UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE SANTA CATARINA
PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO EM INGLÊS:
ESTUDOS LINGUÍSTICOS E LITERÁRIOS

Alexander Martin Gross

"THE ABSTRACTS AND BRIEF CHRONICLES" OF THE CITY: SHAKESPEARE'S GLOBE TRAGEDIES AND THEIR CONDITIONS OF PERFORMANCE

Tese submetida ao Programa de Pós-Graduação em Inglês: Estudos Linguísticos e Literários da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina para a obtenção do Grau de Doutor em Letras.
Orientador: Prof. Dr. José Roberto O'Shea

Florianópolis

2016

Ficha de identificação da obra elaborada pelo autor,
através do Programa de Geração Automática da Biblioteca Universitária da UFSC.

Gross, Alexander Martin
"The abstracts and brief chronicles" of the city : Shakespeare's Globe tragedies and their conditions of performance / Alexander Martin Gross ; orientador, José Roberto O'Shea - Florianópolis, SC, 2016.
187 p.

Tese (doutorado) - Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Centro de Comunicação e Expressão. Programa de Pós Graduação em Inglês: Estudos Linguísticos e Literários.

Inclui referências

1. Inglês: Estudos Linguísticos e Literários. 2. Shakespeare. 3. Teatro Globe. 4. Condições de enceneção. 5. Literatura em contexto. I. O'Shea, José Roberto. II. Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina. Programa de Pós Graduação em Inglês: Estudos Linguísticos e Literários. III. Título.

[blank page]

Caelum non animum mutant
qui trans mare currunt
HORACE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I express my sincere gratitude to CAPES for financial support throughout my studies at UFSC, and particularly for enabling me to spend eleven months in Stratford-upon-Avon. My thanks to Prof. Michael Dobson at the Shakespeare Institute for accepting me for this important stint in Shakespeare's birthplace, where the greater part of this dissertation was written. A special mention is due to Michelle Devereux at the University of Birmingham, who was so kind and helpful throughout my stay, and during the preceding bureaucratic struggles.

I warmly thank my supervisor Dr. José Roberto O'Shea for his patience, his perspicuous insights, and his great help in taking this work in the right direction. This dissertation owes a great deal to his consistently enlightening input over the last five years.

A special word of thanks is reserved for Drª. Marlene Soares dos Santos (UFRJ), for her generous participation on the *banca* for this dissertation. Many thanks to Drª. Liana de Camargo Leão (UFPR), for reading my work so attentively once more, and for her kind comments and suggestions at the *defesa*. My experience at UFSC, from the very first day, has also been greatly enriched by the teaching, assistance, and formidably good humour of Drª. Susana Bornéo Funck. I am grateful for the kind and helpful contributions from all my teachers, colleagues, and students during these years.

I express my heartfelt thanks to Osiris and Raquel Nerone for their unfailing and continued practical and moral support throughout my time in Brazil. I am grateful to my mother, Claire, for her loving support, and particularly for her assiduous readings of my work. I thank my father, Wilfried, and Aurelia for their help and advice, and for providing a restful setting in which to write. Special thanks to my friends Ryan D'Souza, Robert Priewasser, and Richard Price, as well as my sister, Linda, and Ben for visiting me in Florianópolis.

I owe an inestimable debt of loving gratitude to Gabriela Nerone, who has been there at every step of the way over these years, and who has patiently and lovingly helped to shape this work.

In memory of Margarete Gross, who sadly passed away just before the end of this process, and who taught me so much of what I know about love, kindness, and tolerance.

Florianópolis, 22 February 2016

ON LONDON

There are two things scarce matched in the Universe–the Sun in Heaven and the Thames on Earth

Attributed to
Sir WALTER RALEIGH (1552-1618)

RESUMO

O presente estudo examina as “Grandes Tragédias” shakespearianas–*Hamlet*, *Otelo*, *Rei Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Antônio e Cleópatra*–bem como a tragédia precursora, *Júlio César*, visando à apreensão da *historicidade* dessas peças. A relação entre Literatura e História é aqui abordada a partir de uma perspectiva teórica que topicaliza as especificidades históricas e locais dos textos literários. O objetivo, portanto, é consolidar uma percepção das peças teatrais enquanto eventos históricos, no centro do palco, numa cidade e num momento cultural de grande interesse, tanto para o crítico literário como para o historiador. As peças escolhidas são tratadas como uma série–as “tragédias do Teatro Globe”–, no intuito de ressaltar um extraordinário período de estabilidade profissional e sucesso na carreira de Shakespeare. Os nove anos, entre 1599 e 1608, constituem o único período em que Shakespeare, provavelmente, escreveu *para* o Teatro Globe, local que era o foco principal da produção dramática voltada para a companhia teatral Chamberlain-King's Men. O presente estudo demonstra que as contingências do surgimento do Teatro Globe, ao lado de várias controvérsias políticas e teatrais registradas nos anos anteriores à construção do Globe, deixaram suas marcas nas peças. Ademais, características do *ethos* renascentista, o qual foi incorporado ao novo teatro, podem ser identificadas nas peças. O estudo aborda, também, momentos metateatrais, que chamam a atenção para o próprio teatro, para a cidade, ou para a sociedade onde as peças são encenadas, e que, portanto, indicam a importância do “lugar” na obra shakespeariana. Analisando diversas facetas do ambiente criativo em que Shakespeare se inseria, ao longo de três capítulos centrais, a investigação demonstra que as “tragédias do Globe” foram, inevitavelmente, moldadas pelas condições de encenação que prevaleciam em Londres entre 1599 e 1608.

Palavras-chave: Shakespeare; teatro Globe; condições de encenação; metateatro; literatura em contexto.

ABSTRACT

This study examines William Shakespeare's “Great Tragedies”–*Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Antony and Cleopatra*–and their precursor, *Julius Caesar*, with a view to apprehending their *historicity*. The relationship between literature and history is here addressed from a theoretical perspective that foregrounds the historical and local specificity of literary texts. The aim is thereby to consolidate the perception of the plays as historical events, centre-stage in a city and a cultural moment that are of great interest to the literary critic and the historian alike. The selected plays are treated as a series–the “Globe tragedies”–in order to highlight a remarkable period of professional stability and success in Shakespeare's career. The nine years between 1599 and 1608 constitute the only period in which Shakespeare can be said to have written *for* the Globe playhouse, while the venue was the primary focus of dramatic production for the Chamberlain-King's Men playing company. The present study shows that the contingent origins of the Globe, together with various political and theatrical controversies of the years immediately preceding the building of the Globe, left their mark on the plays. Likewise, traits of a Renaissance ethos, which was embodied by the new playhouse, are identified in the play texts. The study also focuses on moments of metatheatre, which draw attention to the playhouse itself, the city, or the society in which the drama is being performed, and which thus indicate the importance of “place” in Shakespeare's work. By examining various facets of Shakespeare's creative environment across three principal chapters, the study demonstrates that the Globe tragedies were ineluctably shaped by their original conditions of performance in London between 1599 and 1608.

Key words: Shakespeare; Globe theatre; conditions of performance; metatheatre; literature in context.

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 1 Map showing the playhouses and theatres superimposed on a plan of modern London. 31
Bowsher, *Shakespeare's London Theatreland*

Fig. 2 Sign of the Old Globe Theatre playhouse reconstruction in San Diego, CA. 58
www.performingartsarchive.com

Fig. 3 Arend van Buchell's copy of the drawing of the Swan playhouse (1596) by Johannes De Witt. 61
Foakes, *Illustrations of the English Stage 1580-1642*

Fig. 4 *L'Uomo Vitruviano* ("The Vitruvian Man") by Leonardo da Vinci (1490). 70
© Trustees of the British Museum

Fig. 5 Ground plan of the Roman theatre by Andrea Palladio, for Daniele Barbaro's *Commentary on Vitruvius* (1567). 71
Vitruvius, *De Architectura*

Fig. 6 London panorama entitled *Civitas Londini* (1600) by John Norden. 74
British Library

Fig. 7a Map of the City of London in the early seventeenth century (west side). 86
The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson

Fig. 7b Map of the City of London in the early seventeenth century (east side). 87
The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson

Fig. 8 Title page of *Geografia Tavole Moderne di Geografia* (1560-67) by Antonio Lafreri. 89
www.mbmaps.net

Fig. 9a Map of the world entitled *Universalis Cosmographia* (1507), by Martin Waldseemüller. 90
Library of Congress

Fig. 9b Set of gores for the production of terrestrial globes (1507), by Martin Waldseemüller. 91
Badische Landesbibliothek

Fig. 10 Title page of the 1612 edition of *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (first published 1570) by Abraham Ortelius. 93
British Library

Fig. 11 Fool's Cap World (ca. 1590). 94
Whitfield, *The Image of the World*

Fig. 12 The "Sieve Portrait" of Queen Elizabeth I, dated 1583 and attributed to Quentin Metsys the Younger. 97
Bate and Thornton, *Shakespeare: Staging the World*

Fig. 13 Title page of the 1619 edition of Gerardus Mercator's *Atlas* (first published in 1595). 100
British Library

Fig. 14 Artist's reconstruction of Bankside, ca. 1602, by Faith Vardy. 142
Bowsher, *Shakespeare's London Theatreland*

Fig. 15 Section of *Long View of London* (1647) by Wenceslaus Hollar. 143
© Trustees of the British Museum

Fig. 16 Seventeenth-century German woodcut of animal-baiting in the Fechthaus, Nürnberg. 144
Salgado, *The Elizabethan Underworld*

Fig. 17 *Going to Bankside* (ca. 1619) from Michael van Meer's friendship album. 153
Bate and Thornton, *Shakespeare: Staging the World*

LIST OF APPENDICES

1 APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 1 174

1.1 Letter from Sir Henry Wotton on the destruction of the Globe (1613) 174

3 APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 3 175

3.1 The origin of *totus mundus agit histrionem* 175

3.2 Scholarly history of the sign and motto of the Globe theatre 176

3.3 Passage from Marston's *Antonio and Mellida* 177

3.4 Facsimile extract from the first quarto of *Hamlet* (1603) 178

4 APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 4 179

4.1 Letter from Henry Carey, Lord Chamberlain, to the Lord Mayor (1594) 179

4.2 Petition to the Privy Council by Blackfriars residents (1596) 180

4.3 Title page of the first quarto of *The History of King Henry the Fourth* (1598) 181

4.4 Deposition on the lease of the Theatre site and its expiry (1600) 182

4.5 Letter from the Privy Council to the Master of the Revels (1598) 183

5 APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 5 184

5.1 Excerpt from *An Execration Upon Vulcan* by Ben Jonson (1623) 184

5.2 Title page and epigram from *The Letting of Humours Blood in the Head-Vaine* by Samuel Rowlands (1600) 185

5.3 Title page and excerpt from the 1601 English translation of Pliny's *Naturalis Historia* 186

5.4 Excerpt on stage plays from *The Anatomie of Abuses* by Phillip Stubbes (1595 ed.) 187

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

The plays of Shakespeare:

AC	*Antony and Cleopatra*
Ham	*Hamlet*
JC	*Julius Caesar*
KL	*King Lear*
Mac	*Macbeth*
Oth	*Othello*

Frequently cited works:

CBJ	Bevington, Butler, and Donaldson, eds. *Cambridge Works of Ben Jonson* (2012)
ES	Chambers. *The Elizabethan Stage* (1923)
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary* (online ed.)
Oxf	Wells and Taylor, eds. *The Oxford Shakespeare*, 2nd ed. (2005)
SAB	Ingleby, ed. *The Shakespeare Allusion-Book* (1932)
TRP	Hughes and Larkin, eds. *Tudor Royal Proclamations* (1969)
TSC	Gurr. *The Shakespeare Company* (2004)
TSS	Gurr. *The Shakespearean Stage*, 4th ed. (2009)
WS	Chambers. *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems* (1930)

LIST OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION 23

1.1 "Not of an age but for all time": Shakespeare's transcendent universalism 24

1.2 "The abstracts and brief chronicles" of the city 26

1.3 Shakespeare at the Globe 27

1.4 Survey of the period, 1599-1608 28

1.5 Dating of the plays 33

1.6 A note on procedures 37

2 A THEORETICAL RETROSPECT 40

2.1 "Return" to history 41

2.2 New Historicism 42

2.3 Cultural Materialism 45

2.4 A profusion of historicisms 47

2.5 The "New Boredom" 48

2.6 Presentism 50

2.7 Locating Shakespeare 52

2.8 Metatheatre 53

3 "LIFE'S BUT A WALKING SHADOW": THE ETHOS OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYHOUSE 56

3.1 "*Totus mundus agit histrionem*": The sign and motto of the Globe 59

3.2 "Hercules and his load": The emblem on the Globe sign 62

3.3 “This goodly frame”: *Hamlet* and the Globe playhouse 66

3.4 Vitruvius and the origins of *theatrum mundi* 69

3.5 John Dee, early English architecture, and Burbage's Theatre 75

3.6 Classical influence on the Elizabethan playhouse 77

3.7 Sidney's *Apology for Poetry* and the playhouse as heterocosm 79

3.8 Pico della Mirandola's *Oration* and the ethos of the Globe 81

3.9 “The Atlas of your spheare”: Global iconography in early modern Europe 88

3.10 “In this distracted globe”: Exploiting the symbolism of the playhouse 101

4 “ON SUCH A FULL SEA ARE WE NOW AFLOAT”: THE PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT 105

4.1 Origins of the Lord Chamberlain's Men 106

4.2 Burbage's Blackfriars venture 111

4.3 Success and controversy, 1596-97 113

4.4 The move across the Thames 117

4.5 Will Kempe's exit and Hamlet's clown 121

4.6 *Henry V*, *Julius Caesar*, and the building of the Globe 124

4.7 Shakespeare's self-promotional intertextuality 127

5 “THE GLORY OF THE BANK”: THE SOCIO-CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT 131

5.1 “Some gallèd goose of Winchester”: Prostitution in the liberties 132

5.2 “There they are as mad as he”: Shakespeare's foreign scenes 137

5.3 “Bear-like I must fight the course”: Animal-baiting 139
5.4 “To split the ears of the groundlings”: Social diversity and division at the Globe 148
5.5 “The cause of plagues are playes”: Religion, plague, and the stage 152

6 CONCLUSION 156

LIST OF REFEERENCES 161

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 1 174

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 3 175

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 4 179

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 5 184

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The discipline of studying a play is
absolutely subject to understanding
its original conditions of performance
J. L. STYAN

This dissertation addresses the relationship between literature and history from a theoretical perspective that foregrounds the historical and local specificity of literary texts. More precisely, it focuses on the importance of place in the shaping of an outstanding body of dramatic art. The study endeavours to offer a reading of Shakespeare's Globe tragedies not as transcendent works of literature celebrated for their so-called universality across time and space, but as historical events best to be understood through a study of the conditions of their conception and enactment on the London stage during the first decade of the seventeenth century. The extant printed texts are thereby considered not as sacrosanct evidence of authorial intention, but rather as valuable artefacts attesting to and providing insight into a series of plays first performed within a complex and specific political and cultural landscape. The aim is not only to verify how a reading of Shakespeare may be illuminated by the study of history, but more specifically to consolidate the perception of the plays as *part* of history, centre-stage in a city and a cultural moment that are of great interest to the literary critic and the historian alike.

An awareness of the contexts of conception and production facilitates and enlightens critical interpretation across all art forms, but particularly in the case of dramatic art, which seeks always to engage with its public and to create meaning through action and interaction. In the wake of the intrinsic approach of New Criticism during the mid-twentieth century,[1] such fundamental qualities of the medium led the theatre historian and critic J. L. Styan to assert that "the drama has always resisted the idea of itself as an impersonal operation, having its existence *in vacuo*, and did not yield to a purely semantic analysis and the assumption of determined moral values" (108). Styan and his contemporaries, among them John Russell Brown and Bernard Beckerman,[2] saw that formalist criticism "shamefully limited our understanding of major dramatic fields," and that "we must return to the source of drama, the theatre itself" (ibid.). With the critical developments that followed, contextual readings of literary works and a concerted focus on the moments of their production became the vogue, and in the case of Shakespearean drama the tireless efforts of scholars and dramatists led at long last to the realisation of a full-scale reconstruction of its source, with the opening of *Shakespeare's Globe* on London's South Bank in 1997. Notwithstanding some misguided notions of an "essential" Shakespeare–a kernel of perceived truth to be uncovered through attempted mimicry of original staging–critical interpretation and performance of the plays have broadly benefited from the attention paid to the Elizabethan playhouse. Yet I hold that there now remains–particularly outside fairly circumscribed loci of Shakespearean cultural production which profit directly from these advances–an inadequate apprehension of the historical and local specificity of Shakespeare's dramatic art.

---

[1] New Criticism is a doctrine of literary theory that rejects historiographical study as irrelevant to an understanding of the formal organisation of a literary text.

1.1. "Not of an age but for all time": Shakespeare's transcendent universalism

It is no accident that on account of a perceived quality of timeless and ubiquitous relevancy, the works of Shakespeare have proved comparatively resistant to developments in Literary Theory that have stressed the original conditions of production as a necessary point of departure. The First Folio of 1623 is the only reliable source text for many of the plays, presenting them without any modern respect for a chronological order of composition, and indeed, 155 years would pass before the appearance of Edmond Malone's *Attempt to Ascertain the Order in Which the Plays Attributed to Shakspeare Were Written*.[3] From the outset then, the Shakespeare canon may be said in the collective consciousness to have been loosely tethered to the material conditions of its author's life and times. In his dedication in the prefatory pages of the First Folio, just seven years after Shakespeare's death, Ben Jonson's famous words “not of an age but for all time” would set the tone for centuries of criticism–through Coleridge to the New Critics and beyond–that was disposed to lift his works out of the contexts of their production, elevating them to a pedestal from which an examination of those circumstances might appear simplistic. We need only to look at the work of such an esteemed scholar as Sir Edmund Chambers, author of the influential four-volume treatise *The Elizabethan Stage* (1923) and the subsequent *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problem*s (1930), to see such a tendency in even the most objective and assiduous of critics: “I do not myself believe that, apart from some passages of obvious satire in comic scenes, there is much of the topical in Shakespeare, whose mind normally moved upon quite another plane of relation to life” (*WS* 1: 67).

---

[2] Brown, *Shakespeare's Plays in Performance* (1966); Beckerman, *Dynamics of Drama* (1970).

[3] In the 1778 *Johnson-Steevens Edition* of Shakespeare's works. See "Steevens" in list of references.

At the end of the last century, literary and history studies flirted with notions of interdisciplinary research, and calls to restore texts to the conditions of their composition grew steadily. Nonetheless, the lingering impression that “Shakespeare has, almost from the beginning, been thought uniquely able to resist such readings, his putative universality rendering them almost insultingly reductive,” continued to pose a problem (Kastan, *Shakespeare After Theory* 16). Writing in 2005, the American scholar James Shapiro commented on this apparently individuated estimation of the Shakespeare canon:

> The commonplace that dramatists are best understood in relation to their time would go unquestioned if the writer in question were Euripides, Ibsen, or Beckett. But only recently has the tide begun to turn against a view of Shakespeare as a poet who transcends his age [. . .]. (*1599: A Year in the Life* vi)

During the last decade or so, the tide has indeed turned with the publication of fresh, in-depth studies of the environment in which Shakespeare wrote, such as Shapiro's *1599: A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare* (2005) and its sequel *1606: William Shakespeare and the Year of Lear* (2015), Tiffany Stern's *Making Shakespeare* (2004), Jonathan Bate's *Soul of the Age: The Life, Mind, and World of William Shakespeare* (2008), and the collaborative volume *Shakespeare in London* (Crawforth, Dustagheer, and Young, 2014). The commercial success of such offerings, among many others, reflects a growing public interest in the lesser-known historical facts pertaining to Shakespeare and his environment, as an insight into his famous works.

1.2. “The abstracts and brief chronicles” of the city

With this study I follow these recent developments and present, from a deliberately narrowed and pointedly historical perspective, a composite assessment of the physical, professional, and socio-cultural conditions that shaped Shakespeare's dramaturgy during the period in which he is thought to have written and overseen the first enactment of some of his most celebrated plays. These various categories together I call the conditions of performance, borrowing Styan's phrase: “We ask to know about the *conditions of performance* of a play in order to gain some sense of those governing factors of convention, stage and audience which guide us to the mode of experience the play's first audience underwent” (111, my emphasis). The dissertation which follows has developed from a previous work which dealt precisely with this definition of the conditions of performance, examining the way the structure, resources, and conventions of Shakespeare's theatre shaped his drama.[4] The present study moves from such a predominantly theatrical brief to a decidedly more historical perspective.

I now aim to foreground the importance of place in shaping a series of plays that are particularly susceptible to overarching universalism, the so-called “Great Tragedies” and their precursor, *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*.[5] The importance of place in shaping Shakespeare's dramatic work is a central concern of this investigation, not only in the localised sense of the specific theatrical spaces in which the plays were first enacted, but also more generally in terms of the city of London and the material and ideological conditions that may have impinged upon the conception, enactment, and reception of the plays. As such, the study aims not only to examine the impact that the specific performance space at the Globe theatre may have had on the selected plays, but also to highlight the vibrant relationship between those plays and the cultural moment in which they were first conceived and performed. For this reason, I have chosen for the title of this dissertation to adapt Hamlet's epithet for the travelling players:

---

[4] Gross, *The Role of the Globe Theatre in Shaping Shakespeare's Tragedy of Julius Caesar* (2012).

[5] Modern consensus counts *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, and *Antony and Cleopatra* as the “Great Tragedies,” as grouped by Harold Bloom in *The Invention of the Human* (1998).

> Good my lord, will you see the players well bestowed? Do ye hear?–let them be well used, for they are *the abstracts and brief chronicles* of the time. After your death you were better have a bad epitaph than their ill report while you live.
> (*Ham* 2.2.525-29, my emphasis)[6]

This study aims to confirm that, when properly apprehended, the *historicity*[7] of Shakespeare's works allows them to be seen as "the abstracts and brief chronicles" of their environment; that is to say, of the city of London in which they were conceived and first enacted.

