renaissance Stage: Geometry, Poetics, and the Practical Spatial Arts 1580–1630* (Oxford, 2006).

¹⁰ For example, Norden's survey of the manor of Halimote in Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire provides a list of tenants, their properties, and annual rents without including any estate maps: see ‘Perambulatio, &c. de Halimote’ (1616), British Library, Lansdowne MS 905 f. 98.

excision of those sections dealing with the technical aspects of surveying and the surveyor's instruments.¹¹

Early modern surveying did not always produce objects that were primarily visual in form. In some recent critical discussions of early modern surveying, surveys are presented as a subset of cartography, and there is an underlying assumption that all surveys were intended to produce a visual record in the form of an estate map.¹² But surveying began to be equated with mapping only in the late sixteenth century, relatively late in the development of both fields, a period which Peter Eden describes as the 'golden age of estate cartography'.¹³ The fact that Norden's *Surveyor* is not a cartographer therefore distinguishes his text's depiction of its subject from the institutional and intellectual changes marking both fields. Even though Norden had produced a series of county maps as part of his *Speculum Britanniae* series, and was well-versed in the cartographical aspects of surveying, this facet is mentioned only once in *The Surveyor's Dialogue*.¹⁴ In the first book, Norden's *Surveyor* imagines a scenario in which the results of his survey will enable a landlord, 'sitting in his chair', to be able to 'see what he hath ... upon the sudden 'view' (p. 25). This passage, one of the most frequently cited references to Norden's text, does indeed demonstrate the significant conceptual effects of estate surveying, illustrating what Bernhard Klein describes as 'an

¹¹ The 1738 edition printed Books 1–3 only, while the 1853 text included Book 6 alongside the first three dialogues. In addition, the 1853 edition deleted sections referring to outdated practices such as feudal service (Book 2) and early modern instrumentation (Book 3); this latter omission reflects the extent to which surveying instruments had become standardized and professionalized by the nineteenth century. For a list of variations among the editions, see the Textual Notes.

¹² On estate maps, see P.D.A. Harvey, 'English Estate Maps: Their Early History and Their Use as Historical Evidence', in David Buisseret (ed.), *Rural Images: Estate Maps in the Old and New Worlds* (Chicago, 1996), pp. 27–61, as well as his *Maps in Tudor England* (London, 1993), pp. 79–93.

¹³ Eden, 'Three Elizabethan Estate Surveyors: Peter Kempe, Thomas Clerke and Thomas Langdon', in Sarah Tyacke (ed.), *English Map-Making, 1500–1650* (London, 1983), p. 76. Among other discussions of early modern surveying, see Jess Edwards, *Writing, Geometry and Space in Seventeenth-Century England and America* (London and New York, 2006); David Buisseret (ed.), *Monarchs, Ministers, and Maps: The Emergence of Cartography as a Tool of Government in Early Modern Europe* (Chicago, 1992); J.A. Bennett and Olivia Brown, *The Compleat Surveyor. Published to Accompany a Special Exhibition at the Whipple Museum of the History of Science* (Cambridge, 1982).

¹⁴ Frank Kitchen has provided a comprehensive account of Norden's biography and career as a cartographer and professional surveyor in several works: 'Cosmo-Chorograph: An Analytic Account of the Life and Work of John Norden, 1547–1625' (unpublished D. Phil. Dissertation, University of Sussex, 1992); 'John Norden (1547–1625), Estate Surveyor, Topographer, County Mapmaker and Devotional Writer', *Imago Mundi* 49 (1997): 43–61; and 'John Norden,' *The Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 41 (Oxford, 2004), pp. 5–7.

increasingly desocialized conception of agrarian space'.¹⁵ The social function of surveying is thus transformed from 'overseeing the relationships between landlords and tenants to overseeing the land as a thing in itself', as Crystal Bartolovich has commented.¹⁶ Nonetheless, Norden's allusion to a landlord poring over his estate map is, after all, a hypothetical scene, and it presents an ideal of a desocialized model of possession that is at odds with the contested terms of property and tenure in early modern agrarian England.

Rathborne's image of the surveyor alone with his instruments and Norden's reference to a landlord sitting at home with his estate map share an underlying assumption about the work of surveying. Whether at the stage of production or consumption, this labor is embodied in the figure of the solitary, individual subject. By contrast, a distinguishing feature of Rathborne's careless surveyor is the social context in which he operates, with an emphasis placed on the tenant farmers who assist him as he conducts his perambulation of the manor. If he depends too much on a faulty instrument, the plane table, he is even more dangerously reliant on the information that tenants provide him. One of the dominant concerns of Norden's opening dialogue is, in fact, the *Surveyor's* need to counter the opposition of the tenant Farmer and induce him to cooperate with the survey. As a practicing surveyor, Norden was acquainted with the widespread resistance that a survey could generate: in one instance, he noted that 'We could not procede in the survey of this manor for that of nere 100 tenantes not 30 appeared'.¹⁷

When a survey was conducted in the early modern period, this process was organized under the jurisdiction of the Court baron, a context that challenges the image of an avaricious landlord foisting a survey on unwilling tenant farmers. The manorial court system was not administered by the Lord himself but instead conducted under the auspices of his steward (estate manager) and bailiff (legal officer), and all of its proceedings were reviewed and authorized by a jury of freeholder tenants.¹⁸ In other words, the assumption that a landlord would hire a surveyor, who would then produce an estate map for the landlord's eyes only, misrepresents the complex process that constituted a Court of Survey. It is appropriate, then, that the longest section in Norden's text is Book 3, which provides step-by-step instructions for calling and administering a Court of Survey (pp. 79 and ff.). Although surveys often authorized actions that had deleterious social effects—from raised rents and fines, and the enclosure of commons or wastes, to

¹⁵ Klein, *Maps and the Writing of Space*, p. 59.

¹⁶ Crystal Bartolovich, 'Boundary Disputes: Surveying, Agrarian Capital and English Renaissance Texts', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 1993, p. 18.

¹⁷ Qtd in Eric Kerridge, *Agrarian Problems in the Sixteenth Century and After* (London, 1969), p. 30.

¹⁸ On the early modern manorial court system, see especially Christopher Harrison, 'Manor Courts and the Governance of Tudor England,' in C.W. Brooks and Michael Lobban (eds), *Communities and Courts in Britain, 1150–1900* (London: Hambledon Press, 1997), pp. 43–59.

a redrawing of tenants' land boundaries—this process did not occur outside the law.¹⁹ What distinguished agrarian change in this period, however, was that the legal foundation of surveys was increasingly undermined, particularly as a result of limits imposed on the contributing authority of both a professional class of manorial officials and an elite of landholding tenant farmers (or freeholders).

Because early modern surveys entailed a process of social negotiation, Norden's selection of the literary convention of the dialogue provides an appropriate framework in which to depict his Surveyor's experience in the field. The formal qualities of the text also differentiate *The Surveyor's Dialogue* from other contemporary surveying manuals. Whereas the earliest publications in English treating the geometric aspects of surveying were similarly written in dialogue form, this convention had flourished in the mid-sixteenth century and was rarely used by the early Jacobean period.²⁰ The changing form of these texts derived in part from a shifting rubric for the organization of knowledge, a 'decay in dialogue' that accompanied the growing influence of Ramist logic. As Walter Ong has argued, Ramism organized knowledge according to a spatial logic associated with visual perception.²¹ Its characteristic taxonomies, which broke down subjects into a chain of adjuncts and subcategories, attempted to create transferable, reproducible models for knowledge production, a process that fixed objects of inquiry by transforming them into charts on the printed page. One can see this influence bearing on Norden's text in his fourth book, where he offers a series of graphic forms to explain how a plot of ground can be measured (p. 127). However, even at this moment, the dialogue form itself reveals the ways that the surveyor's 'plot' results from a process of construction involving human agents. As Virginia Cox has argued in her study of the early modern dialogue, this literary form 'has the effect of calling attention to the act of communication itself'.²² In this sense, rather than emphasizing its referential content, the facticity of the information presented,

¹⁹ In legal terms, enclosure could begin only with the prior approval of five independent referees and two surveyors as well as a guarantee that displaced tenants would be relocated or compensated (Joan Thirsk [ed.], *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, vol. 4: 1500–1640 [Cambridge, 1967], p. 254).

