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Theodore B. Leinwand  
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This innovative study examines emotional responses to socio-economic pressures as they are revealed in early modern English plays, historical narratives and biographical accounts. These texts yield fascinating insights into the various, often unpredictable, ways in which people coped with the exigencies of credit, debt, mortgaging and capital ventures. Plays discussed include Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* and *Timon of Athens*, Jonson's *The Alchemist* and Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*. They are paired with writings by and about the finances of the corrupt Earl of Suffolk, the privateer Walter Raleigh, the royal agent Thomas Gresham, theatre entrepreneur James Burbage, and the Lord Treasurer Lionel Cranfield. Leinwand's new readings of these texts discover a blend of affect and cognition concerning finance that includes nostalgia, anger, contempt, embarrassment, tenacity, bravado and humility.

Theodore B. Leinwand is Professor in the Department of English at the University of Maryland, and author of *The City Staged: Jacobean Comedy, 1603–1613* (1986). He is editor of *Michaelmas Term* in the forthcoming *Collected Works of Thomas Middleton*, and has published essays in *PMLA*, *ELH*, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, *Shakespeare Studies* and *Women's Studies*.

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For Joan

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## Acknowledgments

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Finding my way into this book has entailed some felicitous false starts. Several essays in which I explored ways people high and low on the early modern English social ladder negotiated the distances that separated them were meant to grow into a book. They appeared in print but never coalesced because I seemed to have said as much as I had to say, and because my own thesis – my allegiance to the concept of negotiation – had begun rather predictably, and so tediously, to drive my argument. There followed an introduction to a book on Jacobean London's middling sort, those who were climbing on the intermediate rungs of the ladder. I began with Shakespeare and I had planned to move on to Jonson, Middleton, Heywood and so on – precisely the playwrights who figure in *Theatre, finance and society*. But once again, a project founded upon what distinguishes diverse socio-economic sorts failed to sustain my interest. Perhaps increasing age, perhaps a small but unmistakable move to the right, were abetting a turn in my attention from distinction to affiliation. In any case, I found myself more and more attracted to the notion that constraints and opportunities, pressures and pleasures, pertain at every rung on the ladder. Consequently I have found it more interesting to discover the precise, not the opposed, ways a peddler and a royal agent cope with the need for credit.

Finding my way into this book has been, then, not really a climb but a walk along an unforeseen path. Most of the progress I made took place at the Folger Shakespeare Library. It is difficult for me to imagine a better place to go about one's business. When I did take to the road, I profited from responses I got at the City University of New York Graduate Center, at the Strode Center at the University of Alabama, at several Shakespeare Association of America meetings, and at the Sixteenth Century Studies Conference. The University of Maryland has supported me with a General Research Board fellowship and my colleagues in the English department invited me to present a first draft of the first chapter at one of our Renaissance Reckonings.

In the past, I have tried to repay some of the personal debts I have



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incurred while wrestling with notions like the middling sort and negotiation. Here, I want to thank those who have either helped me to see my final topic more clearly or encouraged me to believe that it is a subject worth pursuing. For help with a quick question, for talk over lunch, or for reading through one or more chapters, I am grateful to Jonathan Auerbach, Kent Cartwright, Neil Fraistat, Mary Fuller, Marshall Grossman, Lindsay Kaplan, Bob Levine, Beth Loizeaux, Bill Loizeaux, Nancy Maguire, David Miller, Gail Paster, David Sacks, James Siemon, and Julie Solomon. Dorothy Stephens waded through numerous pages when she had more pressing things to do. In those places where I have met her standards of argument, this book is the better for it. I came upon Elizabeth Hanson working at the Folger Library on material related to my own after I had already covered quite a bit of ground. She was and continues to be a generous and shrewd reader. While I have learned to welcome the hard questions she asks, I take comfort in the knowledge that, as often as not, she does not expect that anyone can answer them. Finally, I must acknowledge Frank Whigham, who has seen me through from start to finish. His company – his friendship and his counsel – makes for one of the chief satisfactions of doing this work.

Sarah and Jesse belong here too. Joan stands apart.