1.3. Shakespeare at the Globe

The wider context of this study is the period of Elizabethan, Jacobean, and Caroline theatre in England between 1574 and 1642.[8] The first royal patent for a company of adult players was given in 1574, and this was followed by the first permanent London playhouse in 1576. The outbreak of the English Civil War (1642-51), meanwhile, led to a blanket ban on public playing, which "was thoroughly enforced for the next eighteen years, long enough to destroy almost all traces of Shakespearean theatre conditions and traditions" (*TSS* ix). The specific period of interest to this dissertation represents a remarkable portion of Shakespeare's career, marked by the composition and first performance of some of his most exalted works. During the nine years that his Chamberlain-King's Men theatre company spent with the Globe theatre as their principal focus of dramatic production, London audiences were entertained by new plays that included *Julius Caesar*, *As You Like It*, *Hamlet*, *Twelfth Night*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, and *Antony and*

---

[6] Quoted from *Oxf*, the copy text for this study (see note on procedures below, 37). The plural *abstracts*, as printed in the First Folio, is preferred to the singular *abstract* found in the 1604 Quarto, as it better conveys the meaning implied by the title of this study, conforming to the now rare definition of *abstract* as "a person or thing regarded as encapsulating in miniature, or representing the essence of, the characteristic qualities or features of something much larger" ("abstract, n.3" *OED*). In *AC*, Octavius calls Antony "a man who is the abstract of all faults / That all men follow" (1.4.9-10).

[7] "The fact, quality, or character of being situated in history" ("historicity, n." *OED*).

[8] Elizabeth I (r. 1558-1603); James I (r. 1603-1625); Charles I (r. 1625-1649).

Cleopatra, an extraordinary period of prolific success even in the context of a stellar career. Shapiro has called the year 1599 “perhaps *the* decisive one, in Shakespeare's development as a writer” (*1599: A Year in the Life* x), a moment that instigated a creative process that has left us with the series of plays to which we now refer as the Great Tragedies.

A core preoccupation of this study is to consider these plays as a series of events shaped by the time and space in which they were first realised, as opposed to individual works venerated for their adaptability when divorced from such contexts. A similar undertaking is found in Beckerman's classic 1962 book entitled *Shakespeare at the Globe: 1599-1609*. Beckerman succinctly states the case for studying this exceptional period of theatre history:

> [F]or us the [Globe] signifies more than a physical structure for the presentation of plays. It has become the symbol of an entire art. Its construction initiated a glorious decade during which the company achieved a level of stability and a quality of productivity rarely matched in the history of the theater. (ix)

This is followed by the perhaps overzealous assertion that “virtually all interest in the Elizabethan drama radiates from the work of these years” (ibid.). Shakespeare's early work during the 1590s, and the final collaborative years before his probable retirement (ca. 1613), as well as the careers of numerous other writers, are rich fields of study in their own right, but Beckerman rightly signals the singular fascination of the Globe years, beginning in 1599: “At this time Shakespeare […] was passing into a new phase of dramatic activity. The major tragedies were soon to come from his pen” (ibid. x).

1.4. Survey of the period, 1599-1608

Given the lack of biographical evidence, we must surmise that William Shakespeare (1564-1616), born in Stratford-upon-Avon, began his career as a playwright in the early 1590s. The earliest extant, printed allusion to Shakespeare in London is from 1592, in the pamphlet named *Greene's Groats-worth of Wit*, which was published shortly after the death of its author, the dramatist Robert Greene:

> [T]here is an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tygers heart wrapt in a Players hide*, supposes he is as well able to bumbast out a blank verse as the best of you: and being an absolute *Iohannes fac totum*, is in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a countrie. (Qtd. in *ES* 4: 241-42)[9]

Greene here alludes to a line from *1 Henry VI*, one of Shakespeare's earliest plays: “O tiger's heart wrapped in a woman's hide!” (1.4.138). He also appears to call Shakespeare an “upstart crow,” which suggests that Shakespeare was a recently established playwright in London at that time, albeit one who already posed a threat to his elders. Shakespeare's earliest attempt at a tragedy for the stage, *Titus Andronicus*, which was printed in 1594, was probably first performed in the same year as Greene's famous allusion (*Oxf* 155). In terms of tragedy, *Titus* was followed in 1594-95 by *Romeo and Juliet*, which first appeared in print in 1597, but Shakespeare's career in the 1590s was otherwise dominated by histories and comedies.

After a major realignment of London theatre companies in 1594, discussed in detail in the fourth chapter of the present study, Shakespeare became an actor and resident playwright for the Lord Chamberlain's Men playing company, which would later enjoy royal patronage from James I and be re-named the King's Men. Shakespeare stayed with this same company for the rest of his London career (until ca. 1613), and “is the only prominent playwright of his time to have had so stable a relationship with a single company” (ibid. xxi). The company's renowned leading actor Richard Burbage (1567-1619) was the son of James Burbage (d. 1597), who in 1576 had built an amphitheatre playhouse named the Theatre in the Shoreditch district of London, and who thereby helped to institutionalise playgoing in the city.[10] The initial 21-year lease on the site of the Theatre expired with no possibility of renewal in 1597, the year of James Burbage's death. At that same time, the City authorities also blocked the company's use of the Blackfriars theatre, which had been acquired by Burbage with a view to playing indoors in the winter seasons. Upon his death the company was thus left in an awkward position, without a permanent home and with much of its capital invested in the Blackfriars. Shakespeare's reputation at this point was buoyed by the success of his second tetralogy of history plays,[11] and particularly his creation of the Falstaff character. Yet during 1597-98 his plays were staged at the inadequate Curtain, the neighbouring playhouse to the Theatre (see fig. 1), while Richard and his brother Cuthbert Burbage (1565-1636) searched for a new home to safeguard their father's legacy. It was out of this predicament that the famous Globe theatre was born in 1599.

---

[9] *Iohannes fac totum* is the Latin equivalent for a “jack of all trades.”

[10] The Theatre is widely referred to as London's first permanent playhouse, yet James Burbage's brother-in-law and business partner John Brayne (d. 1586) was responsible for the building of the little-known Red Lion amphitheatre playhouse in Stepney, east of London, in 1567. This was a precursor to Burbage's Theatre and, as Janet Loengard points out, “Brayne lent not only his capital but also his well-tested and not insubstantial expertise to the designing of the Theatre itself” (299).

Shakespeare and four of his fellow players–Thomas Pope, Augustine Phillips, John Heminges, and Will Kempe–raised the capital for one half of the interest in the new playhouse, the counterpart to the Burbage brothers (*ES* 2: 203). The Globe would survive in this first incarnation, with the number of actor-sharers ranging from four to six, until 1613, when it was destroyed by fire during a performance of Shakespeare's late play *All Is True* (*Henry VIII*).[12] Significantly, the company elected immediately to rebuild their playhouse at great expense, and the second Globe was complete by 30 June 1614 (ibid. 2: 218), remaining in use until the closure of all London theatres in 1642.[13] The demarcation of the chosen period to 1608, rather than to the end of the first Globe's run in 1613, relates to the question of the Blackfriars theatre and indoor playing. The venue had remained in Richard Burbage's ownership after the death of his father, but had been used by the boys' company, the Children of the Chapel Royal.[14] After a serious outbreak of the plague, the lease was surrendered to the King's Men in July 1608 (ibid. 2: 214). Shakespeare's company did not occupy the Blackfriars until late-1609, but the period in which the Globe served as a primary focus of dramatic production is limited to mid-1608, both because of the concerted decision to acquire a second playhouse at that time, and because performances could not have resumed at the Globe until after the Blackfriars was ready for use: “In fact the plague kept the London theatres closed from July 1608 to December 1609” (ibid.).

---

[11] *Richard II* (ca. 1595), *1 Henry IV* (1596-97), *2 Henry IV* (1597-98), and *Henry V* (1599).

[12] Henry Wotton's letter, which attests descriptively to this event, can be found in appendix 1.1.

[13] “The players' lease of the land ran out at Christmas 1644, but they may have abandoned the playhouse before this […] no definitive date for its disappearance has been found in any documentary sources” (Bowsher 96).

[14] Also commonly named the Children of the Revels, or Children of the Chapel and Queen's Revels, as in *ES*.

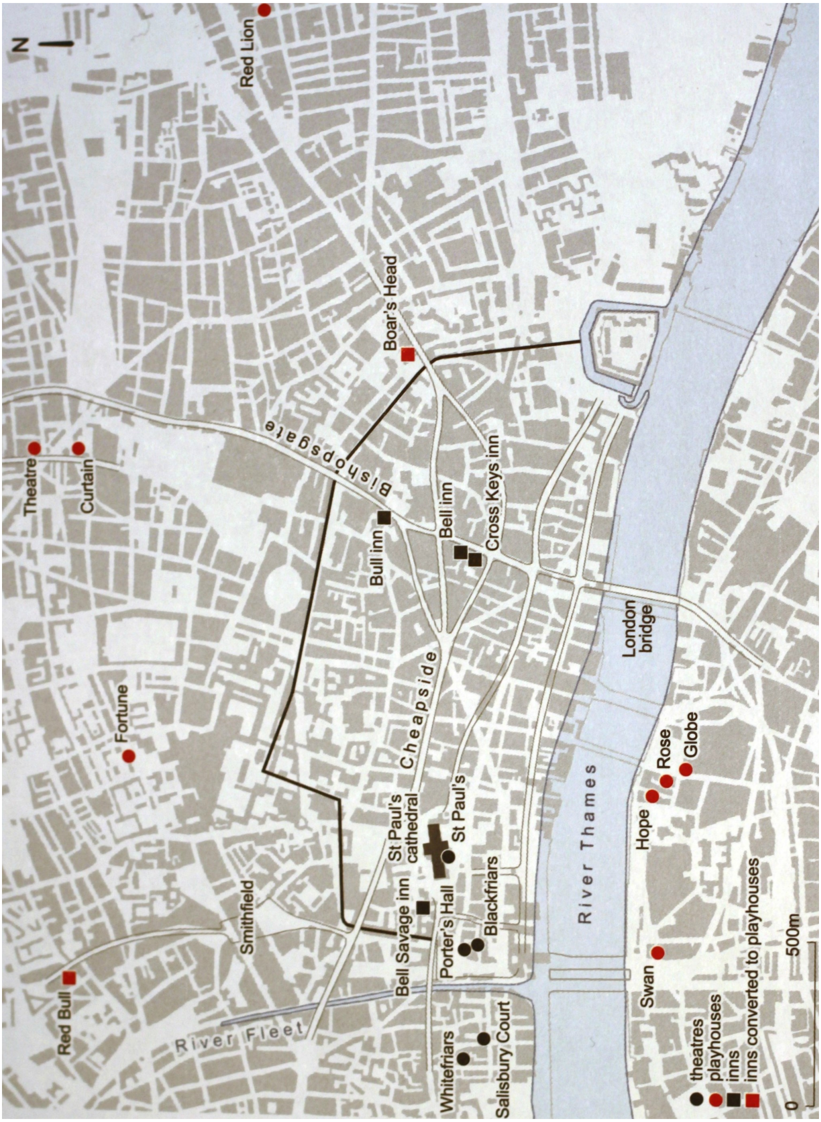

N
Red Lion
Boar's Head
Bishopsgate
Theatre
Curtain
Bull inn
Bell inn
Cross Keys inn
London bridge
Fortune
Cheapside
St Paul's cathedral
St Paul's
Bell Savage inn
Porter's Hall
Blackfriars
Smithfield
Red Bull
River Fleet
Whitefriars
Salisbury Court
River Thames
Hope
Rose
Globe
Swan
theatres
playhouses
inns
inns converted to playhouses
0
500m

Fig. 1: Map showing the playhouses and theatres superimposed on a plan of modern London, including outlines of the present-day Blackfriars Bridge and Blackfriars Railway Bridge, which span the river from the site of the Swan playhouse.

Beckerman explains that "the events grouped around the move to Blackfriars indicate that then too a new start was made" (*Shakespeare at the Globe* xi), and he cites two major factors in support of the notion that the new playhouse brought a shift in dramatic emphasis. The Blackfriars was a so-called private playhouse, catering to what Beckerman calls a "sophisticated and exclusive" audience (ibid.). This was in large part due to its location inside the City of London, as opposed to the Bankside site of the public amphitheatre playhouses.[15] In addition, the Blackfriars was a relatively small, indoor, candlelit theatre, which demanded a different type of dramaturgy when compared to the large, open-air arenas typified by the Globe. London playing companies employed a repertory system, and were accustomed to performing their plays in various localities: the King's Men played regularly at the royal court and also toured outside London during plague closures. However, as I shall outline in the course of this dissertation, the circumstances of the company's move to the Globe in 1599 meant that this playhouse became a material and symbolic home for Shakespeare's company, and thus the focus for his dramatic production. It is difficult to sustain such a claim for the period after 1608, since the company then performed on both sides of the river, in contrasting conditions.

Any study of Shakespeare at the Globe necessarily takes into account the work of other playwrights in the period, who contributed to his professional environment. Shakespeare was, in effect, the first of a new generation of playwrights in London, following the deaths of Christopher Marlowe (1564-93) and Thomas Kyd (1558-94). Emerging at the end of the sixteenth-century were the dramatist and translator George Chapman (d. 1634), Shakespeare's major contemporary playwright and chief rival Ben Jonson (1572-1637), Thomas Dekker (d. 1632), and Thomas Heywood (d. 1641). John Marston (d. 1634) and Thomas Middleton (1580-1627) were two of the leading London playwrights, engaged in satire and topical city plays (*Oxf* xxv).

---

[15] Here and throughout this dissertation, the capitalised *City* of London denotes the area governed by the Lord Mayor and the Corporation of London–now known as the "Square Mile"–and is used in contradistinction to the *city* of London in a wider sense, which includes surrounding towns and districts.

1.5. Dating of the plays

The dating of Shakespeare's works is a notably problematic undertaking, particularly when–as for this study–interest centres on the dates of composition and initial performances, for which the evidence is scant. As the editors of the Arden third series edition of *Hamlet* instruct, “there must be at least three separate significant dates for any Shakespeare play: those of the completion of the manuscript, the first performance and the first printing” (Thompson and Taylor 44). For the purposes of this introduction, I briefly outline in the following pages the major pieces of evidence and controversies which pertain to the dating of the Globe tragedies, in order to provide an overview of how those plays are situated in the context of Shakespeare's career. A more detailed discussion of the dating of a play is given when necessary, as for *Henry V* and *Julius Caesar* in chapter four.

The most important piece of available evidence relating to the dating of Shakespeare's works is a passage from *Palladis Tamia: Wits Treasury* by Francis Meres, which was entered in the Stationers' Register on 7 September 1598:[16]

> As Plautus and Seneca are accounted the best for comedy and tragedy among the Latins, so Shakespeare among the English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage: for comedy, witness his *Gentlemen of Verona*, his *Errors*, his *Love Labour's Lost*, his *Love Labour's Won*, his *Midsummer's Night Dream*, and his *Merchant of Venice*; for tragedy, his *Richard II*, *Richard III*, *Henry IV*, *King John*, *Titus Andronicus*, and his *Romeo and Juliet*. (Meres, n. pag.)

Meres thus supplies a *terminus ante quem* of late-1598 for several Shakespeare plays. For plays that do not appear in this list, meanwhile, a *terminus post quem* is helpfully implied, although there are exceptions: “Works not mentioned by Meres that are believed to have been written by 1598 are the three plays concerned with the reign of Henry VI, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Edward III*, and the narrative poems” (*Oxf* xxii).

---

[16] The Stationers' Register was a record book of the London Stationers' Company. For a fee, publishers and booksellers entered titles of newly published works, or works for future publication. This was an early form of copyright law for those in the book trade only, not for authors.

Julius Caesar (1599)

The play seen by the Swiss traveller Thomas Platter in 1599 is generally accepted to be Shakespeare's *Tragedy of Julius Caesar*:

> On the 21st of September, after dinner, at about two o'clock, I went with my party across the water; in the straw-thatched house we saw the tragedy of the first Emperor Julius Caesar, very pleasingly performed, with approximately fifteen characters; at the end of the play they danced together admirably and exceedingly gracefully, according to their custom, two in each group dressed in men's and two in women's apparel. (Trans. Schanzer, “Platter's Observations” 466)

Ernest Schanzer, who in 1956 provided this improvement upon the translation of Platter's diary entry by Chambers, warned that “we must bear in mind the possibility that the play was not Shakespeare's and the playhouse the Rose” (ibid. 467). Nonetheless, *Julius Caesar* is dated to 1599 on the strength of this probable allusion. It does not appear in *Palladis Tamia*, and contemporary allusions in *Henry V* and *Hamlet*–as well as moments in *Julius Caesar* itself–are commonly cited to support the notion that it was one of Shakespeare's earliest offerings at the Globe, if not the first (Daniell 12ff.). These are discussed in detail in chapter four of this study. The play was first published in the First Folio of 1623.

Hamlet (1600-01)

The following entry in the Stationers' Register, dated 26 July 1602, and the absence of a reference in *Palladis Tamia*, situate Shakespeare's *Hamlet*[17] between late-1598 and mid-1602: “A booke called the Revenge of Hamlett the Prince Denmarke as yt was latelie Acted by the Lord Chamberleyne his servantes” (qtd. in Hibbard 3). Allusions to *Julius Caesar*, discussed in chapter four of this study, suggest that *Hamlet* was written after that play. In an oft-cited essay entitled “The Date of *Hamlet*,” Ernst Honigmann concludes that “*Hamlet* seems to have been written after late 1599 and before the summer of 1601, perhaps before

---

[17] Allusions to a so-called *Ur-Hamlet*, dating back to 1589, problematise the dating of Shakespeare's play. Thompson and Taylor remark that “this hypothetical lost play continues to complicate the issue of the date of Shakespeare's play” (44), but “the play as we know it in the three surviving texts must have been written, or rewritten, a decade later” (47).

February 1601; and the most likely date of composition seems to be late 1599 to early 1600” (33). G. R. Hibbard, in the Oxford Shakespeare edition, affirms that “it seems safe to say that *Hamlet* was indeed written in or about the year 1600” (5). Shakespeare's *Hamlet* exists in three different textual forms. The 1603 First Quarto, discovered in 1823, is an apparently unauthorised memorial reconstruction. The 1604 Second Quarto is the longest extant version of the play, although the version printed in the 1623 Folio includes around 70 lines not found elsewhere. The Oxford editors offer the following summary of the complicated relationships between these three texts: “It is our belief that Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet* about 1600, and revised it later; that the 1604 edition was printed from his original papers; that the Folio represents the revised version; and that the 1603 edition represents a very imperfect report of an abridged version of the revision” (*Oxf* 681).

Othello (1601-02)

Othello was performed at the royal court on 1 November 1604. The publication of the English translation of Pliny's *Historie of the World* in 1601 is cited as a *terminus post quem*, because this text “almost certainly supplied Shakespeare with much of the play's 'foreign' and exotic material” (Honigmann, *Othello* 344). Honigmann states that the 1603 First Quarto of *Hamlet* “seems to echo *Othello*, just as it garbles lines from many other plays,” and concludes that the play “was probably written at some point in the period from mid-1601 to mid-1602” (ibid. 345). He concludes his essay on the dating of the play by stating that *Othello* “would have been performed not later than March 1603, a *terminus ante quem* that again points to 1602 as the probable year of the play's first performance” (ibid. 350). The play was not published in Shakespeare's lifetime; it appeared in quarto form in 1622. The Quarto and Folio texts have over a thousand differences in wording, but the Folio text is significantly longer, and is taken to represent a revision (*Oxf* 873).

King Lear (1605)

The Stationers' Register entry for the 1608 Quarto of *King Lear* informs that the play was acted for King James I at Whitehall Palace on 26 December 1606 (Wells, *King Lear* 10). Contemporary literary sources, and an anonymous play entitled *The True Chronicle History of King Leir*, are used in attempts to establish a *terminus post quem*. R. A. Foakes, in the Arden third series edition of the play, comments that *King*

Lear “was probably composed in 1605-6” (*King Lear* 89), while Stanley Wells instructs that a combination of the available evidence “suggests that Shakespeare wrote all or most of *King Lear* in the later part of 1605” (*King Lear* 14). The 1608 First Quarto version differs markedly from that printed in the 1623 Folio. Indeed, Wells remarks that “of all the Shakespeare plays surviving in two authoritative texts *King Lear* is the one in which the differences are greatest” (ibid. 8). The fact that between these two versions of *King Lear* “revisions are not simply local but structural, too,” caused the Oxford editors in 1986 to print both texts separately, after they had been traditionally conflated (*Oxf* 909). The Quarto text is taken to represent the play “as Shakespeare first conceived it, probably before it was performed” (ibid.), while the Folio is seen as “the first known theatrical adaptation of the play, and the only one in which Shakespeare himself had a hand” (Wells, *King Lear* 6).

Macbeth (1606)

Macbeth was seen at the Globe by Simon Forman on 20 April 1611. Nicholas Brooke, in the Oxford Shakespeare edition of the play, rejects Forman's account as a reliable description of a Globe performance (234f.). Brooke advises that “there is no evidence to contradict” a date of 1606 for the play, “but there is also very little to support it” (59). The editors of the Arden third series edition agree that “there seems no good reason to doubt the generally accepted view that *Macbeth* was written in 1606” (Clark and Mason 13). As the Oxford editors note, it is “obviously a Jacobean play,” (*Oxf* 969), but Brooke warns that “there is no reason […] to see *Macbeth* as particularly related to James's accession in 1603” (59). Instead, a multitude of allusions to the English political landscape after the Gunpowder Plot conspiracy of November 1605 is used to date the play firmly in 1606 (Clark and Mason 13ff.). *Macbeth* was first published in the 1623 First Folio.