²⁰ Other texts on surveying or geometry written in dialogue form include Robert Recorde, *The Pathway to Knowledge* [sic] (London, 1551, with eds in 1574 and 1602); William Cuninghame, *The Cosmographical Glasse* (London, 1559); Edward Worsop, *A Discouerie of sundrie errors and faults daily committed by land-meaters* (London, 1582); Rooke Church, *An olde thrift newly revived* (London, 1612).

²¹ Walter J. Ong, *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue* (Cambridge, MA, 1958), p. 287. Also relevant to this point is Steven Shapin's *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago, 1994).

²² Virginia Cox, *The Renaissance Dialogue: Literary Dialogue in its Social and Political Contexts, Castiglione to Galileo* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 5.

the text foregrounds its own terms of representation as a way of illustrating the process in which knowledge is constructed and transmitted.²³

The dialogue form is characteristically *unformed*, a protean quality that is reflected in its application to a diverse range of texts and genres. As Jon R. Snyder has noted, it is a form especially well-suited for those 'marginal' kinds of texts that do not conform to traditional definitions of genre.²⁴ *The Surveyor's Dialogue* is similarly difficult to categorize: while the text's comparatively brief discussion of the geometric and mathematical aspects of surveying distinguishes it from other surveying manuals, its fairly utilitarian use of the dialogue convention also creates challenges for analyzing it in terms of its literary qualities. But by hewing so closely to the context of spoken dialogue, and thereby creating a text that has a 'low level of literization',²⁵ Norden also facilitates its pedagogical function. The dialogues themselves stage scenes of learning that provide models for readers' own acquisition of knowledge.

From his opening debate with the Farmer onwards, the Surveyor quite literally has a lot of explaining to do, a pedagogical context that is sustained throughout the remaining dialogues. Whereas the Surveyor initially has to justify his presence in the first book, different skills are called for in Book 2, his dialogue with the Lord, an absentee aristocratic landowner who needs to be informed about even the most basic aspects of the manorial system, from its origins and history to the kinds of feudal services that can still be demanded from tenants. The Farmer reappears for the following three books, but in a new identity as the Bailiff, the Lord's legal officer. The longest section, Book 3, emphasizes not only the physical work of conducting a survey, following the Surveyor and Bailiff as they travel the bounds of the manor and question a Jury of tenants, but also its underlying legal basis, with the Surveyor enumerating the procedures that comprise a Court of Survey. The relatively brief Book 4 outlines instructions for measuring land and converting it into mathematically determined 'plots', and includes a series of geometric images and tables to demonstrate these calculations (pp. 127 and ff.). Book 5 provides an extended discussion of techniques of soil management and agricultural improvement, covering such issues as deforestation and fen drainage, while Book 6, the shortest of the dialogues, offers an exchange between the

²³ For Cox, the exchanges among speakers in a dialogic text are also replicated by a 'literary transaction' between the text and readers (*ibid.*, pp. 4–5). Another dialogic feature of Norden's text is provided by his marginal notes, which sometimes offer a perspective distinct from that of the main text: for discussion, see Bartolovich, 'Boundary Disputes', p. 58.

²⁴ Jon R. Snyder, *Writing the Scene of Speaking: Theories of Dialogue in the Late Italian Renaissance* (Stanford, 1989), pp. 7–8. Among other discussions of the early modern dialogue, see Lynne Magnusson, *Shakespeare and Social Dialogue: Dramatic Language and Elizabethan Letters* (Cambridge, 1999); Dorothea B. Heitsch and Jean-Francois Vallee, intro., *Printed Voices: The Renaissance Culture of Dialogue* (Toronto, 2004), pp. ix–xxiii; Kenneth J. Wilson, *Incomplete Fictions: The Formation of English Renaissance Dialogue* (Washington, DC, 1985).

²⁵ Snyder, p. 9.

Surveyor and a Purchaser of Land in which the latter is advised to lease property rather than owning it as a freehold tenant.

The thematic versatility of *The Surveyor's Dialogue* is reflected in the frequency with which it has been cited in critical studies from a range of fields: not only early modern surveying, but also mathematics, geometry, and the history of science, mapping and the history of cartography, agrarian and agricultural history, and economic history, especially Marxist studies of the history of capitalism. These studies seldom consider the text's literary qualities, however, and in most cases *The Surveyor's Dialogue* is treated as a historical document and plumbed for its referential content. As a result, discussions tend to be short and highly selective, rarely referring to more than a passage or two from the text. Despite the frequency with which the text is cited, no published critical study has analyzed *The Surveyor's Dialogue* in its entirety.²⁶ But attention to the whole of the text leads to some unexpected results, including a sense of the importance of several topics that have not received due critical attention, from the representation of the agrarian poor, and the emergence of a national market, to changes occurring to the natural landscape such as deforestation, issues that will be discussed later in the Introduction. Through its dialogic form, the text offers multiple perspectives on these developments, even at those moments when it attempts to quell critique and offer a defense of the status quo. The unsettled status of these topics is additionally evinced by a number of textual cruxes. Norden made several key revisions to his final edition of 1618, particularly in Book 5's discussion of enclosure and deforestation, changes that reflect the complexity of his own position. Particularly in these sections, the text's form and conventions of representation are integral components of its engagement with social and historical contexts.

Manorial Culture

Freehold

The Surveyor's Dialogue is so immersed in its various contexts—the legal, agricultural, and scientific discourses of its time—that it offers particular challenges for a modern reader unfamiliar with the specialized languages of these fields. The first context that is necessary to explain is the complicated workings of tenure, the terms regulating property ownership and relations of service in the early modern period. A discussion of agrarian social relations is complicated by the fact that a manor possessed several different forms of tenure: freehold, copyhold, and leasehold. If a tenant was a freeholder, this designation referred to the terms of tenure rather than the tenant's class status. Consequently, a tenant could at the same time be a freeholder of one property and a copyholder of another. Freehold tenure closely approximated ownership of the land, and it granted tenants the full right to sell or transfer holdings as well as confer property to stipulated heirs. Freehold provided a security of tenure due to the fact that it fell under the jurisdiction of the common law, thereby providing tenants with a legal foundation to title outside the manorial system.¹ Over the course of the early modern period, freeholders increasingly removed themselves from ties to their erstwhile manors, an independence that was generalized with the abolition of feudal tenures in 1660.²

One finds freeholders often referred to as 'yeomen' or 'capitalist farmers' in critical discussions of agrarian relations. As these terms indicate, freeholders formed an elite among the tenancy, an intermediate class situated below the gentry but above customary tenants. The landowning class of a typical village was split between two relatively small elites: the local gentry, the traditional landowners and social superiors, along with a prosperous, socially mobile contingent of freeholder tenants. Through their ownership of their land, both of these groups were differentiated from two much larger classes: the tenant farmers who possessed their land through copyhold (customary) tenure, a population three or four times the size of the number of freeholders, and the unpropertied poor—servants, cottagers, and wage-laborers—who comprised as much as two-thirds of the rural population.³ Freeholders also formed the professional class of agrarian England: the Lord's stewards and bailiffs, the officials administering his estate, were drawn from the manor's freeholders, as were members of the Juries who oversaw the proceedings of the manorial court and authorized the results of surveys.

¹ Richard Lachmann, *From Manor to Market: Structural Change in England, 1536–1640* (Madison, WI, 1987), p. 38.

² Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution, 1603–1714* (1961; New York, 1982), p. 127; Bartolovich, 'Boundary Disputes', n. 33, pp. 208–9.

³ Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York, 1973), p. 102.

²⁶ The only extended discussions of *The Surveyor's Dialogue* have been chapters in dissertations: see Bartolovich, 'Boundary Disputes', pp. 16–61 and Kitchen, 'Cosmo-Choro-Polygrapher', pp. 240–58.

