Jacob Wall

Professor Williamson

English 1302

26 January 2012

London after the Great Fire

Immediately following the Great Fire residents were filled with “anxiety, disruption, instability, and indeterminacy (6).” These four emotions, together with four fifths of London being “blown open and lost (6)” led to a common response to “view[ed] foreigners more than ever as intruders (10).” Wall explains of a story of a poor woman who was taken by a mob, accused of starting the fire, abused, and then had her breasts cut off. The records of the time, many of which were churches and pastors trying to justify the fire, either blaming it on other religions or by saying it was God showing London a lesson, as just previous to the fire was the plague that killed 97,000 individuals. The residents had a very skewed idea of what was happening, as all they knew they could rely on was those of authority from God. Gearing wrote about the suspicious back-to-back catastrophes by stating, “Death is creeping in at your houses, and entering in at your windows (32).” Robert Elborough, the minister of St. Laurence Poutney, preached “God would not withdraw the Fire of his indignation (19).” As Wall points out at the end of her writing, after the fire, Londoner’s had to not only rebuild the city but they also had “to make lived space once again known space (38).” Residents had lost all ability to recognize London as it was before, what was Pudding Lane and the other four fifths of London was mere rubble. Londoners, as she points out, wanted to rebuild the city to how it was instead of starting fresh.