Antony and Cleopatra (1606)

The *terminus ante quem* for *Antony and Cleopatra* is 20 May 1608, the date of its entry in the Stationers' Register. Critical consensus dates *AC* to 1606, partially because of possible allusions to the play in *Macbeth*. Brooke arrives at the tentative conclusion “that *Macbeth* was probably written in the second half of 1606; close, no doubt, to *Antony and Cleopatra*, but whether before or after I do not know” (64). The most striking allusion by another author is found in *The Devil's Charter*, by Barnabe Barnes (d. 1609), which was performed at court by the King's

Men on 2 February 1607 (Wilders 73). *Antony and Cleopatra* was first published in the 1623 First Folio. This is "not only the only authoritative text of this great play but a reasonably satisfactory one as well," in terms of its printing (Hinman xxvii).

1.6. A note on procedures:

A reading of the extant play texts in terms of the contexts of their dramatic conception and first enactment is an unavoidably transhistorical exercise, notably because three of the selected tragedies–*Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, *Antony and Cleopatra*–were not published before they appeared in the First Folio of 1623, and a fourth–*Othello*–also remained unpublished until after Shakespeare's death. The extant source texts available to us are thus based to varying degrees on authorial, or "foul" papers, and on alterations made during performances at the Globe, or thereafter. For this reason, great care must be taken in relating moments from the play texts to given historical events from the period in which Shakespeare wrote for the Globe. The copy text employed by this study for citations from Shakespeare's work is *The Oxford Shakespeare Complete Works*, second edition (2005), edited by Stanley Wells, Gary Taylor, John Jowett, and William Montgomery (*Oxf*). Act and scene notations are taken from this edition unless otherwise stated. Where relevant, textual discrepancies between folio and quarto versions are mentioned in the discussion, or in notes. Particularly in the case of *Hamlet*, the complexity of textual controversies pertaining to the different extant versions of the play means it would not be prudent for this study to privilege any one text. Although citations are mainly taken from the Oxford Folio text, all three *Hamlet* texts are taken into account, and discussed where appropriate. To this end, I have made use of *The Three-Text Hamlet* (2nd ed.), edited by Bernice Kliman and Paul Bertram (see "Kliman" in list of references). In the case of *King Lear*, the editors of the Oxford Shakespeare *Textual Companion* (see "Wells, et al." in list of references) have shown that the printers' copy for the 1608 Quarto was probably based on foul papers (128). Quotations of *King Lear* are taken from the Oxford Quarto text within *Oxf*, and the notation is thus in scene numbers only.

In addition, the study is informed by the authoritative Oxford Shakespeare, Arden Shakespeare, and New Cambridge Shakespeare editions of the individual plays. In the case of the Globe tragedies in particular, the study utilises and refers to the following editions, all of which may be found in the list of references:

Julius Caesar: The Oxford Shakespeare edition by Arthur Humphreys (1984); the Arden third series edition by David Daniell (1998); the New Cambridge Shakespeare second series edition by Marvin Spevack (1988).

Hamlet: The Oxford Shakespeare edition by G. R. Hibbard (1985); the Arden editions edited by Harold Jenkins (second series, 1982), and Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor (third series, 2006); the New Cambridge Shakespeare editions by John Dover Wilson (first series, 1934) and Philip Edwards (second series, 1985).

Othello: The Arden third series edition by Ernst Honigmann (1997).

King Lear: The Oxford Shakespeare edition by Stanley Wells (2000); the Arden third series edition by R. A. Foakes (1997); the New Cambridge Shakespeare second series edition by J. L. Halio (1992).

Macbeth: The Oxford Shakespeare edition by Nicholas Brooke (1990); the Arden editions by Kenneth Muir (second series, revised 1984) and Sandra Clark and Pamela Mason (third series, 2015); the New Cambridge Shakespeare edition by A. R. Braunmuller (1997).

Antony and Cleopatra: The Arden third series edition by John Wilders (1995).

Another play which requires careful consideration in an examination of the chosen period is *Henry V*. I have drawn on the following editions: the Oxford Shakespeare edition by Gary Taylor (1982); the Arden third series edition by T. W. Craik (1995); the New Cambridge Shakespeare edition by Andrew Gurr (1992).

In citing original sources from the period, I have modernised spelling in part to aid legibility. Where applicable, I have substituted *v* for *u* (and vice versa), *j* for *i*, and *s* for *ſ* in the original text. Where dates of birth are unknown or uncertain, only the date of death is given.

There now follows a discussion of relevant developments in Literary Theory which pertain to the relationship between literature and history. The present study looks to situate itself within an ongoing debate about the value and nature of historical scholarship in literary studies. An appropriate theoretical retrospect facilitates the theoretical orientation of the subsequent analysis of Shakespeare's Globe tragedies and their conditions of performance.

CHAPTER TWO

A THEORETICAL RETROSPECT

Il n'y a pas de hors-texte
JACQUES DERRIDA

The Globe tragedies identified in the introduction to this study are to be examined with a specific focus on the importance of place in their conception and enactment on the London stage between 1599 and 1608. This constitutes an effort to read the plays primarily as historical events. An assessment of the material, economic, and ideological environments in which Shakespeare wrote, and in which his plays were first inserted, is an exercise that inevitably conflates historical and literary practices. As such, the central concern of this investigation points to a long-running debate within and beyond Shakespeare studies regarding the relationship between history and literature, and the study must delineate its own position amidst that debate before undertaking a pointedly historical reading of the chosen play texts.

The present chapter charts relevant developments in literary criticism over the last four decades with a view to identifying an appropriate theoretical standpoint from which to analyse the plays. The movements of New Historicism and Cultural Materialism are discussed in terms of their impact on Renaissance literature studies in particular, before attention turns to a more recent epistemological divide that separates the empiricist practices of David Scott Kastan's “post-theoretical” historicism from the “presentism” espoused by Terence Hawkes. The initial summary of major twentieth-century theoretical shifts within literary studies that follows here is necessarily brief and simplified, as the principal focus of this chapter is on events since 1980 that have engendered current debates about the relationship between literature and history, specifically within the Shakespeare field. The three subsequent chapters represent the implementation of the principles adopted towards the end of this theoretical retrospect.

2.1. “Return” to history

Early twentieth-century literary criticism in Britain and the United States was closely tied to historical scholarship, and characterised by an empirical pursuit of discernible facts and original source material. The study of historical and biographical contexts as backgrounds to literary works may now be referred to as a “traditional” historicism.[18] In Shakespeare studies its lasting importance is evident in the unparalleled scope of historical investigation undertaken by the aforementioned Edmund Chambers, whose works remain oft-cited authorities on Renaissance theatre.[19] In the zealous quest for factual accuracy and objectivity, however, scholars in the mould of Chambers saw the text-context relationship as one-directional, denying for example that “apart from some passages of obvious satire in comic scenes, there is much of the topical in Shakespeare” (*WS* 1: 67). The unedifying tendency of traditional historicists was to treat text and context as separate entities, with the latter merely informing the study of the former. In some cases the practice led to totalising assumptions about social contexts, as exemplified by E. M. W. Tillyard's famous *The Elizabethan World Picture*, published in 1943. Tillyard argued that Shakespeare's works were underpinned by a unified social and political philosophy shared by the Elizabethan populace, which feared rebellion, disorder, and a repeat of the cyclical violence of the Wars of the Roses (Coyle 16-17).[20]

By the middle of the twentieth century the archival mode of historical scholarship, which required critics to take innumerable non-literary sources into account, became a target for formalism and the New Criticism that emerged with the establishment of Literary Theory as a field of study *per se*. A quasi-interdisciplinary approach as adopted by historically-minded scholars was seen increasingly to undermine that newly institutionalised discipline. In the post-war era, two predominant strands of literary studies, Russian Formalism and American New Criticism, “both considered the proper object of literary study to be literary texts and how they worked rather than authors' lives or the social and historical worlds to which literature refers” (Rivkin and Ryan 5). In this conception of literary criticism the poem is considered autotelic, that is to say, any literary text has a self-contained meaning or purpose. However, the last three decades of the twentieth century were witness to profound developments in Literary Theory that allow editors of twenty-first-century anthologies to assert that history has returned to literary studies “with a vengeance,” and that the field today is “pervasively historical” (ibid. 505). Just what type(s) of historicism the study of Shakespeare now employs, in the wake of the seismic shifts in literary theory that have occurred, is difficult to ascertain. Any attempt to do so must be preceded by a reflection on the influential critical movements of New Historicism and Cultural Materialism that both precipitated and embodied this so-called return to history.

---

[18] The term “historicism” is here to be understood as the name for a historically-oriented theoretical practice.

[19] *The Elizabethan Stage*, 4 vols. (1923) and *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems*, 2 vols. (1930).

[20] Wars of the Roses (ca. 1455-87), English civil wars between the Houses of York and Lancaster.

2.2. New Historicism

The critical movement of New Historicism has its origins at the beginning of the 1980s, when the American critic and Renaissance scholar Stephen Greenblatt coined the phrase to herald a new vein of historical enquiry in literary studies. It is a name which, in announcing the advent of change, also doffs its hat to traditional scholarship. Greenblatt's New Historicism was rooted in the theoretical advances of the 1970s, particularly in post-structuralism. It was heavily influenced by the likes of Michel Foucault (1926-84), whose collapse of knowledge into power gave rise to a view of language and texts as at once constructing reality and being constructed within it:

> The omnipresence of power: not because it has the privilege of consolidating everything under its invincible unity, but because it is produced from one moment to the next, at every point, or rather in every relation from one point to another. Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere. (Foucault 93)

The key concept that would emerge from the post-structuralist critique, for New Historicists at least, was described by Louis Montrose in an important 1989 essay entitled “Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture.” Montrose identifies a “chiastic formulation” of "the historicity of texts and the textuality of history" (588).[21] The "textuality of history" denotes the idea that historical documents and source material, previously seen as rigid, unimpugnable "facts," were as much unstable discourses as were the literary texts that they supposedly explained. The post-structural identification of the textuality of history alongside the historicity of texts represents the point of origin for an important principle of reciprocity by which New Historicism sees literary texts as not only inscribed by culture but also as active producers of that culture, reinforcing the social order and endorsing existing power relations by means of a strategy of containment. Montrose ably reconciles theories of textuality which argue that "the meaning of a text cannot be stabilized" with this new understanding of the historicity of texts: "We may simultaneously acknowledge the theoretical indeterminacy of the signifying process and the historical specificity of discursive practices–acts of speaking, writing, and interpreting" (ibid.).

The New Historicist movement embraced the arguments of Foucault and Roland Barthes (1915-80), who theorised power as an ideological construct that is dispersed within society through language:

> In our innocence, we believed power was a political object; we learned that power is an ideological object, that it creeps in where we do not recognise it, into institutions, teaching [...] even the forces of liberation themselves. Power is plural, we discovered [...] Make a revolution to destroy it, power will spring up again. And the reason why power is invincible is that the object in which it is carried for all human eternity is language: the language that we speak and write. (Barthes 459)

Richard Wilson, in his introduction to the volume *New Historicism and Renaissance Drama* (1992), comments that "the dark wisdom that *power* is *productive rather than repressive*, since there can be no escape from the prison-house of words, underlies the problematic that developed during the 1970s from which New Historicism would emerge" (3-4, original emphasis). It was a pessimism that initially found an outlet in the "strategic eclecticism" of the Parisian New Philosophy movement formed in Foucault's wake. Wilson explains that "New

---

[21] "Chiasmus" is defined as "a figure of speech by which the order of the terms in the first of two parallel clauses is reversed in the second" (Baldick 38).

Philosophy valorised the irrational and marginal," and American New Historicism would do just that in its study of literary texts, particularly those of the Renaissance (ibid. 4). It is instructive at this point to note that Foucauldian post-structuralism and the school of New Historicism gravitated towards the Renaissance period not least because it represents a major cultural shift in Western society. In Renaissance Europe, the emergent idea of the individual subject gave rise to a new type of drama–especially tragedy–that questioned subjectivity itself, as epitomised by Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. In its deep-lying concerns with the nature of the self and with free will, Renaissance theatre proved a magnet for post-structuralist critics of the 1970s, who took as their point of departure the theories of the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan (1901-81) on the constitution of the individual subject through language. Greenblatt and his disciples later applied those same principles to historical issues that lay beyond the primary literary text, and it is this indebtedness to post-structuralism that impels Wilson to define New Historicism as "an annexation of history by linguistics" (ibid. 6).

Historicising New Historicism, as Wilson ably demonstrates, reveals its own origins in surrounding discourses and only serves to underscore the textuality of history. The profusion of electronic media and aggressive capitalism, led always by the United States, seemingly culminated during the 1980s in a "post-modern vertigo" as the Presidency was assumed by the screen icon Ronald Reagan,[22] whose two terms in office spanned almost the entire decade (ibid. 5). In equating the shaping forces of language with those of capitalism, and in "fetishising power as coterminous with language," New Historicism would become increasingly liable to a co-option of the totalising forces of "Reaganomics" (ibid. 9). By extension, a distinguishing feature of New Historicist criticism is what Wilson calls the "structuralist assumption that cultures maintain themselves somehow by self-regulation" (ibid. 14). Literary texts, including plays, were for New Historicism "pretexts for redoubled oppression," and in this sense the movement was marked by a certain negativity and scepticism, something which Greenblatt himself later acknowledged, as he reflected that in the course of his studies "the human subject came to seem remarkably unfree, a cultural artefact" (256).

---

[22] President of the United States from 1981 to 1989.

2.3. Cultural Materialism

In acknowledgement of its scientific and ultimately ahistorical methods, but not before the appellation of New Historicism had already firmly taken root, Greenblatt eventually attempted to give his practice the new name of Cultural Poetics (Wilson 6). It was in opposition to this label that the British Marxist critic Raymond Williams (1921-88) coined the name Cultural Materialism for a strand of criticism that foregrounds the material struggles inscribed in literature.[23] Where Marxist criticism insists on seeing modes of production and economic conditions as the centre of power, Cultural Materialism incorporates a *range* of material conditions that may be seen to shape a literary work and culture. Like New Historicism then, it is appreciably indebted to Foucauldian post-structuralism. Significantly, however, British academics in the 1980s such as Jonathan Dollimore, Alan Sinfield, Catherine Belsey, and Williams himself, saw Renaissance texts as sites of conflict rather than containment. Each of them stressed the potential for political subversion inscribed in Renaissance literature, perhaps most notably Dollimore in his classic book entitled *Radical Tragedy*, where he saw that “the crisis of confidence in those holding power is addressed in play after play” in Renaissance drama (4). Again, cultural discourses surrounding the movement can be seen to have shaped its theoretical orientation, since Reagan's era of triumphant capitalism before Black Monday[24] contrasted with the era of Margaret Thatcher[25] in the United Kingdom, which was punctuated by the Falklands conflict of 1982 and is considered “the most confrontational decade in recent British political history” (Wilson 15).

Dollimore's *Radical Tragedy* is exemplary of how, as Wilson puts it, “Cultural Materialism was above all inflected by Althusser's theory that though ideology is produced 'in words', it has a material existence since it is reproduced in institutions such as the theatre or university” (ibid. 15). Boldly drawing on the work of Renaissance writers such as Michel de Montaigne (1533-92) and Francis Bacon (1561-1626), which was widely circulated in Shakespeare's London, and associating Montaigne's essays with the theories of the Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser (1918-90), Dollimore insists “that the Renaissance possessed a sophisticated concept of ideology if not the word," and also "that Renaissance writers [...] were actively engaged in challenging ideology" (*Radical Tragedy* 18).[26] Such notions allowed practitioners of Cultural Materialism to politicise the study of Renaissance texts, since politics is before all else the study of governance and the distribution of power in society. In an important essay entitled "Literature, History, Politics," first published in 1983, Belsey draws on the post-structuralist decentralisation of the text in literary criticism to advocate "the production of a political history from the raw material of literary texts" (43). By no longer privileging the text, nor a unified historical account, such a process may reveal the otherwise marginalised or repressed discourses within culture and, more pertinently, may highlight the subversive potential of literary works. Dollimore demonstrates in *Radical Tragedy* the necessity to look beyond the text as artefact in order to expose political subversion:

---

[23] Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (1977).

[24] The name given to the world-wide crash in stock markets on Monday 19 October 1987.

[25] Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1979 to 1990.

> [W]hat makes an idea subversive is not so much what is intrinsic to it or the mere thinking of it, but the context of its articulation – to whom, and to how many and in what circumstances it is said or written. That the theatres in early seventeenth-century England were a potentially subversive context is evidenced by the fact of their censorship. (22)

The clear difference, then, between the American New Historicism and its British counterpart, Cultural Materialism, lies in their perceptions of Renaissance drama as a cultural mode of containment, or of subversion respectively. New Historicist studies are principally concerned with the representation of power in Renaissance texts, seeing the playhouse as the prime location for the representation and legitimation of that power. Cultural Materialism follows Williams in refusing to separate literature from other social practices, collapsing traditional distinctions between literature and its contextual background in a process that Dollimore labelled "radical contextualising" ("Shakespeare" 47). Culture cannot be seen as a unity in this process, and accordingly Williams's well-known distinction between residual, dominant, and emergent aspects of culture is taken into account

---

[26] Underlining his proposal that a concept of ideology predated Althusser, Dollimore goes as far as to suggest that "the originality of Althusser has been overestimated, not least by some Althusserians with an inadequate philosophical and historical perspective" (*Radical Tragedy* 18).

(Williams, *Marxism and Literature* 121ff.), while Dollimore instructs that additional levels of subordinate, repressed, and marginal culture must also be considered ("Shakespeare" 49). Ultimately, the aim of these materialist critics, in seeing the theatre as an ideological institution, is to assess the political and social *effect* of Renaissance texts, that is to say, to what extent they subverted authority and encouraged rebellion, or instead instructed people and maintained order (ibid. 50-51). New Historicism, by contrast, rather takes for granted the answer to this question, assuming the continuous legitimation of those in power, and this in turn may be attributed to its own cultural context in 1980s America.

2.4. A profusion of historicisms

The theoretical movements of the late twentieth century summarised above did much to return Shakespeare studies to history, and to highlight the significance of the political and social conditions that affected the writing and first enactment of the plays. We now understand that it is imperative not to speak of a homogeneous culture that ignores social discord, and we are ever more attentive to the material circumstances of the production of literary texts. After New Historicism and Cultural Materialism prevailed throughout the 1980s, however, the durability of these "isms" beyond 1989 was called repeatedly into question, and their demise–if that is not too strong a word–may in part be attributed to the concomitance of events outside the field over the past thirty years. The financial crash of 1987 had served as a reminder that venture capitalism and entrepreneurship need not be seen as intrinsic to humanity, as New Historicism had erred to suggest (Wilson 10), while the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 lifted a nebulous, deterministic gloom. Cultural Materialism had been at pains to stress the importance of the opposing social forces that shape works of literature. Perhaps appropriately then, the aftermath of the great drama of the Cold War saw the need for a politically radical historicism stultified to some extent by powerful indications that ordinary people were capable of effectuating lasting political change.

The year 1989 also proved to be a watershed specifically for Shakespeare studies, as the excavation and archaeological study of the site of the Rose theatre–initially built by Philip Henslowe in 1587–

would prove to be a major catalyst for long-harboured ambitions to build a full-scale reconstruction of the Globe theatre close to its original location. *Shakespeare's Globe* eventually opened in 1997, and a reconstruction of the Blackfriars indoor theatre–named the *Sam Wanamaker Playhouse*–was inaugurated on the same site on London's South Bank in 2014. All the while, the astounding technological developments of the information age have facilitated access to rare books and documents, which has renewed interest in empirical scholarship by shifting its traditional boundaries. The so-called return to history in Shakespeare studies, which in the 1980s was unmistakably inflected by linguistic science and political concerns, has since diverged into a profusion of Shakespeare historicisms that can form a bewildering theoretical landscape in which to situate accurately a reading of the plays. There is now a consensus that Shakespeare must be read "historically," yet disagreement is rife as to what exactly such an undertaking should entail.

2.5. The "New Boredom"

In *Shakespeare After Theory*, published in 1999, David Scott Kastan prescribed a new rubric for historical scholarship in Shakespeare studies, attuned and indebted to the theoretical advances instigated by critics on either side of the Atlantic in the 1980s, but retaining a principal focus on what he calls a "more rigorously historical" evaluation of the conditions of dramatic production than has been offered by many New Historicist or Cultural Materialist readings (24). Kastan frivolously called his project "the New Boredom," in contradistinction to some of the charges of over-elaboration that he levels at New Historicism. Most notably, he claims that "[i]n its often dazzling demonstrations of the circulation of discourses through culture, New Historicism has rarely paid much attention to the specific material and institutional conditions of the discursive exchanges it has explored" (ibid. 13). As such, he considers New Historicism to be insufficiently historical, with its complex anecdotes often liable to retotalising culture and ignoring its contradictions.

What Kastan proposes, and self-deprecatingly refers to as boring, is a "post-theoretical" return to a more traditional type of historical scholarship, albeit enlightened by the insights that twentieth-century developments in literary theory have given us. In terms of Shakespeare specifically, Kastan advocates a “recognition of the historicity of the play” by means of “a focus on the specific conditions of its production and reception,” and this points towards the principal objective of the present study (ibid. 35). In the reading of the Globe tragedies that follows, this study adopts Kastan's principle of considering a given literary work in terms of four specific categories that clarify how that work may produce and convey meaning. He affirms at the end of the chapter entitled “Are We Being Interdisciplinary Yet?” that the historicity of the work is best apprehended if it is examined “as a verbal structure, as a cultural gesture, as a material object, and as a commodity” (ibid. 48). The three principal chapters of this investigation, which focus on Shakespeare's physical, professional, and socio-cultural environments in turn, combine in their assessment of the selected plays to cover these four specific categories.