A discussion of freehold tenure is especially relevant to an analysis of Book 1 of *The Surveyor's Dialogue*. Although the Surveyor's interlocutor is referred to as 'Farmer' throughout this initial dialogue, he is more accurately described as a freeholder. Recognizing the precise character of this figure's social position significantly alters the conventional reading of this section. Past discussions of the text have assumed that the Farmer is a customary tenant because of his initial resistance to the kinds of innovations achieved through surveys, from a limited access to commons, and an increase of fines and rents, to a more precise demarcation of property boundaries. But in defending custom the Farmer is concerned less with tenants' customary rights than with the ability of commercial farmers to possess a form of tenure that secures title to their land as absolute property: 'and for freeholders' deeds, their Land is their own, and whether they may be compelled to shew them or not, I cannot tell' (p. 37). His ultimate defense of the Surveyor's presence therefore does not reverse or contradict his earlier position; it merely stems from his realization that the survey will benefit his economic interests as a freeholder.

One can assume an implied readership of freeholder tenants for *The Surveyor's Dialogue* due to the fact that the text addresses representatives of this class in five of its six books. The dialogues featuring the Farmer, the Farmer in his guise as Bailiff, and the Purchaser of Land thereby provide pedagogical templates for readers, and they offer rudimentary instructions on the components of surveying, from its legal process (Book 3) to land measurement (Book 4) and improvement techniques to the soil (Book 5).⁴ But even as the text confers knowledge that will enable freeholders to advance their position in an increasingly market-oriented environment, it also expresses an ambivalence regarding the effects of their social mobility. If rents have increased along with property values, the Surveyor attributes these changes to ambitious freeholders who have driven up prices through competitive land auctions (p. 23). Freeholders are closely associated with agrarian capitalism throughout the text, and the Surveyor's frequent admonitions to the Farmer and his counterparts are intended to ensure that this class sustains its position in a managed way. In Book 6, for example, he advises the Purchaser of Land to acquire land on shorter-term leases rather than the more stable but less profitable terms of freehold tenure. This recommendation derives from a concern that freeholders will take on the attributes of the landed gentry as they acquire wealth and position, and, in becoming 'gentlemen', will consequently opt out of the risky market in favor of sustaining their wealth for posterity. Risk and uncertainty thus become encoded in the terms of agrarian social relations, a

⁴ The intended readership of *The Surveyor's Dialogue* distinguishes it from other early modern texts on agriculture, which generally addressed an audience of gentlemen farmers (Andrew McRae, 'Husbandry Manuals and the Language of Agrarian Improvement', in *Culture and Cultivation in Early Modern England: Writing and the Land*, Michael Leslie and Timothy Raylor [eds] [Leicester, 1992], pp. 44–5, and *God Speed the Plough: The Representation of Agrarian England* [Cambridge, 1996], p. 145).

social logic in which freeholders are integral to the formation of capital. While they are differentiated from small landowners and customary tenants due to their acquisition of wealth and consequent social mobility, they are also denied the security that derives from stable land title or the acquisition of rank, estate, and other forms of social capital.⁵

Copyhold and Custom

Over the course of the early modern period, freeholder tenants were increasingly differentiated from the larger mass of customary tenants and agricultural laborers. Copyhold tenure itself had initially emerged as an effort to stabilize agrarian social relations in the aftermath of the Black Death in the fourteenth century. The ensuing scarcity of labor rendered laborers far more valuable as well as mobile, forcing landlords to offer their tenants better terms and a security of tenure in the form of copyhold.⁶ Tenants were consequently ensured a fixed rent, the right to renew their leases with a limited fine, and the ability to pay their rent in cash rather than through feudal duties of service.⁷ Copyhold tenure thus coordinated aspects of feudal service with market dynamics, a juxtaposition that carries over into Norden's discussion in Book 2. Norden insists on preserving the distinctive rituals of feudal service, even if solely in ceremonial form. Because tenants—freeholders as well as copyholders—'still owe services unto their Lords' (p. 39), the Surveyor lists the various fines and gifts that tenants must provide their landlords. Feudal service provided continuity with the past, a way of enshrining tradition and ensuring that tenants stay in place. Yet Norden also recognizes that this economy of symbolic deference is always already shaped by the conditions of the market. Even in his analysis of the genealogy of villeinage, or bond-servitude, he acknowledges that these terms of service exist in name only, and are ultimately incompatible with market relations, 'for if the Lord buy or sell with his bond Tenant, it is an immediate enfranchisement of the Tenant and his posterity' (p. 75).

The defining feature of copyhold was the security it provided: a guarantee of fixed rent and protection from arbitrary fines or eviction that was backed by the written deed (copy) entered into the roll of the manorial court. But alongside its legal foundation, copyhold also acquired the force of unwritten 'custom'. There was an underlying assumption that the terms of copyhold derived not from specific social conditions or legal arrangements but from customary practices preserved from 'time immemorial'.⁸ Because of this correlation, copyhold tenure

⁵ Norden therefore refuses to see freehold as analogous to absolute property, insisting that it offers only 'conditional' title to land (p. 39).

⁶ See Richard Lachmann, *Capitalists in Spite of Themselves: Elite Conflict and Economic Transitions in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford, 2000), p. 175.

⁷ Lachmann, *From Manor to Market*, pp. 38–9.

⁸ The classic analysis of this issue is J.G.A. Pocock's *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law* (1957; New York, 1967), esp. pp. 30–55.

is often referred to as 'customary' tenure. One of the most significant changes affecting early modern agrarian society was an overarching erosion of the rights of customary tenants. At the beginning of the early modern period, customary tenants formed nearly two-thirds of all landholders in England and were 'by far the most important class in the agricultural life of the country'.⁹ By the end of the seventeenth century, only one-third of tenants retained their land through customary tenure, and this number would dwindle even further over the course of the eighteenth century.¹⁰ But as copyhold tenure declined in practice, the idea of custom assumed a new importance. The defense of custom offered a language for articulating popular protest against the unequal terms of economic improvement. Although often steeped in nostalgia and traditionalism, it also provided a framework through which new rights could be asserted.¹¹ As C.E. Searle notes, custom 'was not something fixed and immutable. ... On the contrary, its definition was highly variable in relation to class position, and accordingly it became a vehicle for conflict not cohesion'.¹² Moreover, the conflicts centering on definitions of custom were often battles that pitted groups of the tenancy against one another. The 'internal divisions' among intermediate groups such as freeholders and copyholders played a role as significant as landlord-tenant relations in transforming definitions of tenure and property.¹³

Custom also possessed a specific, localized meaning in the early modern period. When Norden mentions 'custom', he is referring to the customary practices of individual manors. Custom, in this context, is thought of solely as 'the custom of the manor' rather than as a more generalized or abstract principle. But just as the theory of custom possessed a semantic flexibility, the practices of copyhold tenure were similarly variable and amorphous throughout the early modern period.¹⁴ At times, this would benefit tenants, who could lay claim to land title or specific rights based on prior, 'customary' use, and even reinforce their rights through vague recourse to historical precedent. But the ambiguity of custom also gave landlords greater latitude in implementing changes against copyhold tenants, and, in fact, half of customary tenants lacked security of tenure, making them

⁹ R.H. Tawney, *The Agrarian Problem in the Sixteenth Century* (1912; New York, 1967), p. 41.

¹⁰ E.P. Thompson, 'Custom, Law and Common Right', *Customs in Common: Studies in Traditional Popular Culture* (New York, 1993), p. 114. For a recent assessment of critical views regarding the decline of customary tenure in the early modern period, see Henry French and Richard Hoyle, *The Character of English Rural Society: Earls Colne, 1550–1750* (Manchester, 2007).

¹¹ Thompson, p. 1. For a related discussion, see Andy Wood, 'The Place of Custom in Pelebeian Political Culture: England, 1550–1800', *Social History* 22 (1997): 46–60.

¹² Qtd in Thompson, p. 110.

¹³ Williams, *The Country and the City*, p. 40.

¹⁴ Sir Edward Coke similarly noted that 'should I go about the catalogue of several customs, I should with Sysiphus ... undertake an endless piece of work' (qtd in Thompson, 'Custom', p. 137).

vulnerable to the effects of change, which ranged from raised rents and fines to eviction from their holdings.¹⁵ Norden's own recommendations similarly erode the foundational conditions of copyhold tenure. Instead of ensuring fixed fees, for instance, he argues that landlords must respond to market conditions and retain their power to raise rents and entry fines (p. 23).

Throughout his text, Norden is highly skeptical of any claims deriving from custom. As a consequence, he never refers to it as an abstraction but only in reference to the particular practices of a specific social unit. Custom is limited to a strictly legal definition in his mind, one that renders it synonymous with copyhold tenure.¹⁶ Instead of positing custom as unwritten or unchanging,¹⁷ its basis, instead, is entry in the court-roll of the manor. These records constitute a historical authority that underwrites social stability: 'ancient Records, and books of *Survey* of great antiquity' (p. 143) are 'so much the more certain, by how much the more ancient' (p. 80). But Norden is at pains to explain why landlords are nonetheless able to abuse their authority, and he can only feebly lay blame on a lack of records, in which case 'neither memory or record can reform them' (p. 26). By contrast, the Farmer in Book 1 offers a critique of this emphasis on material records: deeds may not only be altered or counterfeited (p. 37), they also require interpretation, and, ultimately, can create as many disputes as they settle (p. 24). The focus on material documentation becomes, in the Farmer's comic reformulation, an image of the surveyor carrying his 'whole trunk full of records' (p. 31) over the course of his survey. Since the Farmer possesses a dual role as the manor's Bailiff, the figure responsible for the manor's records (p. 80), this satire also reflects on the limits of his own knowledge. Indeed, the Surveyor later reprimands the Farmer/Bailiff for the latter's carelessness, noting that his errors will be enshrined for posterity (pp. 85, 145).

Leasehold: Agrarian Capitalism and Neofeudalism

Norden generally consigns customary tenure to the past, casting it as a residual practice that was slowly being phased out in most manors. As the Surveyor notes in his second dialogue with the Lord, customary rights were established at the initial formation of the manorial system, and neither Lords nor tenants had the authority to create new customs (p. 55). Any changes to tenure could occur only outside the customary realm with the introduction of market-based adjustments to entry fines, rents, and the terms of tenure itself. Leasehold tenure, the third and most innovative form of tenure, thus began to compete with and increasingly

¹⁵ John E. Martin, *Feudalism to Capitalism: Peasant and Landlord in English Agrarian Development* (London, 1983), pp. 118, 128.

¹⁶ See Norden's discussion of custom on pp. 49 and ff.

¹⁷ Except in the case of the Lord's property, which the Surveyor presents as 'all such Lands, as have been time out of the memory of man, used and occupied in the Lord's own hands' (p. 137).

replace both freehold and copyhold forms of tenure. As Robert Brenner has argued, the transfer of land from the customary sector to leasehold was instrumental in forestalling the development of 'peasant proprietorship'.¹⁸ There were positive effects stemming from these changes, including the elimination of the coercive, non-economic forms of surplus extraction that had typified feudal terms of service. However, the dwindling opportunities for most tenants to gain direct ownership of their land also helped create an environment in which producers 'had no choice, in order to maintain themselves, but to buy and sell on the market'.¹⁹

As Crystal Bartolovich has noted, one of the underlying conflicts running throughout Norden's text is a tension between 'market' and 'manor' discourses.²⁰ While the Surveyor consistently endorses economic innovations such as leasehold that accelerate the development of market-driven models of land ownership and commerce, he also attempts to preserve the social stability that he associates with manorial society. A distinctive quality of the text is this division it insists on maintaining between economic and social spheres. Yet this disjunction is itself a symptom of emergent market relations, reflecting the assumption that the 'market' can be held at a safe distance from social relations, and that change can be contained so as not to disrupt the imputed tranquility of the domestic space. The manor, in this context, is defined not only as 'home', the geographic space of residence, but also more broadly as the space of social habitus, the conceptual frame of reference that defines ways of thought and structures of feeling.²¹ The dominant feudal language of *The Surveyor's Dialogue* reveals more than just the residual influence of feudal relations, or an inability to conceptualize newer, more capitalist dynamics. Rather, the recourse to feudal traditions as a way of conferring social and conceptual stability is itself what transforms this older social system. Feudalism is not only revived—it is reinvented. As a result, the neofeudal environment presented by Norden is one that already contains the capitalist attributes whose development he is trying to forestall. As Ellen Wood has noted, capitalist relations arose when class groups, in conflict with one another, tried to 'reproduce themselves as they were'.²² Change, in other words, was effected precisely by the attempt to stay in place and

sustain traditional hierarchies and social practices. The 'unintended consequence' of these changes, Wood adds, was that classes were forced to adapt to 'market imperatives' in order to maintain social position and economic stability.²³

Professionalism and Value

Over the course of the text, it is the Farmer/Bailiff, the Surveyor's interlocutor in four of the six dialogues, who illustrates most fully the effects of emergent market conditions. When he first appears in the opening book, the Farmer insistently defends his own and other tenants' customary ties to the land. But his gradual support of surveying results from an appreciation of the Surveyor as a uniquely professional figure, a mediator ultimately working independently of the landowners who employ him.²⁴ This professional role serves as a model for the reconstitution of the Farmer's own identity. When the Surveyor encounters him again in Book 3, the Farmer is referred to as the Lord's Bailiff, the manorial official in charge of arranging for freeholder tenants to serve as jurors in manorial court proceedings, a professional identity he retains over the course of the remaining dialogues. Erasing his customary ties to the land, as well as his economic interest in the Court of Survey being conducted, the Farmer is thereby similarly transformed into an official—the Bailiff—whose identity is predicated by his expertise rather than his interests.²⁵ When he announces his desire to become a professional surveyor as well (p. 32), the Farmer correlates the social claims of surveying—its ability to settle disputes objectively—with its professional foundation as a set of transferable skills and an acquirable body of knowledge.

As the Surveyor conducts his survey over the course of Books 3 and 4, he and the Bailiff engage in a series of knowledge transactions.²⁶ Along with other freeholder tenants, the Bailiff supplies the Surveyor with the information he requires for his survey as they accompany him on his perambulation of the manor in the third book. In Book 4, the Surveyor converts the raw data drawn from his informants into geometrically determined 'plots', abstracting the land from the

¹⁸ Robert Brenner, 'Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe', in T.H. Aston and C.H.E. Philpin (eds), *The Brenner Debate: Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 47.

¹⁹ Brenner, 'The Agrarian Roots of European Capitalism', *Brenner Debate*, p. 214. The point of reference for discussions of agrarian capitalism is, of course, Marx's analysis of 'primitive accumulation' in volume 1 of *Capital* (see *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, volume one*, trans. Ben Fowkes [Harmondsworth, 1976], pp. 873–913). Richard Halpern provides an invaluable analysis of Marx's critical paradigm in *The Poetics of Primitive Accumulation: English Renaissance Culture and the Genealogy of Capital* (Ithaca, NY, 1991), esp. 1–15 and 61–100.

²⁰ Bartolovich, 'Boundary Disputes', p. 30.

²¹ I am drawing on Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge, 1977) and Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford, 1977), pp. 128–35.

²² Ellen Meiksins Wood, *The Origin of Capitalism* (New York, 1999), p. 45.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 45; on this point, also see Brenner, 'Agrarian Class Structure'.

²⁴ Professionalism is a topic that has only recently begun to receive critical attention, and my own analysis is indebted to Eric Ash's illuminating discussion of 'expert mediators' in *Power, Knowledge, and Expertise in Elizabethan England* (Baltimore, 2004). For an extended discussion, also see Edward Gieskes's *Representing the Professions: Administration, the Law, and Theater in Early Modern England* (Newark, DE, 2006).