A further important notion to be drawn from *Shakespeare After Theory* is the view that the acceptance of literary texts as socially produced need not necessarily mean that they themselves exercise a political function, and that our identification of the complexities of meaning to be derived from a text is “not necessarily itself a political act” (ibid. 20). This study follows Kastan in refusing to accept the chiasmic formulation of the historicity of texts and the textuality of history as propagated by New Historicism (ibid. 22), and does so by narrowing its focus to the conditions of performance that affected the Globe tragedies in Shakespeare's London, or in other words, by analysing how place may have shaped the plays. This does not constitute a denial of the potential, subversive or otherwise, for Renaissance texts to produce culture and effectuate social change. The study chooses to limit itself to an examination of the ways in which material and ideological conditions of the environment impinged upon the conception and enactment of the plays, thereby acknowledging and consolidating its position as a historically informed literary study, as opposed to a socio-political history informed by literature.

In reviewing *Shakespeare After Theory*, Robert Weimann sees the ultimate objective of Kastan's project, attained to varying degrees across the collection of essays, as the promulgation of a challenge “to reimagine Shakespeare's plays as inclusive as well as contestatory, enchanting as well as disenchanting, images of triumph and defeat as well as grim documents of social and gendered struggle” (192). When successfully employed, such a historical reading differs markedly from its more politically entrenched predecessors, and can represent the “fair conjunction of textual scholarship and historical criticism, including theater history” (ibid.), at which this study also aims to arrive. Weimann neatly summarises Kastan's “re-turn” to history as a move “from a politically correct moralism to a politically pregnant materialism” (ibid. 191). The phrase signals the plurality of meanings and the political inclusivity of Shakespearean tragedy which the present study looks to emphasise by means of a dispassionate examination of historical contexts. Mindful that the attempt by any text to deny political orientation and/or motivation may itself be construed as a political act, terms such as “apolitical” or “non-political” are cautiously avoided here. Moreover, given the onus on the historicity of texts, and on the various socio-political shaping factors inscribed within them, it would make little sense for this study to disavow its own cultural moment. In other words, rather than laying claim to an apolitical stance, the present study readily situates itself as politically centrist, and as a work which collapses the subversion/containment distinction in order to highlight the multifarious and inclusive nature of Shakespearean tragedy.

2.6. Presentism

An important critical response to *Shakespeare After Theory* was offered by Terence Hawkes in *Shakespeare in the Present*, which was published in 2002 and followed in 2007 by a collection of essays entitled *Presentist Shakespeares*. Hawkes had “championed the radical potential” of literature in the context of British Cultural Materialism, and did much to institutionalise aforementioned notions of the ineluctability of politics, as John Drakakis informs: “[t]he acceptance […] that literature is inevitably political, that decisions about what counts as literature are influenced by social hierarchies, and that the ways we read literature have political effects owe much to Hawkes's influence” (n. pag.). In *Shakespeare in the Present*, Hawkes directly counters Kastan's call for rigorous historical enquiry by arguing that targets for Shakespeare studies should be set unabashedly in terms of current socio-cultural concerns: “Reversing, to some degree, the stratagems of new historicism, [presentism] deliberately begins with the material present and allows that to set its interrogative agenda” (22). Unsurprisingly for an innovative approach to criticism endorsed by Hawkes, presentism barely conceals its politics, employing the metaphor of a Heimlich manoeuvre–with overtones of eruption, regurgitation, renewal–for an introductory manifesto that Hawkes himself labels “most radical” (ibid.). Again, the study of Shakespeare's tragedies that follows in these pages makes no pretence to divorce itself from its own context, and indeed acknowledges a very present concern to highlight the importance of place in the shaping of the selected plays, but it shares little else with the practice of Hawkes and his peers, where politically motivated forays into the past enrich what is essentially a cultural history of the present informed by literature.

Nonetheless, the arguments in favour of a presentist criticism offered by Hawkes are of use to this study in terms of their direct engagement with Kastan's propositions. Indeed, *Shakespeare in the Present* opens with a nod to the role of *Shakespeare After Theory* as part of a “changing climate” in the field (ibid. 1). Hawkes quickly isolates key problems in Kastan's “return to history,” namely the veneration of facts and the imperative to “restore” Shakespeare's works to their original circumstances. “Restore” is shown to be a loaded term, possibly implying a unified truth sought by the historian, while Hawkes argues that “[t]o reduce history to a series of isolateable, untheorised 'facts', or neutrally analysable 'texts', is in any case unproductive” (ibid. 3). In a reference to his earlier book entitled *Meaning by Shakespeare* (1992), Hawkes artfully instructs that facts or texts have no immanent meaning, but are only employed for purposes of our choosing:

> Indeed, they don't speak at all unless and until they are inserted into and perceived as part of specific discourses which impose their own shaping requirements and agendas. We choose the facts. We choose the texts. We do the inserting. We do the perceiving. Facts and texts, that is to say, don't simply speak, don't merely mean. *We* speak, *we* mean, *by* them. (ibid. 3, original emphasis)

Of course, this is true for the present study, yet an acknowledgement of the instability of so-called facts need not preclude a search for historical accuracy as undertaken here. It must instead serve as a cautionary reminder of the pitfalls of historical investigation.

2.7. Locating Shakespeare

In the years since Kastan's proposition of a “New Boredom,” which Weimann reticently ventured to call “a post-poststructuralist approach to the Elizabethan theater” (189), a clearer definition has not been determined for a practice whose means are informed by Literary Theory but whose end is resolutely historical. *Making Shakespeare* by Tiffany Stern may be seen to some extent to answer Kastan's call for “more rigorously historical” scholarship. Writing in 2004, Stern referred to the “stage-to-page trajectory” of her work, “an approach currently without its own defining 'ism'” and which “has only lately been theoretically situated” (4f.). In *Making Shakespeare*, she combines the study of theatre history with that of the history of books and publishing, in order to re-read the plays in terms of “the collaborative, multilayered, material, historical world that fashioned the Shakespeare canon” (ibid. 5-6). Across six principal chapters, the book considers the city of London and its playhouses, editing and publishing conventions, performance practices, theatre resources, and the transition of the plays from manuscript to print via stage performance. Broadly speaking, the objectives and procedures of *Making Shakespeare* are contiguous with those of this study, as Stern explains that “[b]y redefining ideas of textual and authorial instability in a rooted historical context,” she “aims to create a newly vibrant meeting point between the two” (ibid. 6).

The scope of this investigation is necessarily narrower than that of *Making Shakespeare*. As suggested by the title–*Shakespeare's Globe Tragedies and Their Conditions of Performance*–attention centres on the conception and enactment of the plays in a London context between 1599 and 1608. The history that charts the editing, publishing, and circulation of the play texts falls largely outside this remit, particularly since four of the selected tragedies–*Julius Caesar*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*–were not published during Shakespeare's lifetime (see above, 37). What this study specifically looks to ascertain is the nature of the shaping forces of the environment in which the plays were first inserted, how those forces were inscribed in contemporary performances, and what they may reveal about the multitude of meanings that may be constructed from the surviving play texts via performance in the present day. In this sense, the critical undertaking that follows here may be better termed “Locating Shakespeare,” as its ultimate aim is to expose the historical and local specificity of Shakespearean tragedy.

The analysis of the selected tragedies that follows across the subsequent three chapters takes into account the various conditions of performance, that is to say the ethos and structure of the Globe theatre, the economic factors and professional exigencies affecting Shakespeare and his playing company, the wide range of social issues affecting a diverse society, the political landscape from international conflicts to low-level legal disputes, and the role of religion in contemporary society, particularly its strained relations with the theatre. In studying a series of tragedies that together represent a remarkable decade of dramatic production at the Globe, the study looks to identify common features that suggest particular shaping influences on the selected plays, but also to expose the contradictions and cultural shifts of an eventful period in English history that was punctuated in 1603 by the end of the long and illustrious reign of Elizabeth I. The aim throughout is to isolate moments in the play texts which can reveal a close relationship between the selected plays and the environment–both physical and ideological–in which they were first inserted. Such an effort is not part of any futile search for "essential" Shakespeare, but rather constitutes a historical reading that can serve to enliven the text and expose the contemporary socio-cultural concerns inscribed within it. The traditional division of text and context is collapsed in order to underscore the position of the plays as active parts of their historical moment, a perspective that benefits other critical approaches as well as Shakespearean performance.

2.8. Metatheatre

Throughout this study I employ the term *metatheatre* and its variants in order to highlight the moments in Shakespeare's plays at which the illusion of reality is deliberately, although often implicitly, undermined. The concept of metatheatricality is of paramount importance to the present study, because Shakespeare's willingness to implicate or engage with his audience points to the significant role played by his environment in the conception and early enactment of his plays. Shakespeare often consolidates thematic elements within the drama itself by drawing attention to the playhouse, city, or society in which a given play is performed. Furthermore, in identifying points in the plays at which onstage characters signal the theatricality of their own existence, we may apprehend how Shakespeare's great works owe much of their vitality to a collective readiness to suspend disbelief.

Metatheatre is now defined as “any moment of self-consciousness by which a play draws attention to its own fictional status as a theatrical pretence” (Baldick 151). The term originates from Lionel Abel, whose 1963 book *Metatheatre: A New View of Dramatic Form* designates plays of a certain dramatic self-consciousness as “metaplays.” Abel begins his exposition of this terminology by remarking that those plays which emphasise their fictional status in such a way attest to the dramatic imagination of the playwright. Quoting *Hamlet*, Abel states that “[o]f such plays, it may indeed be said: 'The play's the thing'” (59).

Abel defines metaplays in part by focusing on the inherent theatricality of their characters and subject matter:

> [T]he plays I am pointing at do have a common character: all of them are theatre pieces about life seen as already theatricalized. By this I mean that the persons appearing on the stage in these plays are there not simply because they were caught by the playwright in dramatic postures as a camera might catch them, but because they themselves knew they were dramatic before the playwright took note of them. (ibid. 60)

Shakespeare, as so often the exception, belies Abel's more general claim that such characters are scarcely seen in tragedy because of its “irrevocable” events, and the fact that “that which does not exist can scarcely make us sad” (ibid. 59). As the present study demonstrates, Shakespearean tragedy is stocked with moments of metatheatre, moments which draw attention to both the theatricality of the events and personages portrayed, and to the fictional and locally specific nature of that portrayal. Already in his earliest tragic offering at the Globe, *Julius Caesar*, Shakespeare imbues his characters with an awareness of the timeless significance of the “lofty scene” which they inhabit, just moments after Caesar's assassination at 3.1.76:

> CASSIUS. How many ages hence
> Shall this our lofty scene be acted over,
> In states unborn and accents yet unknown!
> BRUTUS.
> How many times shall Caesar bleed in sport,
> That now on Pompey's basis lies along,
> No worthier than the dust!
> (*JC* 3.1.112-17)

David Daniell, in the Arden third series edition of the play, provides an astute assessment of the resultant dramatic effect: “Like a trick with mirrors, this endless reverberation allows Shakespeare to pitch the dramatic experience still higher: to make their actions not just dreadful, but fixed in fearfulness for ever. […] The effect is dizziness, appropriate to the sudden horror” (241). Meanwhile, in the last of the Globe tragedies, Cleopatra contemplates her fate as prisoner of Rome by alluding to the future theatrical bastardisation of her greatness:

> The quick comedians
> Extemporally will stage us, and present
> Our Alexandrian revels. Antony
> Shall be brought drunken forth, and I shall see
> Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness
> I'th' posture of a whore.
> (*AC* 5.2.212-17)

In Shakespeare's theatre, which employed boy actors for female parts, these lines again take on a dizzying layer of localised metatheatre: “Shakespeare shows extraordinary boldness in giving these lines to a boy actor who must, presumably, have done justice to the role of Cleopatra” (Wilders 291).

The following chapter attempts to determine the ethos of the Globe theatre, citing metatheatrical moments in the plays which indicate the ways in which contemporary cultural and ideological developments were embodied by the playhouse, and thus imposed themselves on Shakespeare's dramaturgy. In other words, the physical conditions of performance are discussed in terms of the metaphorical potential of the Globe theatre.

CHAPTER THREE

“LIFE'S BUT A WALKING SHADOW”

THE ETHOS OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYHOUSE

He does smile his face into more lines
than is in the new map with
the augmentation of the Indies.
TWELFTH NIGHT

Among the most famous lines in all Shakespeare is Jaques’s contention that the world we inhabit is analogous to a playhouse stage:

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players.
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages.
(*As You Like It* 2.7.139-43)

The idea that we are all actors who play a series of parts in a larger design is engrained in our collective consciousness, but for the conceit to have its full effect on Shakespeare's audiences in 1599, the still fledgling London theatre industry first had to achieve an obverse impression that the stage represented the world outside. The perception of the “theatre as world,” recovered from antiquity, is a legacy of the Renaissance that was consolidated by the name of the most important performance space in the period, the Globe. It remains instructive to ask how, scarcely two decades after the appearance of London’s first long-standing, purpose-built playhouse,[27] a situation had arisen where Shakespeare and his fellow players set about building a new theatre on vacant land outside the City walls, with its ambitious appellation signalling the works of universal resonance that would be first performed within its own walls. It was a venue where the dramatist could confidently proclaim that “all the world’s a stage” because his stage encompassed all the world. The Globe stood on London’s Bankside in name, form, and function as the pre-eminent example of a widespread association of the Elizabethan playhouse with the larger concerns surrounding it, and this shaped the works written with a view to fill its galleries, to sustain it financially, and to justify the considerable risks undertaken in its construction. How were such attitudes and conceits shaped by contemporary developments, not just in the theatre world but in the wider world also? More simplistically, what lay behind the choice of the “Globe” name? The present chapter sets out to answer such questions, before assessing how the Globe’s metaphorical potential may have contributed to the creative processes which underlie Shakespeare’s Great Tragedies.

---

[27] The Theatre in Shoreditch, built by James Burbage and John Brayne in 1576 (see note 10 above).

Much like the concept that our world is a stage on which we act, the notion that a sign on the exterior of the Globe heralded this new London landmark is well established in our cultural heritage. At the beginning of Laurence Olivier’s 1944 film version of *Henry V*, the camera pans over an elaborate model of Elizabethan London, slowly focussing on Olivier’s vision of the Globe, where a flag which depicts a classical deity bearing an orb on his shoulders is hoisted above the playhouse. The signage outside the Old Globe Theatre playhouse reconstruction in San Diego, California, shows a similar image, replete with the latin motto *totus mundus agit histrionem*,[28] which is of course not far removed in semantic terms from Shakespeare’s “all the world’s a stage” (see fig. 2). Although the name of Renaissance London’s most famous playhouse is not in doubt, we have no firm evidence for such an affiliated sign, emblem, or motto. However, an examination of the circumstantial evidence that points to such features, as part of a wider enquiry into the possible reasons behind the choice of the “Globe” name, points to cultural developments and events which shaped the dramatic content of Shakespeare’s Globe plays.

---

[28] Literally “all mankind plays an actor.” Innumerable online reference sources now offer the loose translation “the whole world is a playhouse,” associating this with the famous lines from *As You Like It*.

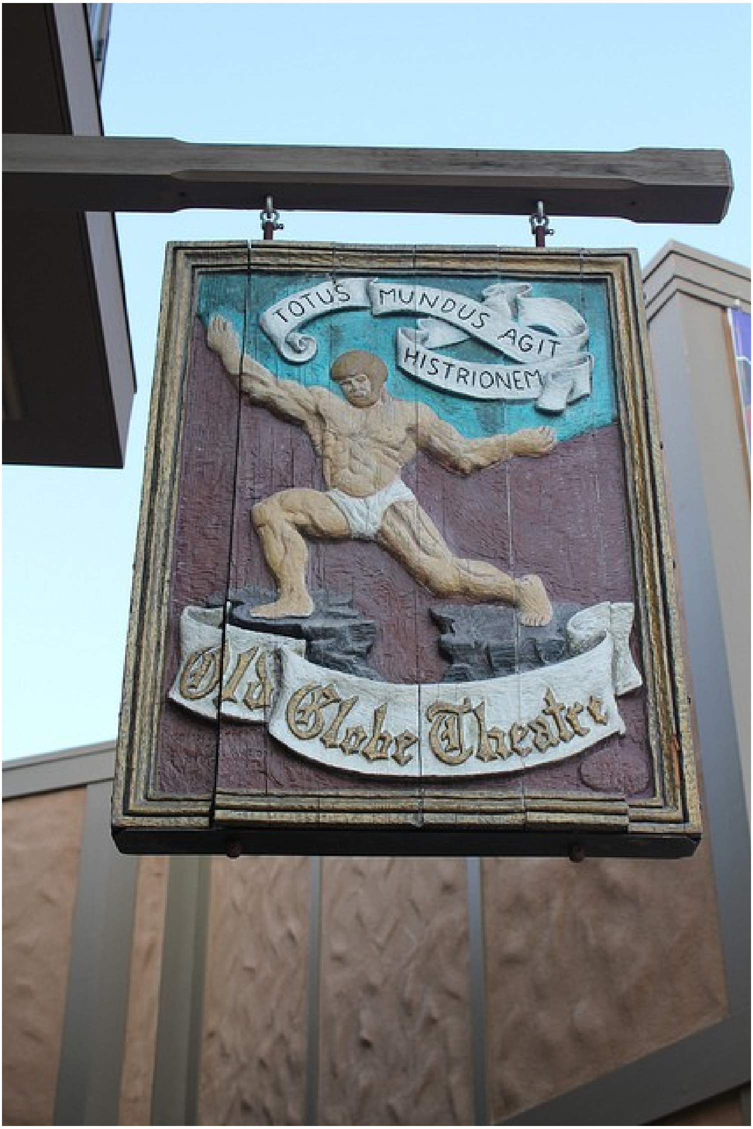

TOTUS MUNDUS AGIT HISTRIONEM
Old Globe Theatre

Fig. 2: Sign of the Old Globe Theatre playhouse reconstruction in San Diego, CA, showing the traditional emblem and motto of the Globe.

3.1 "*Totus mundus agit histrionem*": the sign and motto of the Globe

Scholarly enquiries into the matter can be said to begin with Chambers, whose closing remarks on the Globe indicate a certain scepticism as to the presumed derivation of its name from a sign, and perhaps a frustration at the lack of available evidence: "[Edmond] Malone conjectured that the name 'Globe' was taken from the sign 'which was a figure of Hercules supporting the Globe, under which was written *Totus mundus agit histrionem*'. I do not know where he got this information" (*ES* 2: 434).[29] Malone's remark is found in his ten-volume *Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare* (1790). Ernest Schanzer, in his brief article "Hercules and His Load" (1968), explains that Malone likely got this information from his predecessor George Steevens (1736-1800), whose own edition of Shakespeare's works, first published in 1773, appeared in expanded form in 1778.[30] Steevens, in turn, is seen by Schanzer to have received it from the antiquarian and bibliographer William Oldys (1696-1761), who provided Steevens with various documents relating to Shakespeare. The anecdote in question, which presents a purported exchange of verse couplets between Shakespeare and his rival Ben Jonson (1572-1637), can be found in the appendix to this chapter (3.1). Schanzer concludes that Oldys is the "earliest-known authority for the Globe's motto," and sees "no strong reason for doubting its authenticity" ("Hercules" 52).

More recently, Tiffany Stern has pointed out that "sign and motto are treated separately in 1778 and 1780,"–by Steevens and Malone respectively–"and then linked in 1790" by Malone ("Was *Totus Mundus*" 124).[31] While there are contemporary Elizabethan references to playhouse signs and possible allusions to the Globe's sign, there is no mention of a motto before the anecdote proffered by Steevens. Stern argues convincingly that the motto is in fact more likely to have been eighteenth-century currency in London theatres, most notably at Drury

---

[29] Edmond Malone (1741-1812), Irish scholar and editor of Shakespeare's works.

[30] This 1778 *Plays of William Shakespeare* is commonly known as the *Johnson-Steevens Edition*, as it was based on Samuel Johnson's 1765 text and was seen to have "perfected the Johnsonian model" of Shakespeare scholarship. It is regarded as "the finest example of eighteenth-century corporate editing and perhaps the most important edition of Shakespeare ever produced after the first folio of 1623" (*Johnson-Steevens Edition* 1: v, vi). It comprises ten volumes, plus another two supplementary volumes added by Malone in 1780. See "Steevens" in list of references.

[31] The relevant extract from Stern's article, with her important explanation, can be found alongside the "Hercules and his load" passage from the *Johnson-Steevens Edition*, in appendix 3.2.

Lane, and states that there is “no evidence that '*Totus Mundus*' dates from before the Interregnum, let alone from 1599” (ibid. 125). Stern’s suggestion is that the motto, as well as the verses ascribed to Jonson and Shakespeare in the Steevens/Oldys anecdote, are the spurious results of Restoration “Shakespeare-worshipping” (ibid. 126). As I have mentioned, however, the case for the sign and emblem that are thought to have adorned the playhouse is founded on a number of contemporary clues. In his *Observationes Londinenses*, Johannes De Witt had remarked, probably in 1596, that the names of London playhouses at that time were displayed on signs:

> There are four amphitheatres in London of notable beauty, which from their diverse signs bear diverse names. In each of them a different play is daily exhibited to the populace. The two more magnificent of these are situated to the southward beyond the Thames, and from signs suspended before them are called the Rose and the Swan. (Qtd. in *TSS* 162)

The copy of De Witt’s sketch of the Swan playhouse duly shows a flag depicting a swan flying high above the tiring house (see fig. 3).