²⁵ In another instance correlating professionalism and objectivity, the Lord is angered by what he perceives as the unwarranted impartiality of the Surveyor, who will provide an indifferent account both to tenants and the landlord employing him (p. 65).

²⁶ This term derives from Lisa Jardine and William Sherman, 'Pragmatic Readers: Knowledge Transactions and Scholarly Services in Late Elizabethan England', in Anthony Fletcher and Peter Roberts (eds), *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 102.

verbal context of dialogue and negotiation. Dialogue remains integral even in this section, however, with Book 4 depicting a reciprocal exchange, a pedagogical context in which the Surveyor instructs the Bailiff in the rudiments of triangulation and land measurement. The legitimacy of the Surveyor's craft is ensured through its replication; the fact that the Bailiff could conduct his own survey and arrive at the same results confirms the status of surveying as an objective body of knowledge, instrumental in character and transferable in its applications. Surveying, in this context, functions merely as a closed system, one that deals exclusively with questions of measurement, calculation, and the gathering of information.

But the rules of this language game shift when the Bailiff presses for the referential content of the survey, that is, the monetary value assessed to individual plots of land. It is at this point that the Bailiff's identity is reconstituted once more: no longer a professional officer of the manor, he becomes, instead, a 'stranger' in the dominions of his Lord. Shifting to the third-person, the Surveyor declaims that 'he is no true Surveyor for the Lord, that will make the same known to strangers' (p. 144). Even though, he notes, 'there are some things which may be public', others are to be insistently kept 'private, and to be concealed', even from the professional managers of the estate (p. 145). Withholding the property values from the Bailiff, the Surveyor advises him to consult another surveying manual and improve his technical knowledge rather than inquire into matters beyond his concern (p. 145). To preserve rights of property, the content of the survey must remain concealed.

Norden's recommendation is in keeping with the institutional secrecy that surrounded the production and dissemination of early modern surveys, documents that in most cases did not circulate among a wider audience. As J.B. Harley has noted, early modern mapping was a technology whose value was contingent on the secrecy of its information.²⁷ The survey functioned not only as an instrument of capital, used to assess and assign value, but also as a form of capital itself, albeit one whose value depended on the concealment rather than the circulation of its contents. In practice, early modern surveyors had their own capital interest in preserving the secrecy of their surveys: unbeknownst to the tenants providing them with information, surveyors could claim for themselves any previously 'concealed lands' that they had uncovered in the course of their work.²⁸

Even as this information is withheld from him, the Bailiff's curiosity about land values testifies to the final transformation he has undergone over the course of the text. By seeing the land in terms of value, and in relation to fluctuating terms determined by market conditions, the Bailiff assimilates himself to an emergent logic of agrarian capital. But even as he embraces the market so fully,

²⁷ Harley, 'Silences and Secrecy: The Hidden Agenda of Cartography in Early Modern Europe', *Imago Mundi* 40 (1988): 61. For a related discussion, see my chapter 'Forgetting the Ulster Plantation', in *England's Internal Colonies: Class, Capital, and the Literature of Early Modern English Colonialism* (New York, 2003), esp. pp. 187–8.

²⁸ Kerridge, *Agrarian Problems*, p. 27.

he is denied access to any knowledge of its workings. Book 4 concludes with the Surveyor dropping a bombshell on the Bailiff and informing him that the survey has in fact ascertained his poor job performance, that he has not 'been so careful and provident for the Lord's profit' (p. 145). It is this revelation that provides the context for Book 5, the longest dialogue in the text, in which the Surveyor instructs the Bailiff on the latest techniques for improving agricultural production: soil management, including irrigation and drainage, the planting of hedges, trees, and forests, and the production of agricultural commodities for a national market.

The Country and the City

Books 5 and 6 of *The Surveyor's Dialogue* have remained the most overlooked portions of a text that is itself read far too selectively. But these final two dialogues provide invaluable accounts of the social effects of emergent market relations in agrarian England. In Book 5, the Surveyor's description of techniques of agricultural improvement creates a framework of a national market, one that denaturalizes local customs by comparing them to other regions, thereby offering a mode of analysis that enables a transition to agricultural production for the market. Book 6 consists of the Surveyor's encounter with a Purchaser of Land, a freeholder tenant who had earlier appeared as a member of the Jury for the Court of Survey. Moreover, these final books—like the text as a whole—are significant in terms of what they do not discuss, particularly in terms of two key omissions: Norden's steadfast refusal to acknowledge the Midland Rising, a popular rebellion occurring at the same time he was initially composing his text in 1607, and his scant reference to the practices of enclosure that were at the center of ongoing disputes in the Midlands and elsewhere.

A National Market

Drawing on his background as a writer of devotional texts,¹ Norden concludes Book 6 on an apocalyptic note, envisaging the demise of the values associated with agrarian culture.² The dominance of market relations is likened to the spread of disease: All that is solid melts into air, and the erosion of boundaries separating agrarian England from its urban counterpart ensures that neither region is able

¹ Norden wrote 24 devotional texts, the most popular of which was *A pensieve mans practise* (London, 1586). This text, which went through 17 editions by 1640, was augmented with second and third parts in later editions (*The pensieve mans practise. The second part. Or the pensieve mans complaint and comfort* [1593] and *A progress of pietie, being the third part of the Pensieve mans practice* [1598]). For discussion, see Alfred W. Pollard, 'The Unity of John Norden: Surveyor and Religious Writer', *The Library* 7, 3 (1926): 233–52 and Frank Kitchen, 'Cosmo-Choro-Polygrapher', pp. 152–73. Kitchen also provides a bibliography of Norden's religious writings (pp. 349–63).

² Norden himself traversed urban as well as rural contexts, with much of his personal and professional life centered on London. A longtime resident of Middlesex, his map and description of that region was the most successful volume in his *Speculum Britanniae* series (*Speculum Britanniae. The first parte of an historிக்கal description of Middlesex* [London, 1593]). He also composed several maps of London, including maps of the City and Westminster in his *Middlesex* volume, along with two later maps: *The view of London bridge from east to west* (London, 1597; republished in 1624) and *Civitas Londoni* (London, 1600).

to fend off this decay (p. 201). Contradicting this concluding sermon, however, Norden's text as a whole attests to the economic interdependence of rural, seemingly neofeudal England and its emergent urban counterpart, the rapidly sprawling metropolis of London. It illustrates the ways that the formation of capital creates the conditions for an 'unprecedented kind of *internal* market',³ a circuit of production and circulation that elides boundaries separating rural from urban markets. In this context, the housewives of Hertfordshire and Middlesex produce their goods for the London market, 'as they do all other vendible things else' (p. 165), and even an object like a fish-pond, traditionally associated with the pleasures of rustic retreat, becomes a commodity 'vented very beneficially' to an urban clientele (p. 173). Literalizing the eroding grounds of regional distinction, Norden notes that the land itself has become transformed and associated with mobility and commodification, with rural soil and limestone transported to London while the city's waste is taken to its western suburbs for conversion to compost (p. 181).

A figure of uncertain provenance, the Surveyor himself embodies the distinctive placelessness that accompanies capital formation. It is never stipulated, after all, where the Surveyor has come from, where his home is located, or where he will be employed next. Lacking ties to any region or locality, the Surveyor instead brings with him a national frame of reference.⁴ This changing sense of place is a perspective that is increasingly shared by the Farmer/Bailiff, whose shifting social position—as he moves from tenant farmer to manorial official to aspiring surveyor—is marked by a growing knowledge acquired through extensive domestic travel.⁵ Assuming the universalized position of the professional subject,⁶ the Bailiff begins to refer to the customs of his 'country' (p. 188) as customs—as local, subjective, and open to reform and improvement. Those tenants who oppose such innovations become associated, in his mind, with 'country willfulness' (p. 151): the refusal to comply with the new terms of the market is reinscribed as a stubborn adherence to an outmoded sense of regional specificity.

Norden's Surveyor imagines the nation as a serialized, interlocking network of localities, and his analysis is insistently comparative, drawing analogies from the practices and commodities of other regions: the price of wheat at Royston, Hertfordshire (p. 23); the unit of measurement used in Shippon, Berkshire

³ Wood, *Origin of Capitalism*, p. 40.

⁴ The most influential discussion of Norden in the context of English nationhood is Richard Helgerson's 'The Land Speaks' essay, included in his *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago, 1992), pp. 107–47. But whereas Helgerson links mapping and surveying with a sense of the particularity of place, my own discussion emphasizes the abstracting power of market relations.

⁵ The Farmer mentions having traveled to London, where he saw surveyors advertising their services (p. 24), and later reveals knowledge of Somerset (p. 182) as well as the problem of flooding in the East Anglian Fenlands (p. 150); these details counter his later self-deprecating remark that 'I have been no great traveller' (p. 165).

⁶ On this point, see Sukanya Banerjee, *Becoming Imperial Citizens: Indians in the Late-Victorian Empire* (Durham, NC, 2010).

(p. 58); the practices of inheritance found in Kilmersdon, Somerset (p. 94); the production of cider in Devon (p. 164). The emergence of a national market in turn leads to the creation of regional specialization, with the commodities of a region increasingly standing in for the lost distinctiveness of local identity. In representing a national market, Norden additionally transforms the model of exchange, moving away from a local, customary basis to a generalized abstraction of a national market. He therefore advocates the standardization of units of measurement, for example (p. 142); in order to facilitate the movement of goods between regions, any quaint customs and practices that impede the circulation of commodities are seen as expendable.⁷

The creation of a national market is therefore also predicated by its exclusions. Norden's text never mentions Scotland, for instance, and contains few references either to Wales (pp. 164, 180) or areas of the North Country (pp. 99, 102). If the market creates a network linking together the nation's constituent 'countries', those regions excluded from economic development are also excised from the mental map of the nation.⁸ However, demonstrating how inclusion in the national market is not solely a demographic factor attributable to agricultural output, an odd feature of the text is that it never even mentions the Midlands. Norden's image of England has an absent geographic center, and his discussion omits an entire swath of the nation: Oxfordshire, Warwickshire, Northamptonshire, Leicestershire, Nottingham, Rutland, Huntingdonshire, Bedfordshire.⁹ There was no economic justification for this exclusion, since the Midlands constituted one of the most commercially viable and productive areas of the country.¹⁰ Nor did this exemption result from Norden's professional specialization, for while he was employed most

⁷ Appropriately, Norden was the first cartographer to indicate roads on his maps when he included this feature as part of his county map of Cornwall (*Speculi Britanniae Pars: A Topographical and Historical Description of Cornwall* [London, 1728]). In addition, one of Norden's most popular texts, *England An Intended Guyde, for English Travellers* (London, 1625), consisted of a series of charts marking distances between towns in each county, while a general chart providing distances between towns in England and Wales was sold as a separate broadside (*A table shewing the distances betweene all the Cities and Shire Townes of England* [London, 1625]). For discussion of Norden's 'road maps,' see Garrett A. Sullivan, *The Drama of Landscape: Land, Property, and Social Relations on the Early Modern Stage* (Stanford, 1998), pp. 129–34.

⁸ Literal markets—that is, market towns—were likewise unevenly distributed throughout England and Wales, with the greatest concentration in the southwest (Dorset, Somerset, Gloucestershire) and southeast (Suffolk, Kent) (Thirsk [ed.], *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, vol. 4, p. 496).

⁹ Norden provides a thorough survey of agricultural practices in England, referring to 30 of 39 counties in the course of his text. Significantly, eight of the nine counties not mentioned in his text are located in the Midlands.

¹⁰ Thirsk (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, vol. 4, p. 496.

often in the West Country and Home Counties, he worked on several occasions in the Midlands as well.¹¹

The Midland Rising

There was a more direct reason for Norden's omission of the Midlands from his view of England's national market. As he composed his text in 1607, one of the largest agrarian protests of the early modern period—the Midland Rising—was taking place throughout the region. What had begun that April as a series of protests against the enclosure of arable land by large landowners in Northamptonshire soon grew into a mobilization of more than 1,000 rioters. Over the next two months this rebel group conducted a series of attacks against enclosures, and expanded their activities throughout Warwickshire and Leicestershire before being violently suppressed by the local militia on 8 June.¹² Acknowledging the significance of the Midland Rising counters the assumption that early modern England lacked any major instances of popular revolt in the century from the 1540s to the 1640s. On the contrary, approximately 125 enclosure-riots took place in the Jacobean period alone.¹³ The Midland Rising was the largest, most organized, and most sustained of these efforts. It was also a protest distinctive for its ideological foundation. By casting themselves as 'Diggers' in their seizure of commons, the rioters articulated a model of popular protest, a precedent that would later be consciously invoked by Gerrard Winstanley and other radicals in the 1640s and 1650s.¹⁴

Previous discussions of Norden's text have noted that the Rising occurred roughly around the time that *The Surveyor's Dialogue* was first published.¹⁵ But this context is more than a coincidence, and Norden in fact wrote his text in the months

¹¹ Norden would have been especially acquainted with Northamptonshire. His description of the county, begun in 1591 under the direction of Lord Burghley and intended for inclusion among his proposed series of county maps, was published posthumously as *Speculi Britanniae Pars Altera: Or, a Delineation of Northamptonshire* (London, 1720). Norden also surveyed estates in Huntingdonshire and Leicestershire, although in 1619, a year after the publication of the third and final edition of *The Surveyor's Dialogue* (Kitchen, 'Cosmo-Choro-Polygrapher', pp. 23–31, 388, 400).

¹² On the Midland Rising, see Steve Hindle, 'Imagining Insurrection in Seventeenth-Century England: Representations of the Midland Rising of 1607', *History Workshop* 66 (2008): 21–61; Roger B. Manning, *Village Revolts: Social Protest and Popular Disturbances in England, 1509–1640* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 82–107; and Martin, *Feudalism to Capitalism*, pp. 161–79.

¹³ Manning, *Village Revolts*, p. 82.

¹⁴ James Holstun, *Ehud's Dagger: Class Struggle in the English Revolution* (London, 2002), pp. 372, 382.

¹⁵ See Bartolovich, 'Boundary Disputes', p. 33 and Klein, *Maps and the Writing of Space*, p. 59.

following these events.¹⁶ He therefore omits any reference to the Rising in order to suppress the memory of a context whose implications threaten to undermine his entire project.¹⁷ But the Rising nonetheless manifests itself within the text, often in vague allusions such as the references to unspecified forms of 'disorder' and 'complaints' that pervade the first dialogue with the Farmer (p. 35). The text's gaps often take on a willfully perverse form: when Norden's Surveyor includes a sample document of a precept calling a jury of tenants to the manorial court, he dates his letter 3 June, with the court to open 10 June 1607, the same week as the bloody skirmish that ended the Midland Rising (p. 83). In other words, Norden deliberately sets his dialogues at exactly the same time as the Midland Rising, insistent to have business carry on as usual in Beauland Manor, undisturbed by the most tumultuous events in agrarian England during the Jacobean period.¹⁸

The context of the Midland Rising bears on the text in other ways as well. Given Norden's flourishing second career as the writer of popular devotional tracts, many of which appealed to a nonconformist audience, it is surprising to find that he generally avoids theological topics in *The Surveyor's Dialogue*. But because the ideological program of the Rising was one of militant Protestantism, such references possessed a dangerous topicality. In the second book, for example, the Lord dismisses the Surveyor's infusion of religious language as something that 'digress[es] from our present matter' (p. 67) and grows increasingly uncomfortable with the implications of the Surveyor's use of scripture.¹⁹ At the conclusion of that book, the Lord reminds his interlocutor that he has 'heard all thy discourse with patience', and also grumbles that 'there is no comfort in a discontented people' (p. 77). Ultimately, however, the Lord has little cause for concern; even though the Surveyor draws on scripture to curtail the actions of landowners—to be moderate in enforcing forfeitures, for example (p. 61)—he most often directs his biblical citations against tenants, as when he warns that God will punish them if they lie or withhold information from the survey (pp. 33, 85).