The later playwright Thomas Heywood (d. 1641) referenced the Fortune playhouse in *The English Traveller*, published in a 1633 quarto, and indicated that it employed a sign:

> REIGNALD. […] I’ll rather stand here
> Like a statue in the forefront of your house
> For ever, like the picture of Dame Fortune
> Before the Fortune playhouse.
> (4.6.295-8)

In a footnote to this extract, Joseph Quincy Adams remarked that “Heywood generally uses ‘picture’ in the sense of ‘statue’” (277), casting a slight doubt over the use of any flag or fixed sign, at least at the Fortune. Richard Dutton reminds that Shakespeare uses the same connotation of “picture” in *The Winter’s Tale*, 5.2.172 (36). The “signs” in De Witt’s account could well refer only to flags, however, as the cognate “ensign” denoted “[a] military or naval standard; a banner, flag” well before 1596 (“ensign, n.5.” *OED*). The Fortune playhouse was based to a good degree on the Globe, as the Burbages’ builder, Peter Streete, was commissioned by Philip Henslowe (d. 1616) and Edward

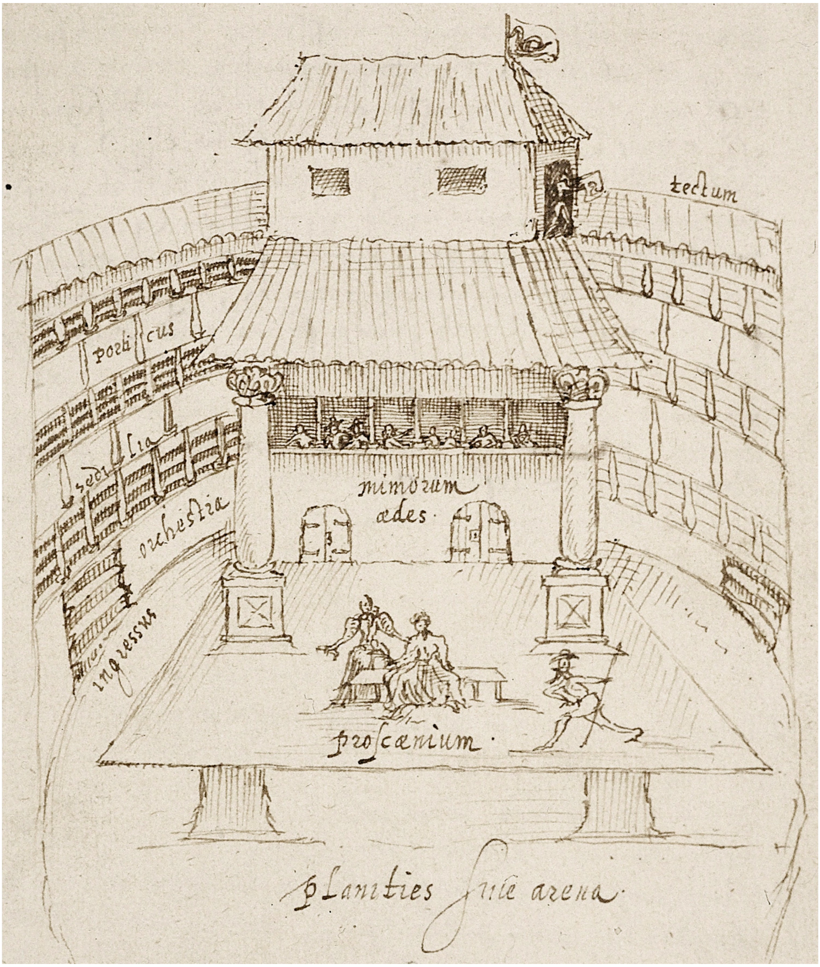

tectum
porticus
sedilia
orchestra
ingressus
mimorum aedes
proscaenium
planities siue arena

Fig. 3: Arend van Buchell's copy of the drawing of the Swan playhouse (1596) by Johannes De Witt.

Alleyn (1566-1626) to construct it as a new rival playhouse for the Admiral's Men. Although tenuous, not least because Heywood would have had in mind the second Fortune–built after 1621–these references together are generally seen to point to a convention likely adhered to throughout the period.[32] The weight of contemporary pictorial evidence–in the De Witt sketch or in panoramic views of London–points towards the use of flags, but as Dutton has pointed out, the emphasis need not lie on the physical nature of the sign–be it an image fixed to the edifice, a statue, a flag, or a combination of these–as the nature of the affiliated emblem and its significance are of prime importance (36).

3.2 "Hercules and his load": the emblem on the Globe sign

The debate as to what a sign heralding the Globe may have depicted, albeit *sans* motto, serves as point of entry to an examination of various significant cultural developments during the latter half of the sixteenth century, developments which may be seen to have had an impact on specific dramatic content but also on the wider significance of Shakespeare's Globe plays. In his important early treatise on the possible characteristics of Shakespeare's theatre, John Cranford Adams presented the following anonymous elegy on Richard Burbage (d. 1619) as possibly alluding to the Globe sign:

> Hence forth your wauing flagg, no more hang out
> Play now no more att all, when round aboute
> Wee looke and miss the *Atlas* of your spheare.
> (Qtd. in J. C. Adams 32)

As with Heywood's reference to the Fortune, this is an allusion to a playhouse rebuilt after fire,[33] but again the assumption is that the second Globe emulated the first in many respects. The elegy indicates the presumed custom of advertising by means of a flag on the exterior of the playhouse, underlining the impression that such a flag was almost certainly a feature of the Globe. Tantalisingly, it also provides a metaphor which at once does justice to Burbage's unsurpassed reputation as an actor and appears also to allude to the sign of the Globe:

---

[32] "In common with other playhouses of the same type, the Globe had a sign prominently displayed over the main entrance" (J. C. Adams 31).

[33] The Globe was immediately rebuilt at great expense after it was destroyed by fire in 1613 (see Introduction, 30).

the deity and his “spheare.” The implication seems to be that Burbage’s career sustained the Globe theatre, raising it high above all else. If indeed referring to the sign, the anonymous author casts the Titan Atlas as its motif, where Malone had insisted it was Hercules. In Greek mythology, both were said to have borne the heavens, and thus a confusion–or even a conscious amalgamation–of the two is understandable.[34] In the case of the Burbage elegy, it may simply have been a matter of poetic metre, with the duo-syllabic “Atlas” more suitable than its unwieldy alternative.

In 1970, *Shakespeare Quarterly* published a short article by Ejner J. Jensen entitled “A New Allusion to the Sign of the Globe Theater.” The new allusion was found in the Induction to John Marston’s *Antonio and Mellida*, where the actors playing Piero and Alberto discuss their roles as part of a framing device.[35] The moment serves to highlight the close association, and perhaps confusion, of Hercules with Atlas in contemporary parlance. Following Jensen’s reading, Alberto appears to criticise the arrogance of the players at the Fortune–the Admiral’s Men–by accusing them of behaving as if they had adopted the motif of their more illustrious rivals at the Globe, or in his words, “as if Hercules / Or burly Atlas shoulder’d up their state” (Induction, lines 18-19). Read in this way, the passage is indeed a compelling allusion to the sign of the Globe, and it helps us to understand apparent discrepancies as to whether it was Hercules or Atlas who was depicted.[36]

The received identification of Hercules as the figure on the Globe sign appears, like the motto, to emanate from Steevens in the

---

[34] In the eleventh labour of Heracles, Eurystheus orders Heracles to fetch golden apples from the Hesperides. Before doing so, Heracles frees Prometheus from his punishment, and Prometheus advises him to take over the sky from Atlas and send him to fetch the apples in his stead. “So Atlas took three apples from the Hesperides and returned to Heracles; and not wishing to hold up the heavens again, [he] said that he himself would carry the apples to Eurystheus, and asked Heracles to support the sky in his place. Heracles promised that he would, but passed it back to Atlas by means of a ruse […] And when Atlas heard his request, he placed the apples on the ground and took the sky back. In this way, Heracles was able to pick up the apples and depart” (Apollodorus 83). Hercules is the Roman equivalent name for Heracles.

[35] *Antonio and Mellida* was entered in the Stationers' Register on 24 October 1601. The relevant extract can be found in appendix 3.3.

[36] Uncertainties in this matter are exemplified by Edward H. Sugden’s *Topographical Dictionary to the Works of Shakespeare and His Fellow Dramatists* (1925). Under the entry “Globe,” Sugden states that “[o]ver the door was the sign of Hercules bearing the world on his shoulders,” while in the entry for “Atlas” he affirms that “[t]he original Globe Theatre had for its sign A[tlas] bearing the world on his shoulders.”

1778 *Johnson-Steevens Edition*. His claim comes in the form of an editorial comment on a reference to Hercules in *Hamlet*, when Rosencrantz and Guildenstern inform the prince about the travelling players who have arrived at Elsinore (see appendix 3.2). The passage concerning the "tragedians of the city" is widely accepted as a metatheatrical allusion to the London theatre scene, and more specifically to a rivalry between the adult and boy players. It suffices here to note the moment when Hamlet asks his courtiers about the runaway success of the young players:

> HAMLET. Do the boys carry it away?
> ROSENCRANTZ. Ay, that they do, my lord,
> Hercules and his load too.
> (*Ham* 2.2.361-63)

Steevens commented that "[t]he allusion may be to the *Globe* playhouse, on the Bankside, the sign of which was *Hercules carrying the Globe*" (Steevens 10: 256, original emphasis). Schanzer, in his article on the Globe sign, doubts the veracity of this statement, memorably asserting that "a picture of Hercules carrying the terrestrial globe offends against both mythology and common sense,"–an opinion which I shall address later in this chapter–before advancing "the distinct possibility that Steevens thought up the picture of Hercules carrying the globe as an *ad hoc* explanation of the *Hamlet* passage" ("Hercules" 52).

Dutton has countered Schanzer's scepticism in part by demonstrating that a reference to the Globe at the point indicated by Steevens would be consistent with other richly allusive moments that appear to suffuse the scene and the play as a whole. For Dutton, "Hercules and his load" remains a reference that is "not obscure […] but seems heavily pointed" (37). It is a scholarly controversy that is problematised somewhat by the fact that the lines in question are part of a section (2.2.338-63) which only appears in the 1623 Folio (F) version of *Hamlet*. Dutton skirts this issue by means of a note in which he states that "it is sufficient to assume that the Folio text is an authentic version of the play" (37), a hazardous claim in light of the textual scholarship that has followed since. The late date raises the possibility that even if "Hercules and his load" was a reference to the Globe, it may have been an addition prompted by features of the second Globe playhouse. However, the appearance in the obviously fragmentary 1603 quarto (Q1) of lines which appear to be cognate to those in the Folio passage may point to the prior existence of this exchange between Hamlet and his men.[37] In Q1 we find the following lines at the point where the second quarto of 1604 (Q2) omits entirely the passage in F that mentions the boy players:

> GILDERSTONE. No my Lord, their reputation holds as it was wont.
> HAMLET. How then?
> GILD. I'faith, my lord, novelty carries it away, for the principle public audience that came to them are turned to private plays and to the humour of children.
> (7.245-49)[38]

We may recognise the similarities to the version that was printed some twenty years later in F:

> ROSENCRANTZ. Nay, their endeavour keeps in the wonted pace. But there is, sir, an eyrie of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question and are most tyrannically clapped for't. These are now the fashion, and so berattle the common stages–so they call them–that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose-quills, and dare scarce come thither.
> (*Ham* 2.2.339-45)

This is the section that culminates in the reference to Hercules in F, and which is omitted in Q2. There is a sense that the presence in Q1 of the "carrying it away" conceit as part of these lines, albeit pared down and assigned to a different role, may support the notion that the exchange as a whole, including the allusion to the Globe sign, was part of the first performances of Hamlet in the years before its publication in 1603. The topical allusion to the boy players may have been abridged in Q1 for the same reason that it was presumably excised from Q2, namely that its relevance was wearing thin by the time of printing. More likely still, the lines in Q1 were an imperfect and unauthorised printing of the passage as it was written and first performed, consonant with large parts of that quarto, and, arguably, Heminges and Condell had access to a more complete source in 1623. I do not think it likely that the lines were imaginatively fleshed out at that point with a reference to Hercules that had not been heard by audiences in 1601.

---

[37] A facsimile of the relevant page in Q1 can be found in appendix 3.4.

[38] Citations from the first quarto of Hamlet, with modernised spelling, are taken from Irace, ed. *The First Quarto of Hamlet*.

3.3 “This goodly frame”: *Hamlet* and the Globe playhouse

The passage discussed above is preceded by another, textually less problematic moment that indicates the metatheatrical self-consciousness of *Hamlet* and which supports the reading of “Hercules and his load” as an allusion to the Globe sign:

> HAMLET. I have of late–but wherefore I know not–lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercise; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory. This most excellent canopy the air, look you, this brave o’erhanging, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire–why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours.
>
> (*Ham* 2.2.297-305)

These lines form the preamble to Hamlet’s famous ruminations on mankind as the supposed “paragon of animals,” a speech printed with only slight variances between F and Q2, and in characteristically meagre form in Q1. Hamlet sees the earth as a “goodly frame” and the air around him as an “excellent canopy,” before drawing attention to a magnificent “o'erhanging,” likening the starry sky to a gilded roof. He extols the wonders of nature before declaring that they appear only “foul and pestilent” to him, which throws into relief his depressive state of mind. The idea of the earth as a “frame” corresponds to contemporary usage,[39] but a cursory gesture from the actor–most likely Burbage, the Atlas of this sphere–would surely focus attention on the framing timbers of the playhouse, inducing a metaphorical association of the world of the play with both the inner world of the playhouse and the world outside. A promontory is “a point of high land which juts out into the sea or another expanse of water" ("promontory, n." *OED*). Hamlet's "sterile promontory" is thus conceivably also an allusion, easily accentuated by an actor's gesture, to the expansive, bare stage of the Elizabethan playhouse. If we venture to take the copy of De Witt's drawing of the Swan theatre as archetype, we may notice that the stage was clearly raised above the so-called understanders (see fig. 3). Although "promontory" is commonly glossed as signifying a headland pointing out into eternity (Thompson and Taylor 257), in this instance the playhouse metaphor seems to me to be more directly accessible than its wider signification.

---

[39] *OED* provides the now archaic definition: “the universe, the heavens, the earth, or any part of it, regarded as a structure” (“frame, n. and adj.2.” *OED*). See also “The frame and huge foundation of the earth” (*1 Henry IV* 3.1.15).

De Witt's sketch also shows two large onstage pillars supporting a stage roof which extends from the front of the tiring house. The decorated underside of this roof was colloquially referred to as the "heavens," with Gurr affirming that it was "painted with sun, moon and stars, and probably the signs of the zodiac" (*TSS* 151). Hamlet's "brave o'erhanging"–or "brave o'erhanging firmament" as printed in Q2–is at once the sky above Elsinore and above London, but it is surely also the roof immediately over Burbage's head.[40] Harold Jenkins emphasized the plausibility of the metaphor when lifted from the context of its first performance space: "It is sometimes suggested that the Shakespearean imagery derived from, and could apply to, the playhouse in which the words would be spoken […] But in view of the frequent Elizabethan use of *frame*, *canopy*, *firmament* in descriptions of earth and heaven, it seems unlikely that Shakespeare needed such inspiration" (468).[41] In opposition to this view, however, Dutton upholds that "[t]he inescapable fact is that, during a performance at the Globe, Burbage must have been self-consciously gesturing at a piece of theatrical architecture which directly mirrors Hamlet's lines" (38). Hamlet's prose monologue bespeaks not only his own acute self-consciousness but also that of the dramatist and his play. For Shakespeare and his contemporaries, the playhouse itself was an integral part of performance, a ludic space that played its part by means of the metaphorical potential of its structural features. With the "Hercules and his load" moment in F coming just fifty lines after this passage, I concur with Dutton's assessment that it is surely a pointed reference to the presumed emblem of the playhouse, given that "Hamlet's whole conversation here with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern is built around allusions to the world of the theatre" (ibid. 39).

---

[40] Dutton suggests that "the absence of 'firmament' [in F] tips the passage away from metaphor and towards physical description of the architecture," with the proviso it may be a printing error (38). Q1 has "the spangled heavens," a more direct reference to the colloquialism employed for the stage roof.

[41] In fact, as Hibbard has noted (218), the passage contains the earliest known application of *canopy* to the air ("canopy, n.2.b." *OED*).

As the earliest of a number of allusions to the "heavens" being a regular feature in the public theatres, Chambers cites the playwright Thomas Nashe (1567-1601) in the preface to Philip Sidney's compendium of sonnets entitled *Astrophel and Stella* (1591): "here you shal find a paper stage streud with pearle, an artificial heau'n to ouershadow the faire frame" (qtd. in *ES* 2: 544).[42] Nashe likens Sidney's works to a magnificent playhouse, and by extension the cosmos. The reference indicates common usage of the "heaven" and earthly "frame" metaphors in relation to theatres a decade before the Globe appeared on Bankside. A further reference is found in Heywood's famous *Apology for Actors*, published in 1612. In describing the elaborate features of the Roman amphitheatre Campus Martius, built by Julius Caesar, Heywood mentions "the coverings of the stage, which we call the heavens" (*Apology* 34). He also echoes Hamlet's words in his summary of the classical stage: "in briefe, in that little compasse were comprehended the perfect modell of the *firmament*, the whole *frame* of the *heavens*, with all grounds of Astronomicall conjecture" (ibid. 35, my emphasis). This confirms that Heywood at least would–or perhaps did in person–interpret the Prince's monologue as an ironical panegyric to the Globe playhouse. Moreover, the *Apology* in its account of the Roman theatre points towards the origin of those theatrical traditions "which, taken separately, are almost clichés," but which Shakespeare so adroitly interweaved at such moments (Jenkins 468).

---

[42] Philip Sidney (1554-86), prominent Elizabethan courtier and poet.

3.4 Vitruvius and the origins of *theatrum mundi*

In the first century BC, the Roman architect and engineer Vitruvius Pollio set out the architectural principles of Greek and Roman antiquity. His treatise entitled *De Architectura* comprises ten books, and in book 3 he advises that the planning of temples depends on symmetry and proportion, before stipulating that a temple "must have an exact proportion worked out after the fashion of the members of a finely-shaped human body" (1: 159; bk. 3, ch. 1). After outlining the various proportionalities of the human body that "Nature has so planned," Vitruvius begins to explain how the principle should be applied in architecture:

> In like fashion the members of temples ought to have dimensions of their several parts answering suitably to the general sum of their whole magnitude. Now the navel is naturally the exact centre of the body. For if a man lies on his back with hands and feet outspread, and the centre of a circle is placed on his navel, his figure and toes will be touched by the circumference. Also a square will be found described within the figure, in the same way as a round figure is produced.
> (1: 161; bk. 3, ch. 1)

A modern reader will immediately associate this passage with the famous drawing now commonly referred to as *The Vitruvian Man* (see fig. 4), by Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519). Renaissance interest in Vitruvius was widespread across Europe, with the Italian humanist Leon Battista Alberti (1404-72) producing his own revised Vitruvian architectural treatise, also in ten books and entitled *De Re Aedificatoria*. Following Vitruvius, Alberti praises the circular form and relates it to natural design. In the wake of Gutenberg's invention of the printing press and the rapid diffusion of printing in Europe during the latter half of the fifteenth century,[43] Alberti's work was published posthumously in 1485, and a year later the first printed edition of *De Architectura* also appeared. Da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man* followed hard upon in 1490.

---

[43] Johannes Gutenberg (d. 1468), German printer who completed the first major book printed from movable type, the Gutenberg Bible, ca. 1455.

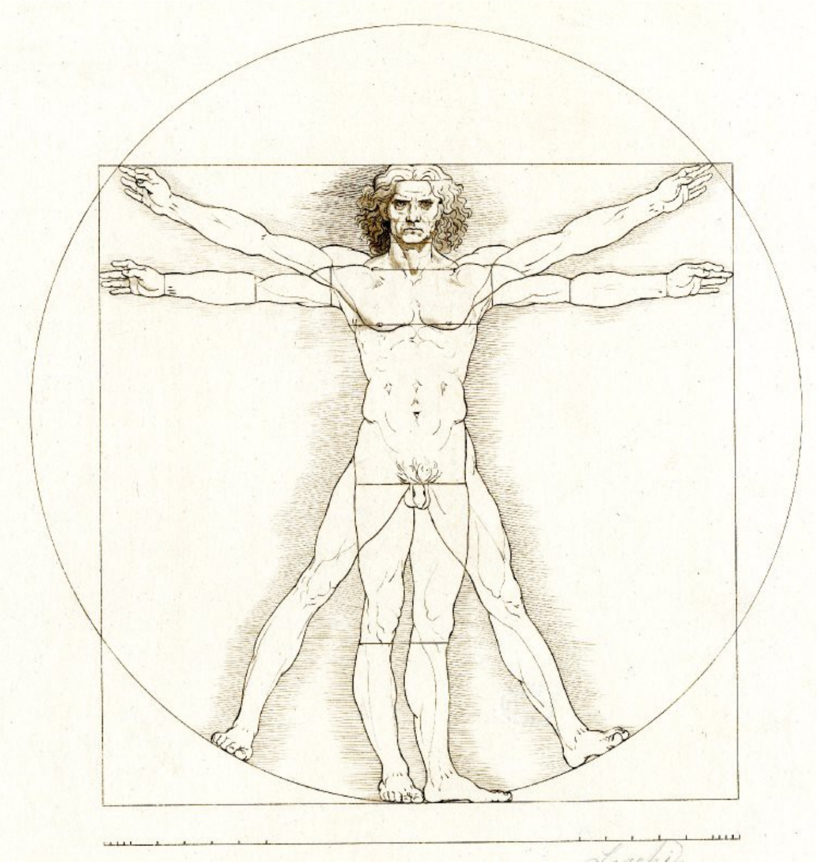


Fig. 4: *Vitruvian Man* (1490) by Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519).