¹⁶ Although the 1607 edition's dedicatory epistle to Robert Cecil is signed 1 January 1607 (sig. A4), one must keep in mind that the New Year began on 25 March in the early modern period, and that the text would therefore have been completed by 1 January 1608, more than six months after the violent suppression of the Midland Rising.

¹⁷ My discussion draws on Pierre Macherey, *A Theory of Literary Production* (1966; London, 1978), esp. pp. 85–9.

¹⁸ The second-largest anti-enclosure riot of the period, in Ladbroke, Warwickshire, also took place during the first week of June 1607 (Manning, *Village Revolts*, p. 82). This event is additionally noteworthy due to the involvement of a local landowner, William Shakespeare. For discussion of the impact of these events on Shakespeare's drama, see Richard Wilson, 'Against the Grain: Representing the Market in *Coriolanus*', *The Seventeenth Century* 6 (1991): 111–48.

¹⁹ In Book 1, the Surveyor similarly objects to the Farmer's application of scripture to 'matters of politic and civil society' (p. 28).

Enclosure

Although the literature of agrarian complaint is often seen as an Elizabethan phenomenon, the practices of enclosure that were critiqued in these texts persisted—and even accelerated—throughout the Jacobean period.²⁰ One of the more glaring omissions in *The Surveyor's Dialogue* is that the text—in its first published version from 1607, at least—contains only one reference to enclosure. Even in this instance, Norden imagines enclosure merely as a localized and instrumental strategy for land improvement, one that he lists alongside the building of hedges and watercourses. Moreover, instead of associating enclosure with the threat of depopulation, of tenants uprooted from the land, Norden isolates this practice to the conversion of 'wastes and unprofitable commons' to agricultural use and production (p. 90).²¹ Early modern complaint literature had diagnosed enclosure as a systematic practice that was being implemented on an unprecedented scale throughout England. Norden, by contrast, distances his own dialogue from this literary tradition of protest and social debate, and confines the topic, instead, to a private, commercial sphere of individual landlords making improvements to their property. In addition, Norden resituates the geographic location of the text, transposing it from the Midlands—the site of ongoing, active resistance to the conversion of land to pasture—to the arable farming regions of the West Country and Home Counties. He thereby creates a pacified space, one associated with improvement and cultivation rather than depopulation and enclosure, a solitary landscape populated by free commercial farmers and unencumbered by social conflict.

Commons and Cottagers

But the wastes that Norden associates with innocuous reclamation efforts were themselves sites of contestation and protest, especially in the Jacobean period, when nearly half of land disputes centered on the appropriation of wastes and commons for private use.²² Moreover, these areas were not unpopulated but instead home to the most destitute and marginal classes of manorial society, especially the cottagers who resided in the undeveloped, outlying areas of estates.²³ Significantly,

²⁰ McRae provides a comprehensive survey of sixteenth-century complaint literature and its relation to agrarian reform in *God Speed the Plough*, pp. 23–57.

²¹ As Ellen Wood notes, 'enclosure' broadly refers to the extinction of common and customary use rights, and is not limited to the physical fencing-in of a plot of land (*Origin of Capitalism*, p. 83). For a similar point, see Martin, *Feudalism to Capitalism*, p. 132.

²² Manning, *Village Revolts*, p. 84. Norden himself wrote an unpublished treatise on this topic: see 'Reasons to prove that the inclosing of Wasts [*sic*] and Common Forest grounds and chases are Lawful, Profitable [and] Necessarie to the King and people' (1612), British Library, Additional MS 38445, ff. 5–9.

²³ For discussion of early modern cottagers, see Netzloff, *England's Internal Colonies*, pp. 204–10. J.M. Neeson discusses the later history of these groups in *Commoners: Common Right, Enclosure and Social Change in England, 1700–1820* (Cambridge, 1993).

cottagers and smallholding tenants, those groups most vulnerable to enclosure and the privatization of commons, comprised the mass of participants in the Midland Rising. Whereas most surveying manuals, as Andrew McRae has noted, are characterized by 'their distinct *lack of people*',²⁴ *The Surveyor's Dialogue* is exceptional in extending its purview even to the social role of cottagers. In Book 3, during his circuit of the manor's boundaries, the Surveyor overrides the Bailiff's suggestion that cottagers be omitted from the survey, rebutting the latter's view of this group as a temporary presence and unprofitable feature of the landscape (p. 124). But Norden includes the cottagers in his survey in order to press that they 'be reformed by the Lord of the Manor' (p. 99). Altering their social position, he transforms them from customary tenants to squatters illegally occupying the fringes of the Lord's property. He also reconstitutes their social identity, recasting them as 'savages' removed from civil society (p. 99). The commons, as well as the displaced populations inhabiting these spaces, are rendered as antithetical to stable manorial society, a strategy necessary to elide the kinds of displacement and uneven development that are byproducts of the formation of capital.

State and 'Common weale'

Opposition to enclosure was also shared by the English state, which attempted to forestall these changes through statutes limiting enclosure and depopulation.²⁵ As a result, the interests of the state and customary tenants were often aligned against those of large landowners. This was the case with the Midland Rising, as rioters petitioned the central government to intervene on their behalf and curb the actions of local landowners. Ultimately, though, the English state sided with local officials and sanctioned the violent suppression of the revolt.²⁶ The protests of the Midland Rising were directed primarily against large landowners who were members of the traditional rural gentry. Norden's text, by contrast, depicts smaller landholders resorting to enclosure as a way of maximizing production and increasing their social standing, and he is unusual in that he places blame solely on ambitious tenants, freeholders who have become 'powerful and mighty' by appropriating commons 'without the Lord's license' (p. 89). As they disrupt traditional hierarchies and become middlemen in the manorial economy, these social climbing tenants take

²⁴ McRae, 'Husbandry Manuals', p. 42.

²⁵ On the failure of state efforts to regulate enclosure, see Tawney, *Agrarian Problem*, pp. 313–400.

²⁶ The English state finally chose to act following the Rising, and brought charges against several of the enclosing landowners who had been targeted by the rioters. (See Edwin F. Gay, 'The Midland Revolt and the Inquisitions of Depopulation, 1607', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 18 [1904]: 195–244.) Although the Rising had attempted to act in the name of the state, and create a popular mechanism for enforcing violations of the statutory prohibition of depopulation, the state enforced its own laws only once these unsanctioned agents of their authority had been delegitimized and punished.

on the traits of their former masters and are likened to the enclosing magnate, the aristocratic landowner conventionally cast as the villain of agrarian society: as the Earl of Leicester had memorably phrased it, 'I am like the ogre in the old tale, and have eaten up all my neighbors'.²⁷ By correlating enclosure with social mobility, Norden critiques this practice without diagnosing its underlying causes.

During his career as a professional surveyor, Norden's most prestigious and lucrative assignments were for the English state rather than private landowners.²⁸ Given this personal history, it is surprising that he makes relatively few references to the state's intervention in agrarian and manorial relations. In representing Beauland Manor as 'a little Commonwealth' (p. 34), a microcosm of the body politic, manorial society becomes a state unto itself, and the text rarely refers to a social world or public authority outside the social unit of the manor. But when Norden revised his text for its third edition in 1618, he added a second reference to enclosure, a passage that marks a significant shift from his earlier position. Rather than isolating these changes to waste areas, he depicts enclosure as producing wide-scale 'devastation' (p. 172). Moreover, contradicting his insistently privatized view of economic relations, he also voices support for recent statutes that attempted to curb enclosure (p. 172).