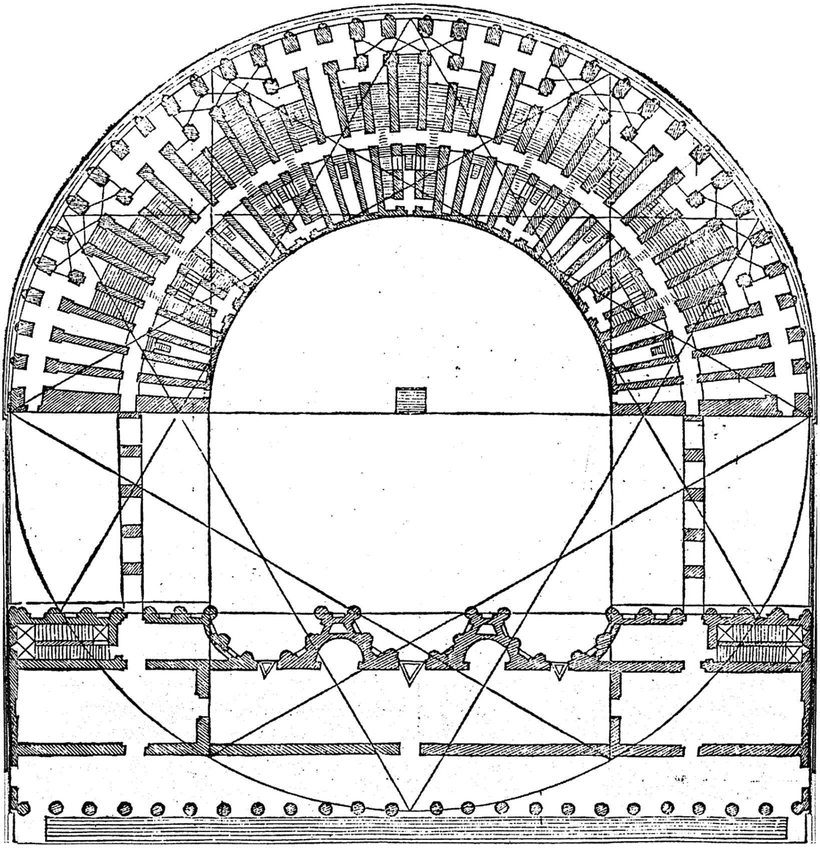


Fig. 5: Ground plan of the Roman theatre by Andrea Palladio, for Daniele Barbaro's *Commentary on Vitruvius* (1567).

In book 5 of *De Architectura*, Vitruvius delineates the principles of Roman theatre construction. His focus in chapter 3 is on acoustics, advising a choice of location where "the passage of sound is not hindered" (1: 269; bk. 5, ch. 3). Vitruvius draws the comparison between sound and water, explaining that the voice "moves circle fashion" similarly to ripples on standing water:

> But while in water the circles move horizontally only, the voice both moves horizontally and rises vertically by stages […]. Therefore the ancient architects following nature's footsteps, traced the voice as it rose, and carried out the ascent of the theatre seats. By the rules of mathematics and the method of music, they sought to make the voices from the stage rise more clearly and sweetly to the spectators' ears. (1: 269; bk. 5, ch. 3)

The above passage points to the Roman emphasis on aural theatre and on the endeavour to project the voice "clearly and sweetly." The importance of the circle and of radial symmetry in the classical theatre is also evident, and this is consolidated by the outline of the structure which Vitruvius describes in chapter 6:

> The circumference is to be drawn; and in it four equilateral triangles are to be described touching the circumference at intervals (just as in the case of the twelve celestial signs, astronomers calculate from the musical division of the constellations). Of these triangles the side of that which is nearest the scene, will determine the front of the scene, in the part where it cuts the curve of the circle.
> (1: 283; bk. 5, ch. 6)

Significantly, Vitruvius here refers to the schema of ancient cosmology and the circle of the signs of the zodiac, which was divided into four triangles of three signs each.[44] The cosmic foundations for the classical theatre indicate its representational function as *theatrum mundi*, a macrocosm in which the human microcosm could play out.

---

[44] "A belt of the celestial sphere extending about 8 or 9 degrees on each side of the ecliptic, within which the apparent motions of the sun, moon, and principal planets take place; it is divided into twelve equal parts called *signs*" ("zodiac, n." *OED*).

Although *theatrum mundi* is commonly translated as "theatre of the world," it is instructive to note that the latin *mundus* also equates to "universe." Heninger, Jr. informs that "[a]ccording to Plutarch, the term *cosmos* originated with Pythagoras," who "devised the word to express the beauty and the orderliness of the created world. The corresponding word in Latin is *mundus*, and in English *universe*" (7).[45] Taken as such, the *theatrum mundi* conceit encompasses the earthly and heavenly components of the universe, not just the terrestrial body with which we now associate the term *world*. These principles, as set out in *De Architectura*, were studied in great detail by the leaders of the Italian Renaissance, among them Alberti, Daniele Barbaro (1513-70) and Andrea Palladio (1508-80). Barbaro in 1567 published a commentary on Vitruvius,[46] for which the architect Palladio provided a ground plan of the ancient theatre among other illustrations (see fig. 5). The work "contained the best text of Vitruvius available," and its publication presented "the best and most learned commentary available" to readers across Europe (Yates 34). The Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza which still stands today was designed by Palladio and completed in 1585, representing a culmination of this rediscovery of Vitruvian theatre architecture in Renaissance Europe.

---

[45] Pythagoras of Samos (ca. 580-500 BC), Greek philosopher and mathematician.

[46] *Vitruvii Architectura cum commentariis Danielis Barbari*. Venice, 1567.

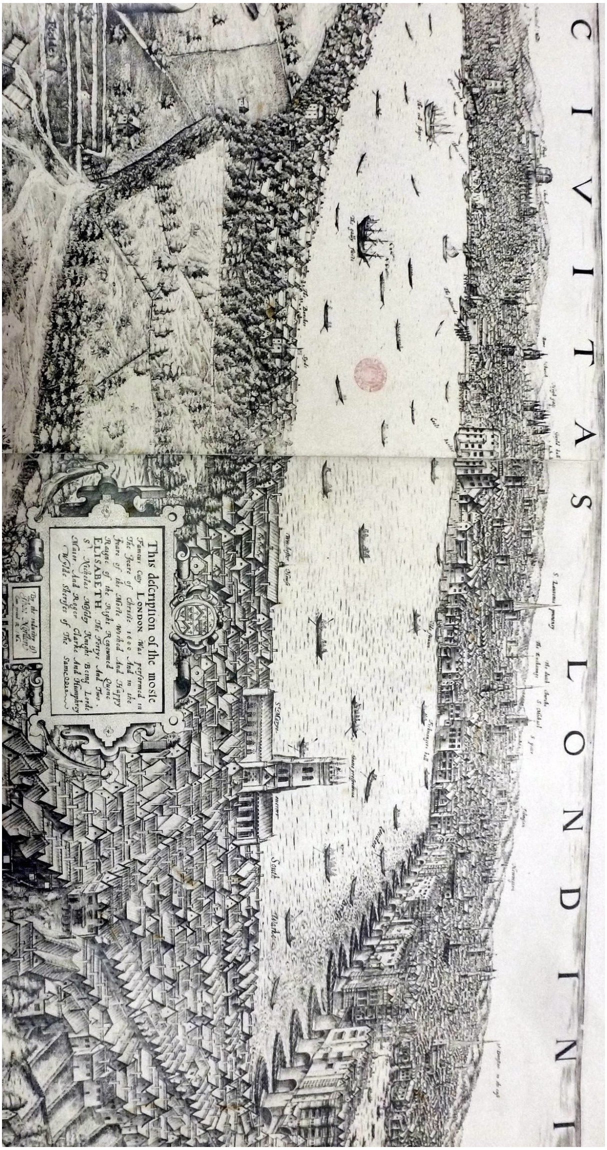

CIVITAS LONDINI
This description of the moste Famous City LONDON Was performed in The Yeare of Christe 1600 And in the Yeare of the Moste Wished And Happy Raigne of the Right Renowmed Queene ELISABETH The Fortye And Two. Sr Nicholas Mosley Knight Being Lorde Maior And Roger Clarke And Humphrey Welde Sherifes of The Same Cittye
South Warke

Fig. 6: Map of London entitled *Civitas Londini*, produced in 1600 by John Norden. Showing the extent of the City and the Bankside area. Showing Old St. Paul's under the 'V' of the title, and St. Saviour's Church, now Southwark Cathedral, in the foreground.

3.5 John Dee, early English architecture, and Burbage's Theatre

In England the architectural Renaissance–as well as the literary–lagged behind developments on the Continent. The great English architects Inigo Jones (1573-1652) and Christopher Wren (1632-1723) would later transform the London cityscape with monumental successes typified by Jones's Banqueting House at Whitehall or Wren's St. Paul's Cathedral, completed in 1622 and 1720 respectively, but it is evident from contemporary depictions such as John Norden's *Civitas Londini* (1600) that Elizabethan London was still aesthetically medieval, dominated by the gothic Old St. Paul's in the City, and the Church of St. Saviour's on the south side of the river (see fig. 6).[47] The Renaissance historian Frances Yates, in her book entitled *Theatre of the World* (1969), demonstrated that we need not infer an ignorance of Vitruvian theories of proportion and symmetry from the absence of impressive new structures in Elizabethan England. Yates identifies the Tudor "Renaissance Man" John Dee (1527-1608) as a proto-architect in England at a time that had long been seen as devoid of cultural interest in neoclassical theory, given the perception of England as "a provincial backwater so far as the new architecture was concerned" (21).[48] In 1570 Dee wrote a preface to the first English translation of the works of the Greek mathematician Euclid,[49] drawing heavily on both Vitruvius and Alberti, and Yates highlights the significance of this publication:

> Nearly fifty years before Inigo Jones, the 'Vitruvius Britannicus', began belatedly to initiate neoclassical building in England, John Dee was teaching the middle-class Elizabethan public, through his popular Preface, the basic principles of proportion and design, and demonstrating that all the mathematical arts subserve Architecture as their queen. (21)

---

[47] Old St. Paul's was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1666 and replaced by Wren's grandiose, domed baroque cathedral that still stands today.

[48] *OED* provides an obscure source from 1563 as the earliest recorded sixteenth-century instance of "architect" that also matches its primary definition of "master builder" ("architect, n." *OED*). Bowsher and Miller add that James Baret's *Alvearie* dictionary of 1580 "shows clearly that the word 'architect' had not yet been assimilated into the English language" (108).

[49] Euclid (ca. 300 BC), Greek mathematician known for his great work *Elements of Geometry.*

Dee’s famous library catalogue of 1583 confirms his knowledge of Vitruvius via the works of Alberti and Barbaro.[50] His “aspiration towards total knowledge” enabled Dee to amass the largest collection of books and manuscripts in Elizabethan England, while his eminence is underlined by his role as advisor to the Queen herself (Sherman 871).

The suggestion here is not that Shakespeare and his sharers built the Globe playhouse as a conscious response to neoclassical theatre architecture on the Continent, or even as an intentional realisation of the Vitruvian *theatrum mundi* conceit. For one thing, the Globe was based at least in part–at very least in its framing timbers–on James Burbage’s Theatre in Shoreditch, which predates Palladio’s Teatro Olimpico. Burbage was no classically informed architect in the mould of Palladio; he had served as an apprentice joiner in London and later turned actor with the Earl of Leicester’s Men. Burbage and his brother-in-law John Brayne successfully initiated the transition from late-medieval drama and itinerant playing to the culture of theatrical enterprise and public amphitheatres in Renaissance London, as I outline in the following chapter. It was an ambitious and costly undertaking, but Burbage’s lofty aspirations and self-confidence are evidenced by the fact that he had assured Brayne “that the cost of erecting the play-house would not exceed £200, and after it had already cost £500, urged that ‘it was no matter’, and that the profits ‘wold shortlie quyte the cost unto them bothe’” (*ES* 2: 387). We must reasonably assume that the structure of the Theatre, on which the Globe would be based, was determined by commercial factors–chiefly the need to accommodate as many patrons as possible–rather than the classical unities studied and adhered to by Palladio.

The assumption by Yates “that Burbage knew something of Vitruvian theory as propagated by Dee,” and her suggestions “that Burbage might have consulted Dee himself about the design; or that Dee himself was really the designer” of the Theatre (125-26) are interesting yet conjecturable, and have not been borne out by subsequent scholarship and archaeological work on Elizabethan playhouse remains. The early playhouse was most likely a rather contingent combination of the features of the existing animal-baiting houses on Bankside with those of the inns and courtyards used for playing before it became an institutionalised pastime. The overwhelming majority of London buildings at that time were built in the vernacular tradition by local craftsmen, and design was not usually motivated by aesthetic concerns or architectural ambition (Bowsher and Miller 108).[51] Nonetheless, I hesitate to dismiss out of hand the theories advanced by Yates, since the decision by Burbage and his associates to name this new venture *The Theatre* implies an awareness of the classical roots of their vocation. Certainly the principles of Vitruvian architecture–not least the relationship between circle and square–and the details of their dissemination and currency in contemporary learned society, as discussed above, allow us to discount the notion that a rectangular stage in a round auditorium was an awkward "square peg in a round hole," irrespective of what the builders intended.[52]

---

[50] The catalogue was published fully indexed in 1990 by the Bibliographical Society (Roberts and Watson, eds. *John Dee’s Library Catalogue*).

3.6 Classical influence on the Elizabethan playhouse

On the issue of classical influence in sixteenth-century theatres I am to some extent inclined to agree with Kent van den Berg, who in his book *Playhouse and Cosmos* argues that while the Elizabethan amphitheatres probably were not designed and built specifically to conform to classical architectural unities, they did respond in form and function to the *theatrum mundi* conceit:

> […] the cosmic emblems seen in the stage and auditorium coincide with and rationalize the inherent symbolic values of the spaces defined by playhouse architecture, and [...] these spaces influenced the presentation and perception of theatrical performance as a metaphor of reality. Descriptions of the playhouse as a *theatrum mundi* are valuable insofar as they translate into a familiar idiom intuitions about the phenomenology of theatrical space that are otherwise difficult to grasp. (46)

Van den Berg's subsequent refutation of a more direct classical influence in Elizabethan theatres is supported in part by a misapprehension, however, as he explains that their discordant design in comparison with classical antecedents caused the playhouses to be more suitable for staging the works of Shakespeare and his contemporaries:

---

[51] Vernacular architecture is that "concerned with ordinary domestic and functional buildings rather than the essentially monumental" ("vernacular, adj.6." *OED*).

[52] C. Walter Hodges in *The Globe Restored* (first published in 1953) remarked that the De Witt sketch "shows a large rectangular stage set out into a round arena, a square peg in a round hole. If we could come fresh to this arrangement, surely it would strike us at once as a rather clumsy and uncomfortable feature" (25).

> The playhouse, in all its heterogeneity, can better present the "multiple unity" or *discordia concors* of Elizabethan dramatic fictions, precisely because the architectural components are not subordinated to a single organic form but remain separate and relatively independent. This remarkable independence of elements within the playhouse defines the spatial and imaginative relationships in Elizabethan theatrical experience. (47-48)[53]

The suitability of the dramatic content to its surroundings is unquestionable, but van den Berg's assessment is surely coloured by hindsight, overlooking the fact that the idiosyncrasies of what he calls the Elizabethan theatrical experience were moulded by the physical environment, rather than the reverse. Shakespeare's works, which epitomise the differentiated mode of theatrical expression that we associate with the period, have their material origins in the playhouse built by Burbage and Brayne in 1576.[54] At that time the business of professional playing had not yet found its feet, and the heterogeneous dramatic fictions referenced by van den Berg had not begun to mature. The Globe would ultimately represent an apogee in the development of the public amphitheatre playhouse in London, providing Shakespeare and his company with their greatest period of sustained success, but it was built in response to the longevity of the Theatre, the Curtain, and the Rose.[55]

In light of the array of restrictions, financial and otherwise, which appertained to the building of London playhouses, it is prudent to acknowledge–as both Dutton and van den Berg have done–that Yates in her suggestions of deliberately Vitruvian theatre construction overstretches an already thin body of evidence. However, Heywood's *Apology for Actors*, with its paean to the ancient Roman theatre, lends credence to the notion that the Globe was emblematic of a more general cultural awareness of the classical arts, and that it was recognised as such. In describing the various theatres of Rome, Heywood explains that “every such was called *Circus*, the frame Globe-like, and merely round” (37). Written ca. 1612, it is an analogy which, as Dutton rightly insists, “can hardly be casual in this context” (41). Heywood is presumably making a direct link between the ancient theatres and the outstanding playhouse of his own time, suggesting that they were comparable at least in form. The few details we have of the London playhouses may amount to an image that appears far removed from the Vitruvian exactitude of Palladio's Teatro Olimpico, but I submit that the Globe was nonetheless a venue that in form and function–and perhaps most recognisably in name–responded to important cultural developments rooted in Humanist philosophy and the *theatrum mundi* conceit.

---

[53] *Discordia concors* ("harmonious discord") is Samuel Johnson's term for "a combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike" (*Lives* n. pag.).

[54] The assumption is that the basic structural arrangement of the Elizabethan public playhouse, as gleaned from De Witt's drawing of the Swan, had changed little from its earliest incarnation at the Theatre in Shoreditch.

[55] The Curtain was built in 1577, close to the Theatre in Shoreditch. The Rose was the first of the public playhouses on Bankside, built in 1587 (see fig. 1).

3.7 Sidney’s *Apology for Poetry* and the playhouse as heterocosm

In his 1953 book *The Mirror and the Lamp*, the venerable critic M. H. Abrams (1912-2015) traces the association of the artist with divinity–the idea of the poet as creator–to the Italian Renaissance of the later fifteenth century. As an example of this incipient metaphorical relationship, Abrams cites the Florentine humanist Cristoforo Landino (1424-98). In his 1481 commentary on Dante's *Divina Commedia*,[56] Landino explains that the Greek etymology for *poet* is rooted “half-way between 'creating,' which is peculiar to God when out of nothing he brings forth anything into being, and 'making,' which applies to men when they compose with matter and form in any art.” He then affirms that “although the feigning of the poet is not entirely out of nothing, it nevertheless departs from making and comes very near to creating. And God is the supreme poet, and the world is His poem” (qtd. in Abrams 273). Abrams informs that this concept of the poet as a divine creator was later introduced in England by the prominent Elizabethan courtier Philip Sidney (1554-86), in a famous essay entitled *An Apology for Poetry*.[57]

---

[56] Dante Alighieri (d. 1321), Italian poet who completed his *magnum opus* (“The Divine Comedy”) in 1320.

Sidney acclaims the unique qualities of the poet among artists by first asserting that all other pursuits are dependent on an objective reality, with the astronomer, the musician, and the philosopher–among several others–acting at the behest of nature:

> There is no Arte delivered to mankinde that hath not the workes of Nature for his principall object, without which they could not consist, and on which they so depend, as they become Actors and Players, as it were, of what Nature will have set foorth. (155)

Already in this conceit, all the world is a stage and nature is cast figuratively as a playwright, but in his appraisal of poetry, Sidney demonstrates the potential for the stage also to be a world, that is to say, for the poet to *create* an alternative, subjective reality that is independent from–and even superior to–the outside world:

> Onely the Poet, disdayning to be tied to any such subjection, lifted up with the vigor of his owne invention, dooth growe in effect another nature, in making things either better then Nature bringeth forth, or, quite a newe, formes such as never were in Nature […]. (ibid. 156)

Sidney's concept of “another nature” indicates the significant achievements of European Renaissance humanists in extolling subjectivity and intellectual independence from the unities of nature. It is this very notion which Abrams labels a “heterocosm” in charting the evolution of poetic metaphor to a point where it might achieve such an independence:

> The key event in this development was the replacement of the metaphor of the poem as imitation, a 'mirror of nature,' by that of the poem as heterocosm, 'a second nature,' created by the poet in an act analogous to God's creation of the world. (272)

---

[57] Abrams advises that although it was first published posthumously in 1595, Sidney's treatise “had been written about 1583, and had been circulated in manuscript before it was published” (381, n. 41).

Abrams also cites Sidney's contemporary George Puttenham (1529-91), presumed author of *The Arte of English Poesie*.[58] The work begins with the forthright dictum "[a] poet is as much to say as a maker" (1), before the author insists that a great poet such as Homer must have been imbued with "some divine instinct" to conjure an all-encompassing poetic vision "being but a poore private man." The central message of this opening passage of *The Arte of English Poesie* is"that if [poets] be able to devise and make all these things of them selves, without any subject of veritie, that they be (by maner of speech) as creating gods" (2). In his comprehensive study of the metaphorical significance of the Elizabethan playhouse, van den Berg neatly summarises these intellectual developments of the late sixteenth century:

> The new concepts of the poet as creator and the poem as heterocosm emerge together with, and are described by means of, a new metaphoric mode of reference that establishes its two terms as equivalents and invites us to view each in terms of the other–God as poet, poet as God. (32)

The new metaphoric mode of reference indicated here by van den Berg is part of an overarching framework of Humanist[59] thought that placed the individual at the centre of the cosmos, and which thereby allowed the reciprocal *theatrum mundi* conceit to take hold in Shakespeare's theatre. The sheer breadth of the literature in circulation which propounded such theories is indicated by Dee's library, itself "one of the great monuments of Renaissance culture" (Sherman 871).

3.8 Pico della Mirandola's *Oration* and the ethos of the Globe

Another significant name found in Dee's library catalogue is that of the Italian philosopher Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-94), whose *Oration on the Dignity of Man*[60] has been considered a "manifesto of the Renaissance" (Dougherty 586). I reference the work here as an exemplar of Italian Renaissance thought which informed

---

[58] The authorship of *The Arte of English Poesie*, published anonymously in 1589, is disputed. As such, the work may be found listed under its title in the list of references.

[59] "Any system of thought or ideology which places humans, or humanity as a whole, at its centre;" and "[a] variety of ethical theory and practice characterized by a stress on human rationality and capacity for free thought and moral action" ("humanism, n.5.a,b." *OED*).

[60] *Oratio de hominis dignitae* (written in 1486 and published posthumously in 1496).

Elizabethan learned culture and gave rise to a theatrical experience preoccupied with subjectivity and the power of the human will. Pico della Mirandola employs a divine rhetoric to advance his case for human learning and endeavour, and envisages God's address to Adam:

> [T]hou, coerced by no necessity, shalt ordain for thyself the limits of thy nature in accordance with thine own free will, in whose hand I have placed thee. I have set thee at the world's center, that thou mayest from thence more easily observe whatever is in the world. (348)

Man is thus placed at the centre of the cosmos, before a prominent theme of the discourse of the *Oration*–the mutability of man–is developed within the same imagined divine address:

> [T]hou mayest […] as though the maker and moulder of thyself, fashion thyself in whatever shape thou shalt prefer. Thou shalt have the power to degenerate into the lower forms of life, which are animal; thou shalt have the power, out of thy soul's judgment, to be reborn into the higher forms of life, which are divine. (ibid.)

Pico della Mirandola in his own voice subsequently praises the Protean mutability of man and asks "[w]ho will not admire this our chameleon?" (349).[61] We may recall the hyperbole of Shakespeare's Richard of Gloucester, who boasts that he "can add colours to the chameleon" and "[c]hange shapes with Proteus for advantages" (*3 Henry VI* 3.2.191-2). It is this same quality which allows Iago enigmatically to pronounce "I am not what I am" (*Oth* 1.1.65), or the wronged Edgar "[t]o take the basest and most poorest shape / That ever penury in contempt of man / Brought near to beast" (*KL* 7.173-5).

In gratitude to God, Pico explains how he has "come to understand why Man is the most fortunate of beings, and consequently worthy of all admiration" (347), before proclaiming: "O highest and most marvelous felicity of Man! To whom it is granted to have that which he chooses, to be that which he wills" (ibid. 348).[62] However ironic, Hamlet's own oration on the dignity of man echoes much of the language of these opening passages of Pico's work:

---

[61] Proteus, Greek mythological deity, son of Poseidon. Proteus had prophetic powers but assumed different shapes to avoid answering questions. Described by Homer, whose works appeared in English translation by George Chapman (d. 1634) from 1598 onwards.

> What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason, how infinite in faculty, in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god–the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals!
> (*Ham* 2.2.305-9)

Indeed, the principles laid out by the *Oration* may be seen to prefigure Hamlet's character and particularly his extraordinary self-consciousness. Pico concludes his explanation of the hierarchy of all beings by distinguishing between the earthly and the heavenly:

> If you see a philosopher determining all things by means of right reason, him you shall reverence: he is a heavenly and not an earthly being. If you see a pure contemplator, one unaware of the body and given over to the inward parts of the mind, he is neither an earthly nor a heavenly being: he is a more reverend divinity vested with human flesh. (349)

The ineluctable resonance of Hamlet's soliloquies leads a modern reader immediately to associate Shakespeare's own "pure contemplator" with the Humanist ideal defined herein.

In the pre-modern pagan world of *King Lear*, the power that the universe holds over mankind is foregrounded from the outset, as Lear invokes "all the operation of the orbs / From whom we do exist and cease to be" (1.104-05). Shortly after, Gloucester exclaims that "These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us" (2.103-04), which may well be a topical reference to eclipses that took place in September and October 1605.[63] In the world of the play, Gloucester's words are certainly representative of an antiquated belief system by which he attributes his son Edgar's presumed treachery to the workings of nature, showing a distrust in reason and science: "Though the wisdom of nature can reason thus and thus, yet nature finds itself scourged by the

---

[62] There is no known English translation of the *Oration* before that cited here, by Elizabeth Forbes in 1942.

[63] "A partial eclipse of the Moon, during which the shadow of Earth covered almost half the Moon, occurred in the predawn hours of September 27, and an almost total solar eclipse took place two weeks later on October 12" (Levy 60).

sequent effects" (2.104-06).[64] These lines are immediately juxtaposed with the trenchant wit of Edmund, who is a villain in the mould of the independent Renaissance subject, a master of not just his own fate but of those around him too. He alone at this point is able to see what Lear and Gloucester–establishing the pervasive motif of their blindness–cannot:

> EDMUND. This is the excellent foppery of the world: that when we are sick in fortune–often the surfeit of our own behaviour–we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars, as if we were villains by necessity, fools by heavenly compulsion, knaves, thieves, and treacherers by spherical predominance, drunkards, liars, and adulterers by an enforced obedience of planetary influence, and all that we are evil in by a divine thrusting on. An admirable evasion of whoremaster man, to lay his goatish disposition to the charge of stars!
> (*KL* 2.113-23)

Edmund's invective is charged with astronomical language and serves as a repudiation of pre-modern thought that cast the role of man as being subservient to "planetary influence." He then ironizes the turns of phrase of the unenlightened, indicating the signs of the zodiac–"my nativity was under Ursa Major"–before his refutation which alludes more directly still to the "heavens" of the playhouse: "Fut! I should have been that I am had the maidenliest star of the firmament twinkled on my bastardy" (2.124-28). With the theatricality of Edmund's situation thus implied, he duly avows his role as dramatist upon Edgar's entrance: "and on's cue out he comes, like the catastrophe of the old comedy; mine is villainous melancholy, with a sigh like them of Bedlam" (2.129-31). By implication, Edmund sees how both the world and the drama truly work; his words here underscore the inversion of the natural order engendered by Lear's folly. In the pagan world of *Lear*, the villainous Edmund is able by virtue of his palpably contemporary outlook to create a "second nature" and draw the audience into his confidence. A topical allusion to Bedlam, the hospital of St. Mary of Bethlehem in London,[65] perhaps expedites the association of Edmund at this moment with the world of the playhouse, rather than that of the play. Shakespeare and the Chamberlain's Men doubtless had much experience of "Bedlam beggars," as the hospital was situated directly adjacent to their former playhouses, the Theatre and the Curtain, in Shoreditch (see fig. 7b).

---

[64] Paraphrased by Foakes: "Although natural philosophy or science can provide explanations, the world of nature (including man) is afflicted by the effects that follow as a consequence" (*King Lear* 185).

Towards the end of his article on the sign of the Globe, Dutton briefly states his assessment that the emblem probably featured a celestial globe, based on the name and emblem of the rival Fortune playhouse:

> [T]heir goddess was (to use a crude distinction) strongly Medieval rather than Renaissance in her connotations, an image of the forces beyond human control, and the celestial Globe would similarly suggest matters beyond merely human endeavour. (43)

Although Shakespeare's works–particularly the tragedies–are clearly imbued with transcendent themes "beyond human control," I disagree with the implication that the symbolism of the playhouse was medieval. On the contrary, I hold that the Globe theatre espoused a decided Renaissance ethos which shaped the works written to be enacted on its stage, and which is personified in Shakespeare's great contemplators and strategists–Hamlet, Iago, and Edmund. In act 1 scene 2 of *Julius Caesar*, it is the rhetoric of Cassius that is steeped in this very ethos, and which urges Brutus to be the master of his own fate: "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, / But in ourselves, that we are underlings" (1.2.141-42). Dutton's view on the playhouse sign accords with Schanzer's aforementioned misgiving that "a picture of Hercules carrying the terrestrial globe offends against both mythology and common sense" (52), but Schanzer himself mentions that there were sixteenth-century precedents for such an image. The cultural history around such iconography requires further attention in order to corroborate the view that the name and emblem of Shakespeare's theatre responded to and informed its function as the material shaping force for the dramatist's "second nature" or heterocosm.

---

[65] The hospital was a well-known asylum for the mentally ill, located in Bishopsgate until 1676 ("bedlam, n." *OED).*

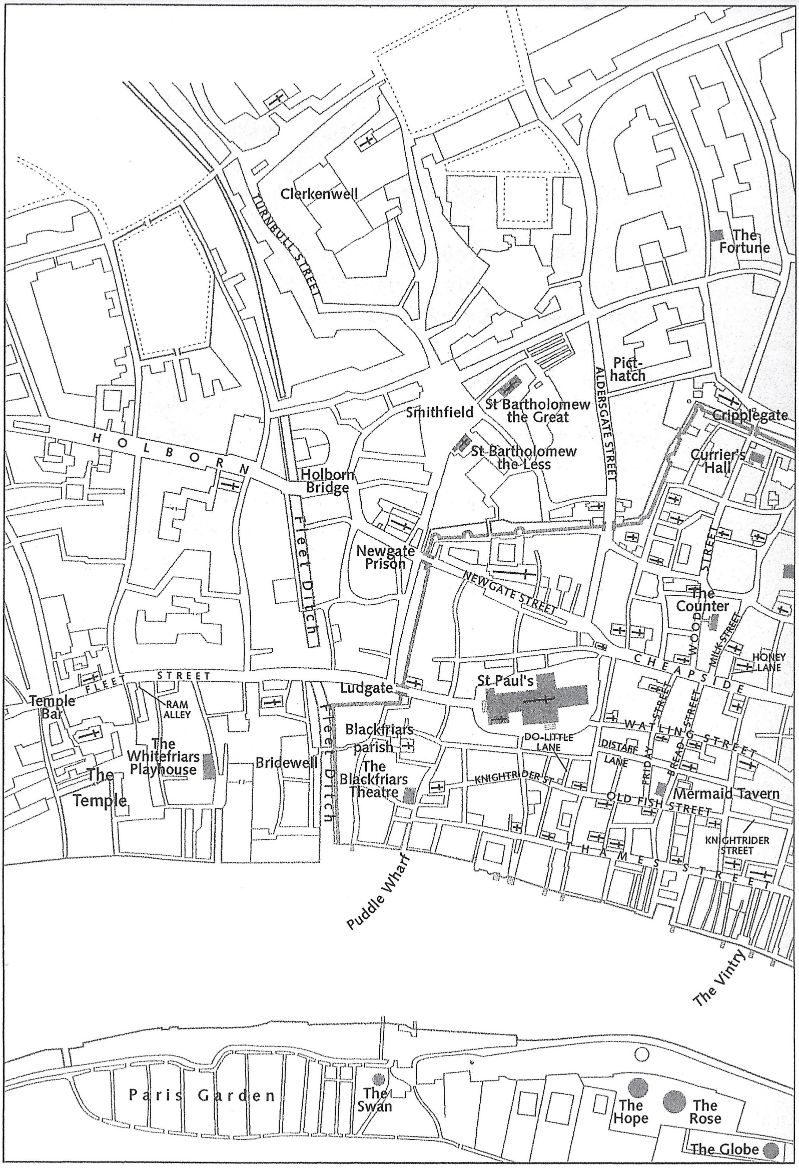

Clerkenwell
TURNBULL STREET
The Fortune
Pict-hatch
ALDERSGATE STREET
St Bartholomew the Great
Smithfield
Cripplegate
St Bartholomew the Less
Curriers' Hall
HOLBORN
Holborn Bridge
Newgate Prison
Fleet Ditch
NEWGATE STREET
The Counter
WOOD STREET
MILK STREET
HONEY LANE
CHEAPSIDE
St Paul's
Ludgate
FLEET STREET
Temple Bar
RAM ALLEY
The Whitefriars Playhouse
The Temple
Bridewell
Fleet Ditch
Blackfriars parish
The Blackfriars Theatre
DO-LITTLE LANE
KNIGHTRIDER ST
DISTAFF LANE
WATLING STREET
FRIDAY STREET
BREAD STREET
Mermaid Tavern
OLD FISH STREET
KNIGHTRIDER STREET
THAMES STREET
Puddle Wharf
The Vintry
Paris Garden
The Swan
The Hope
The Rose
The Globe

Fig. 7a: Map of the City of London in the early seventeenth century (west side). Showing St. Paul's Cathedral, the Blackfriars district, the Temple, Paris Garden, and the locations of the Bankside playhouses, including the Globe.

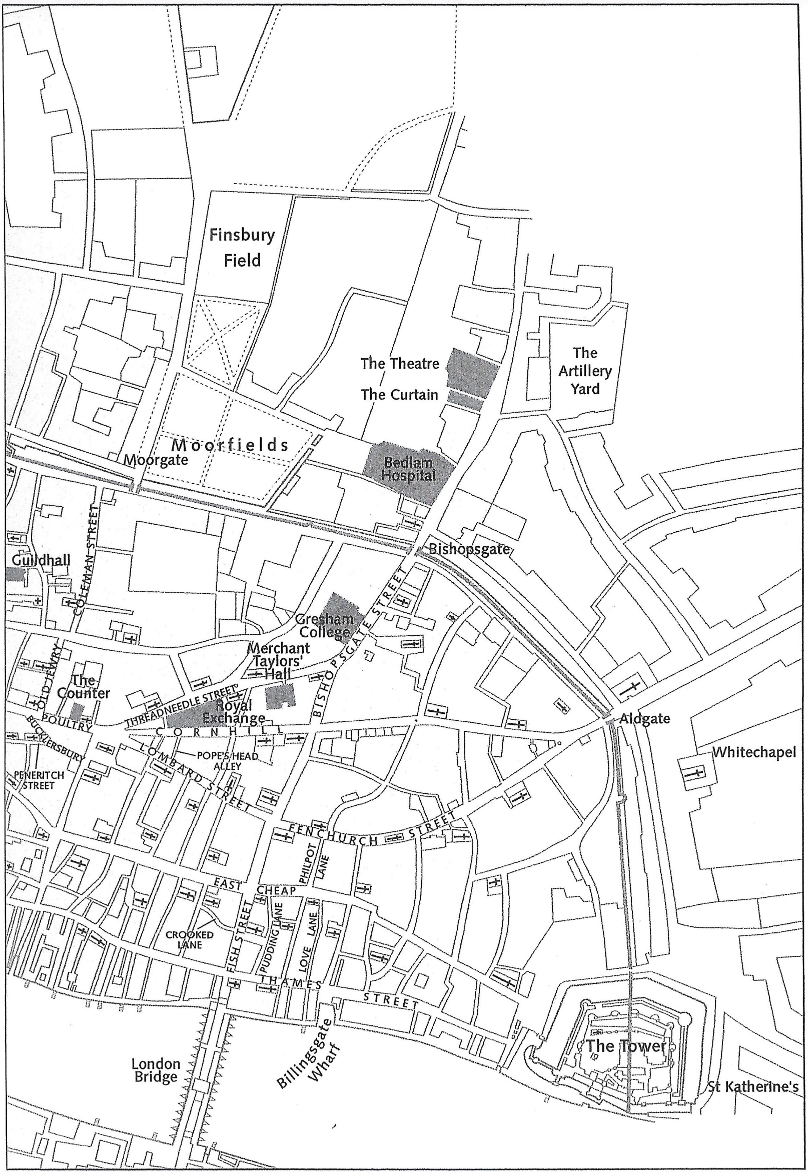

Finsbury Field
The Theatre
The Curtain
The Artillery Yard
Moorfields
Moorgate
Bedlam Hospital
Bishopsgate
Guildhall
COLEMAN STREET
Gresham College
Merchant Taylors' Hall
OLD JEWRY
The Counter
THREADNEEDLE STREET
Royal Exchange
BISHOPSGATE STREET
POULTRY
CORNHILL
BUCKLERSBURY
LOMBARD STREET
POPE'S HEAD ALLEY
PENERITCH STREET
Aldgate
Whitechapel
FENCHURCH STREET
PHILPOT LANE
EAST CHEAP
CROOKED LANE
FISH STREET
PUDDING LANE
LOVE LANE
THAMES STREET
London Bridge
Billingsgate Wharf
The Tower
St Katherine's

Fig. 7b: Map of the City of London in the early seventeenth century (east side). Showing the Tower of London, London Bridge, Bedlam Hospital, and the locations of the Theatre and Curtain playhouses.

3.9 “The Atlas of your spheare”: Global iconography in early modern Europe

The association of the term *Atlas* with cartography was a late sixteenth-century innovation. After the Greek scholar Ptolemy of the second century AD,[66] the most significant figure in geographical science was Gerardus Mercator, born in Flanders in 1512. A protégé of the Dutch polymath Gemma Frisius, whom he assisted in the construction of a terrestrial and celestial globe in 1534-36, Mercator established himself as a distinguished cartographer and prolific producer of maps (Tooley 31). In 1585 he published the first part of his *magnum opus*, for which he collected maps of the known world from his own oeuvre and from his contemporaries. The completed Mercator *Atlas*, published in 1595, was the first collection of maps to be given that name, although an image of Atlas holding a terrestrial globe had earlier been used by Antonio Lafreri (d. 1577) on the cover of his *Geografia Tavole Moderne di Geografia* (see fig. 8). The Mercator *Atlas* represents a consummation of almost two hundred years of cartographic developments that ensued from the first Latin translation (c. 1406-07) of Ptolemy's *Geographia*.[67]

The Ptolemaic opus is seen as “the atlas in embryo” (Campbell 188), and after it was first printed in Bologna in 1477, new maps were added in important editions including the *Berlinghieri* edition of 1482,[68] the widely disseminated edition printed that same year at Ulm, Germany, and the Strasbourg edition of 1513, compiled by the renowned cartographer Martin Waldseemüller (1470-1520). This latter edition of *Geographia* followed Waldseemüller's famed *Universalis Cosmographia* (1507), a large wall map of the world in twelve sections printed from woodcuts (see fig. 9a). His achievements are testaments to a changing world; indeed, the *Universalis Cosmographia* is regarded as “the map that named America” thanks to its dedication to the Italian explorer Amerigo Vespucci (d. 1512), set forth in the accompanying text *Cosmographiae Introductio*.[69] As Eila Campbell explains in an

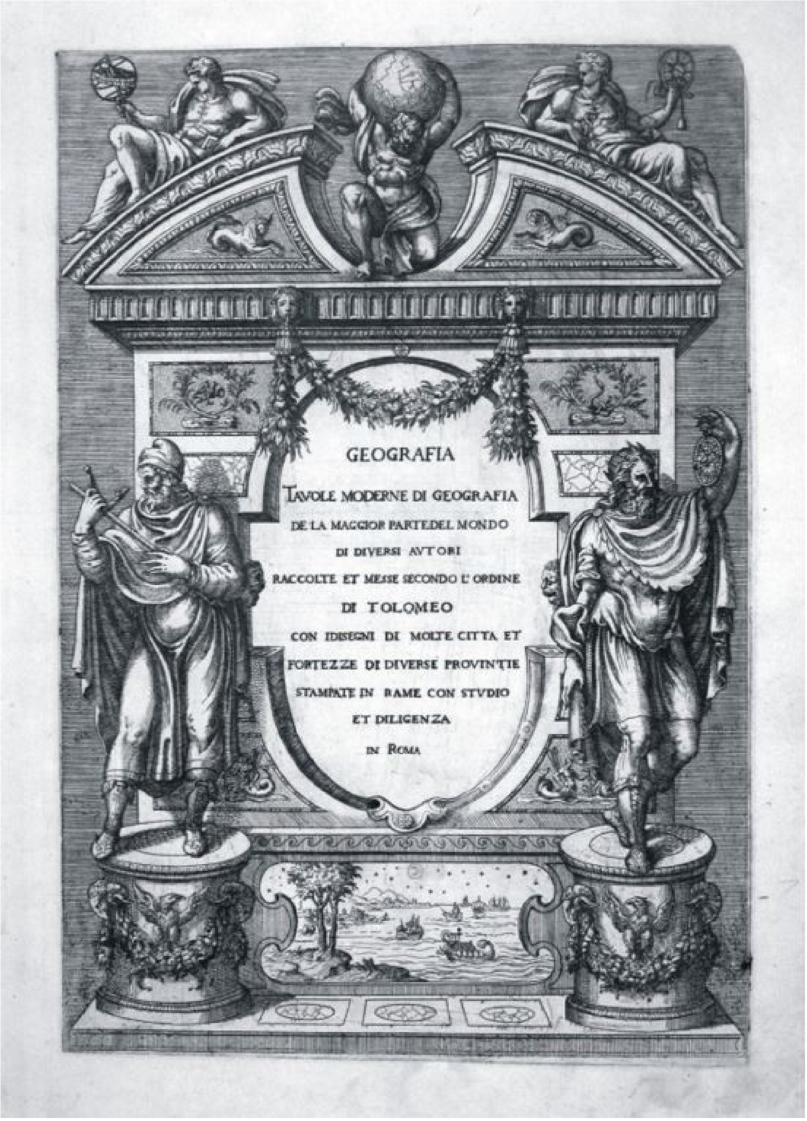
---

[66] Ptolemy, latin name *Claudius Ptolemaeus*, (ca. 100-170 AD): Greek-Egyptian scholar and author of *Geographia*, a treatise on the known geography of the Greco-Roman world.

[67] “It is to be regretted that the majority of geographers to-day remember [Mercator] chiefly for the map projection which bears his name” (Campbell 191).

[68] The Florentine scholar Francesco Berlinghieri (1440-1501) was a protégé of Cristoforo Landino, mentioned above in reference to the poet-as-maker conceit.

[69] “The map has been referred to in various circles as America's birth certificate and for good reason; it is the first document on which the name “America” appears. It is also the first map to depict a separate and full Western Hemisphere and the first map to represent the Pacific Ocean as a separate body of water” (Herbert).



GEOGRAFIA
TAVOLE MODERNE DI GEOGRAFIA
DE LA MAGGIOR PARTEDEL MONDO
DI DIVERSI AVTORI
RACCOLTE ET MESSE SECONDO L' ORDINE
DI TOLOMEO
CON IDISEGNI DI MOLTE CITTA ET
FORTEZZE DI DIVERSE PROVINTIE
STAMPATE IN RAME CON STVDIO
ET DILIGENZA
IN ROMA

Fig. 8: Title page of *Geografia Tavole Moderne di Geografia* (1560-67) by Antonio Lafreri (d. 1577), including the image of Atlas supporting a terrestrial globe on his shoulders.