This reference to enclosure is one of several changes that Norden made to Book 5 for the final 1618 edition of *The Surveyor's Dialogue*.²⁹ Another significant revision is a passage that immediately precedes his allusion to the 'devastation' of enclosure, one in which Norden uses the same term to describe the effects of deforestation (p. 171). The rapid and unprecedented disappearance of England's forests was one of the most visible changes to the rural landscape in the early modern period.³⁰ Earlier in the text, the Bailiff estimates that two-thirds of the forests in his region had been cut down within the preceding 20 years alone

²⁷ Qtd in Maurice Dobb, *Studies in the Development of Capitalism* (New York, 1947), p. 227.

²⁸ For discussion of Norden's professional work for the state, particularly as Chief Surveyor of the Duchy of Cornwall beginning in 1605, see Kitchen, 'John Norden ... Estate Surveyor, Topographer, County Mapmaker, and Devotional Writer': 51–6 and Heather Lawrence, 'John Norden and his Colleagues: Surveyors of Crown Lands,' *The Cartographic Journal* 22 (1985): 54–6.

²⁹ Some changes are far less bold: in his Preface, for instance, Norden tempers his critique of ambitious freeholders and declares his intention to 'caution' them (1618) rather than demand a 'prevention' of abuses (1607, 1610) (p. 8). Other, more neutral revisions include an added paragraph outlining the duties of the manorial court in Book 3 (p. 105) and a reference to Varro and Roman practices of soil management in Book 5 (p. 173). For a list of variations among the editions, see the Textual Notes.

³⁰ For discussion of early modern deforestation, see the work of Oliver Rackham, especially *History of the Countryside* (London, 1986) and *Trees and Woodland in the British Landscape* (London, 1976). Peter Linebaugh offers a wide-ranging survey of political responses to ecological change in *The Magna Carta Manifesto: Liberties and Commons for All* (Berkeley, 2008).

(p. 165). In contrast to the visible effects of enclosure, and the vocal protests it elicited, deforestation is characterized by an absence. The disappearance of trees from the landscape brings about a comparable vacuum at the level of discourse, an inability to represent the magnitude and implications of such radical changes to the physical environment. This impasse provokes an important shift in the tenor of Norden's text. Initially, forests had been conceptualized solely in terms of their commodity form as timber, with the Surveyor instructing the Bailiff how to enumerate trees and underwoods in order to calculate the profit they could generate (p. 122). But a dawning awareness of the effects of deforestation leads to a search for alternative models of value.

It is at this point that Norden seeks recourse in a classical tradition of husbandry, a literary framework that serves to counter his general endorsement of a market-driven ethos of agricultural improvement. In part, the citation of Roman models enables Norden to reintroduce the state as the overriding authority responsible for managing agrarian change, and he follows classical precedent in recommending the appointment of public officials to serve as consuls, or forest wardens, to 'have charge of the Woods' (p. 171). But, he adds, citing Virgil's fourth *Eclogue*, 'Si [canimus] silvas, silvae [sint] consule dignae' ['If our song is of the woodland, let the woods be worthy of a consul'].³¹ Virgilian pastoral, a tradition hinging on the simultaneity of pleasurable rustic retreat and 'the threat of loss and eviction', provides a rubric through which to articulate a eulogistic critique of the intrinsic losses that accompany an ethos of agrarian improvement.³²

Countering the insistently privatized context that defines manorial relations throughout the text, it is the loss of England's forests, and the absence of the kind of public space they represent, that necessitates a reimagining of the commons. And the form this representation takes is that of the 'common weale': the common good, or public interest, but also the common wealth, the profits that rightly belong to the public domain.³³ These references fall into three main categories in the text: A number invoke the commonwealth as a way of describing 'profit', and consequently figure the nation primarily in terms of a national market. In other instances, the term relates to a model of professionalism based on public service rather than private employment and patronage; such 'Surveyors of the Commonwealth' (p. 17) represent an outside legal authority able to arbitrate disputes within the privatized sphere of the manor (pp. 8, 30). Lastly, other

³¹ Virgil, *Eclogue 4*, l. 3 (*Virgil, I: Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid I–VI*, H. Rushton Fairclough (trans.), Loeb Classical Library [Cambridge, MA, 1999], p. 49).

³² Williams, *Country and the City*, p. 17; also see Heather Dubrow, *Shakespeare and Domestic Loss: Forms of Deprivation, Mourning, and Recuperation* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 80–141. For a related discussion, see Joan Thirsk, 'Making a Fresh Start: Sixteenth-Century Agriculture and the Classical Inspiration', in *Culture and Cultivation in Early Modern England*, pp. 15–34. Elsewhere in the text Norden paraphrases Ovid's *Heroides* as a way of memorializing the effects of deforestation: 'Iam seges est ubi quercus erat' ['now are fields of corn where woods once stood'] (p. 104 and n. 112).

³³ See the Index for a full list of textual citations of 'commonwealth'.

allusions to the commonwealth invoke this idea when referring to local, private violations of the public good, from illegal cottages (p. 98) and poaching (p. 103) to enclosure (p. 172) and deforestation (p. 171).

The reintroduction of a social discourse of the commonwealth is one of the most significant features of Book 5 of *The Surveyor's Dialogue*. It is perhaps appropriate that this political language finds its place in the section of the text concerned most fully with the use of the land. In the overlapping political and agrarian registers of this section, Norden's text illustrates an example of what Julian Yates has productively termed as 'agentive drift'.³⁴ Moving away from the image with which we began, the model of surveying found in the Rathborne frontispiece, the subject of the text no longer remains the solitary surveyor asserting his centrality through an instrumental authority over technology. Instead, the surveyor and his interlocutors themselves assume an instrumental position, and are situated as the stewards of a social body and physical landscape left in their care.³⁵ The political thus becomes coterminous with what we would now describe as the 'environmental'.³⁶ In this context, property is no longer figured as the right *over* things, but as the rights *of* things,³⁷ a transition that enables a different set of questions to be posed relating to the reciprocal obligations binding subject and object in the creation of a social body.

³⁴ Julian Yates, 'Towards a Theory of Agentive Drift; Or, A Particular Fondness for Oranges in 1597', *Parallax* 22 (2002): 47–58.

³⁵ On ideas of stewardship, see Sullivan, *The Drama of Landscape*.

³⁶ On this issue, see Michel Serres, *The Natural Contract* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1995), esp. pp. 42–6, and Bruno Latour, *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy* (Cambridge, MA, 2004).

³⁷ See Thompson, 'Custom', p. 135. (Thompson derives this point from volume 2 of Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England*.)

The Text of this Edition

Copy-Text

The copy-text used for this edition is the 1618 version of *The Surveyor's Dialogue*, the third and final edition published in Norden's lifetime.¹ Emendations and corrections to the copy-text have been placed within square brackets in the text. Textual variations—in which the 1618 edition differs from its predecessors—are also marked within square brackets. All emendations and variations among the early modern editions are listed in the Textual Notes. Two of the most significant revisions that Norden made to the 1618 edition—added references to enclosure and deforestation—are discussed above (pp. xxxviii–xxxix).

Orthography

This edition provides the first modern-spelling version of the entire text of *The Surveyor's Dialogue*. The intention, first and foremost, has been to produce a copy of the text that will extend its reception to a wider audience. The 1618 edition is unnecessarily difficult to read due to its orthographic inconsistencies, particularly relating to place names and technical terms. Readers interested in consulting the text in its original, early modern form can easily find digitalized, downloadable copies of all three early modern editions in the EEBO (Early English Books Online) database; a printed facsimile version of the 1618 edition is also available as part of the English Experience series.

Typography

This edition follows the 1618 text in using italic font for such features as speech prefixes, place names, and technical terms. In order to make the text more readable, italic font has been removed from the speeches of the Surveyor's interlocutors and Book 3's list of the components of a Court of Survey. Any errors in the 1618 edition resulting from missing or misplaced type have been corrected as well. All changes are noted in the Textual Notes section.

¹ The specific copy of the 1618 text used for this edition is the facsimile version available in the English Experience series (Amsterdam and Norwood, NJ, 1979). That text derives from the Cambridge University copy (Syn.7.61.77), but draws the pages of Book 6 (sigs. R4r–S4v) from the Bodleian Library copy (4^o.B.32 Art).