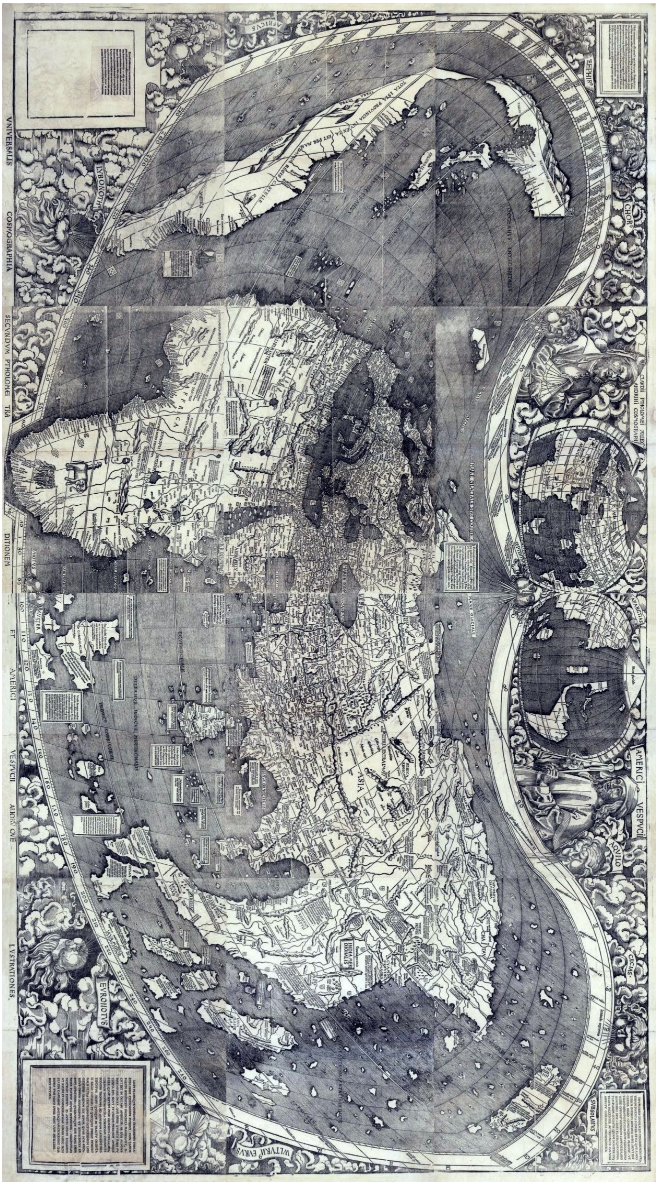

UNIVERSALIS COSMOGRAPHIA SECVNDVM PTHOLOMEI TRADITIONEM ET AMERICI VESPVCII ALIORVMQVE LVSTRATIONES
CLAVDII PTHOLOMEI ALEXANDRINI COSMOGRAPHI
AMERICI VESPVCII
AFRICA
ASIA
EVROPA

Fig. 9a: *Universalis Cosmographia* (1507) by Martin Waldseemüller (1470-1520). Map of the world in twelve sections from woodcuts; now commonly known as “the map that named America.”

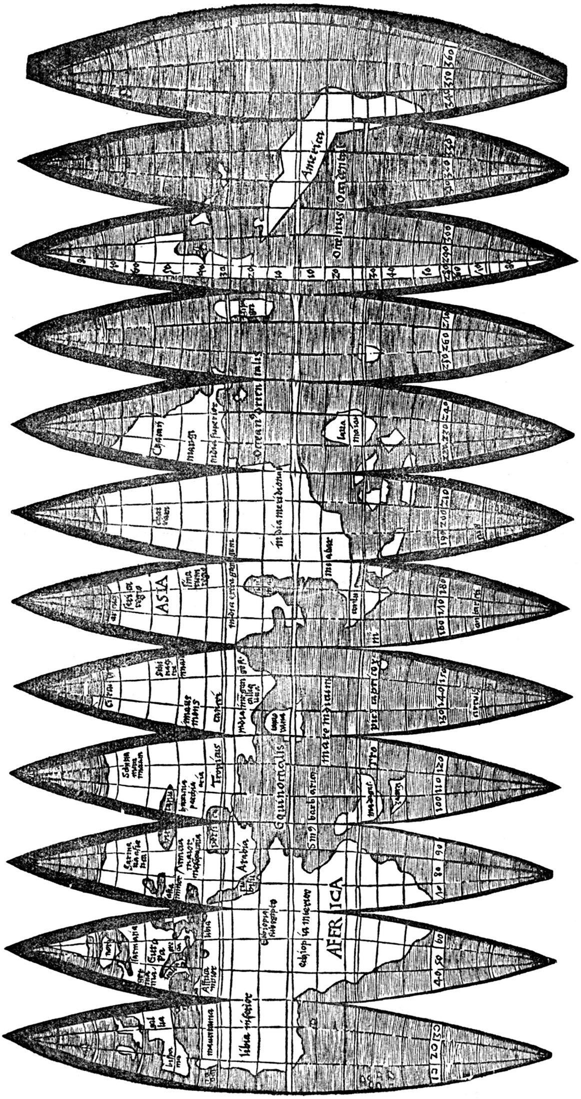
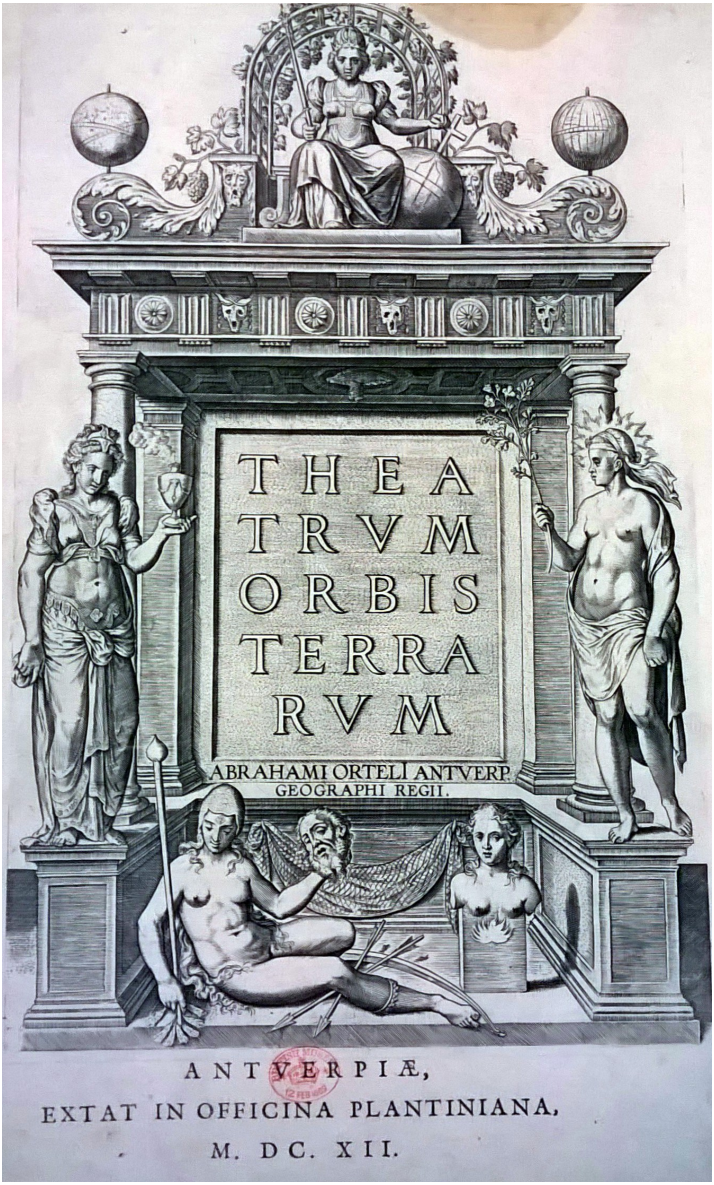

America
Oceanus Occidentalis
ASIA
AFRICA
Arabia
Armenia
Europa
Affrica minor

Fig. 9b: Set of gores for the production of terrestrial globes (1507), by Martin Waldseemüller.

article entitled “The Early Development of the Atlas,” the map did much to cement inchoate ideas of the New World, which for some years had wavered between fact and fiction:

> The discoveries of Columbus did not at first affect the essential feature of the world map, namely, the tripartite land mass comprising Europe, Africa and Asia. It was only when the outline of a new continent began to emerge that the map of the world was seriously affected. Amerigo Vespucci's narrative of his voyages along the north-east coast of Brazil was incorporated by Waldseemüller in [*Cosmographiae Introductio*]. Waldseemüller realised that the cartographical implications of the Portuguese and Spanish discoveries were too real to be ignored. (189)

With the continued exploration of *terrae incognitae* and concurrent advances in cartography throughout the sixteenth century, the discipline grew steadily into a significant part of European culture. In Antwerp in 1570, Mercator's contemporary Abraham Ortelius (1527-98) completed and published the “first bound collection of maps to warrant, although it did not bear, the title of 'atlas'” (ibid. 191). The striking title chosen by Ortelius was in fact *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, or “Theatre of the World.” Its innovative title page illustration is suggestive of a classical theatre proscenium, and an explanatory poem informs that it depicts Europe as sceptred empress on top of the world, with Asia, Africa, and America represented below (see fig. 10). This particular compendium had a widespread appeal; it was translated into several languages, and via numerous editions it grew from a total of 70 maps in 1570 to 167 in 1612. As such, it is a conspicuous attestation to the currency in sixteenth-century Europe of the “theatre of the world” conceit which would give rise to Jaques's famous speech or Antonio's avowal: “I hold the world but as the world, Graziano– / A stage where every man must play a part, / And mine a sad one” (*Merchant of Venice* 1.1.77-79). The close association of the world of the Renaissance theatre with that of cartography is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the striking image known as “Fool's Cap World” (see fig. 11). The combination of the theme of the Fool with the developing world map creates a visual metaphor of “the universality of human folly” (Whitfield 78), and is suggestive of *theatrum mundi*. Even Macbeth, ostensibly of



THEA
TRVM
ORBIS
TERRA
RVM

ABRAHAMI ORTELI ANTVERP.
GEOGRAPHI REGII.

ANTVERPIÆ,
EXTAT IN OFFICINA PLANTINIANA,
M. DC. XII.

Fig. 10: Title page of *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (first published 1570) by Abraham Ortelius (1527-98). The 1612 edition is shown here.

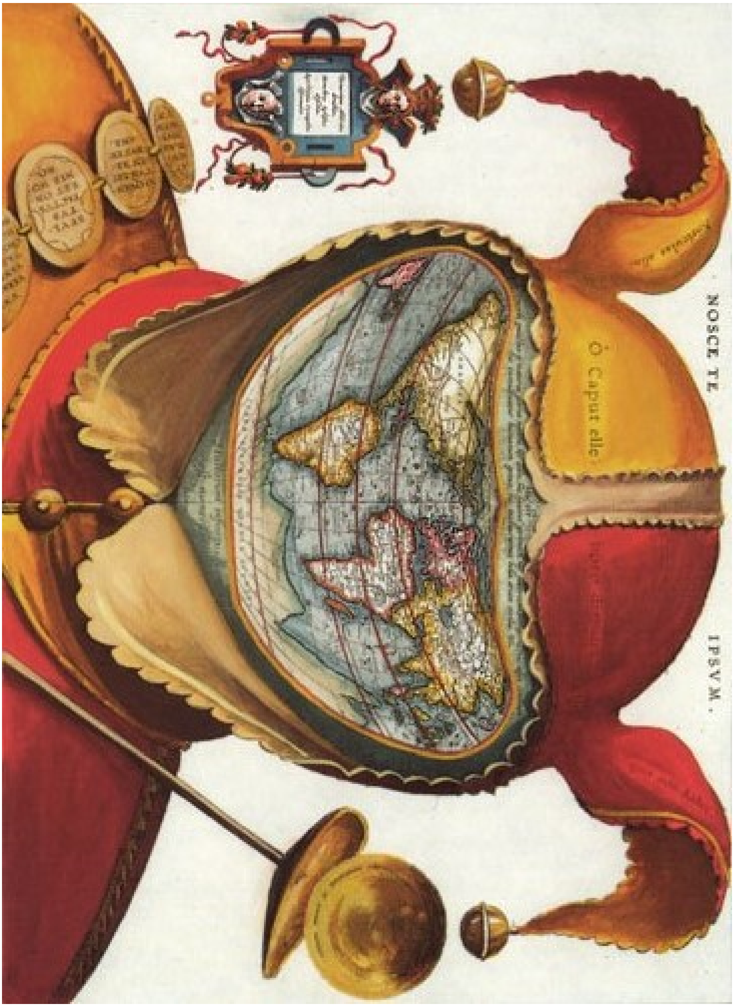

NOSCE TE IPSVM.
Ô Caput elle

Fig. 11: The so-called Fool's Cap World (ca. 1590). The artist, place, and precise date of publication remain unknown, although the map resembles the work of Abraham Ortelius published in the 1580s.

another time long before the Renaissance, is no stranger to the notion of life imitating art, as evidenced by his contempt for the transitory nature of life, on- and offstage:

> Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
> And then is heard no more. It is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing.
> (*Mac* 5.5.23-27)

Alongside *Universalis Cosmographia* in 1507, Waldseemüller also produced a set of gores for terrestrial globes (see fig. 9b),[70] and as with cartography, interest and expertise in the construction of globes spread throughout Europe during the period, aided by improved print technologies and new discoveries. The oldest extant terrestrial Globe is the *Erdapfel* produced by Martin Behaim (1459-1507) in Nuremberg in 1492, and the process was refined in the sixteenth century principally by Frisius, who instructed both Mercator and Dee. Frisius had insisted as early as 1530 that the mounted globe was "indescribably useful and necessary for everyone,"[71] but perhaps the most perspicuous insight into the importance of these developments in contemporary culture, and the esteem in which the associated paraphernalia was held, may be found in Dee's aforementioned *Preface to Euclid*:

> While some, to beautifie their Halls, Parlers, Chambers, Galeries, Studies, or Libraries with; other some, for things past, as battles fought, earthquakes, heavenly firings, and such occurrences in histories mentioned: thereby lively as it were to view the place, the region adjoining, the distance from us, and other such circumstances […] Some, either for their owne journeyes directing into farre landes: or to understand of other mens travailes. To conclude, some, for one purpose: and some, for an other, liketh, loveth, getteth, and useth, Mappes, Chartes, and Geographicall Globes.[72]

---

[70] A *gore* in this sense is defined as "one of the many triangular or lune-shaped pieces that form the surface of a celestial or terrestrial globe […]" ("gore, n.2.6." *OED*).

[71] From the treatise *De principis astronomiae et cosmographiae* (qtd. in Brotton 20).

[72] In *Euclid's Elements of Geography*, first published in 1570.

An important point to draw from this much-quoted extract is the great variety of uses for cartographic instruments, as they were evidently fashionable status symbols as much as dependable for practical use.

In an English context, the successful circumnavigation of the Earth completed in 1580 by Sir Francis Drake (d. 1596) was an event which intensified still further the interest in narratives of exploration, in maps, and in terrestrial globes.[73] The symbolic importance of the globe is evidenced by its appearance in portraits of Queen Elizabeth I, such as the so-called Sieve Portrait, dated 1583 (see fig. 12). Detail on the globe situated behind the Queen shows the British Isles illuminated by the artist, and several ships traversing the Atlantic. Bate and Thornton inform of the significant identity of a background figure:

> The globe with ships plying west suggests the foundation of a new western empire: the badge on the central figure is that of Sir Christopher Hatton (1540-1591), who […] was a financier of that foundational gesture of British empire-building, the circumnavigation of the Globe by Sir Francis Drake. (37)

An inscription on the globe reads *tutto vedo et molto mancha* ("I see all and much is lacking;" ibid. 287, n. fig. 27); the portrait employs the symbolism of the terrestrial globe to commemorate Drake's achievements, but at the same time it points towards further territorial expansion and Elizabeth's perceived destiny of global dominion. It therefore substantiates Jerry Brotton's affirmation that "it is precisely upon the figure of the globe, as both a visual image and a material object, that many of the social and cultural hopes and anxieties of the period came to be focused" (21).

Responding to what was by then a palpable fashion for globes, a London merchant named William Sanderson in 1587 commissioned the first English celestial and terrestrial globes. The task of construction fell to Emery Molyneux (d. 1598), who was personally acquainted with several explorers of the period, and his creations are now known as the Molyneux globes. Completed in 1592, they were "by far the largest globes produced in Europe since antiquity," and their prestige "announced the arrival of England as a global empire while

---

[73] This was the second successful circumnavigation after the *Magellan-Elcano* expedition of 1519-22. Drake was the first man to complete the entire circumnavigation as captain (1577-80).

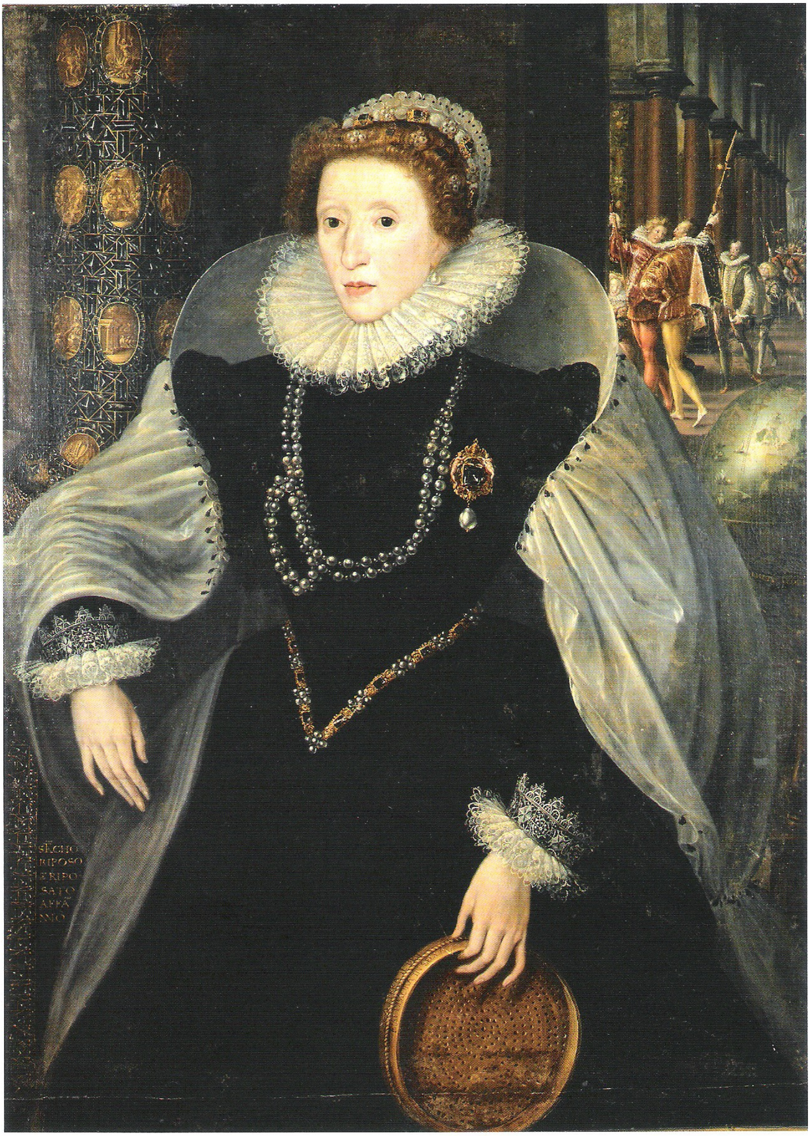

SĒCHO
RIPOSO
E RIPO
SATO
AFFĀ
NNO

Fig. 12: The “Sieve Portrait” of Queen Elizabeth I, dated 1583 and attributed to Quentin Metsys the Younger.

transforming the globe itself into an English symbol" (Cohen 968).[74] Adam Max Cohen has ably demonstrated what he calls an "Englishing" of the globe in terms of the features added by Molyneux that differentiated his terrestrial globe from its continental predecessors:

> A red line and a blue line wind around the globe to denote the routes of the English circumnavigators Sir Frances Drake and Master Thomas Cavendish. The lines resemble red and blue ribbons wrapping a gift, which is appropriate because the globe announces itself as a gift to Queen Elizabeth in a long dedication. (970)[75]

Looking at contemporary documents and reactions to the appearance of the Molyneux globes, it would seem that the fascination for such new technologies among the Elizabethan literati can hardly be overstated. In 1594, the mathematician Robert Hues (1553-1632), who had participated in the circumnavigations led by Cavendish, published an exhaustive study of the Molyneux globes entitled *Tractatus de globis et eorum usu* ("A treatise on globes and their use"). This was an influential work that appeared in thirteen editions across Europe by 1663 (Cohen 974). In a dedicatory preface to Sir Walter Raleigh, Hues makes clear his admiration for the globe:

> I hold it very superfluous to goe about to prove that a Globe is of a figure most proper and apt to expresse the fashion of the Heavens and Earth as being most agreeable to nature, easiest to be understood, and also very beautifull to behold. (*Tractatus de Globis* 16)

Shakespeare around this time imaginatively employed the image of globes signifying uncharted territory, in the narrative poem *The Rape of Lucrece*:[76]

---

[74] "We find very little recorded of Emery Molyneux, beyond the fact that he was a mathematician residing in Lambeth. He was known to Sir Walter Raleigh, to Hakluyt, and to Edward Wright, and was a friend of John Davis the Navigator. The words of one of the legends on his globe give some reason for the belief that Molyneux accompanied Cavendish in his voyage round the world" (Markham xxvi).

[75] Thomas Cavendish (1560-92), died at sea during his second circumnavigation attempt.

[76] Entered in the Stationers' Register on 9 May 1594.

> Her breasts like ivory globes circled with blue,
> A pair of maiden worlds unconquerèd,
> Save of their lord no bearing yoke they knew,
> And him by oath they truly honourèd.
> (Lines 407-10)

The mention of "globes circled with blue" recalls the exploits of the circumnavigators, as depicted on the Molyneux globes.

The pan-European fascination for globes at the end of the sixteenth century is epitomized by the Mercator *Atlas.* Its title page, which shows five different globes, bears a depiction of the mythological Atlas resting a globe on his knee with another at his feet (see fig. 13). The plinth is inscribed with the words *Atlas sive cosmographicae meditationes de fabrica mundi et fabricati figura* ("Atlas, or the meditations of a cosmographer on the making of the world and the shape in which it was made"; trans. van den Berg 34). Atlas himself–founder of astronomy and cartography–is depicted as the cosmographer, apparently using the larger completed globe as a guide to inscribe the smaller, or perhaps completing a set of celestial and terrestrial globes.[77] The image in its context conflates two important themes discussed in this chapter: the prominence of globes as cartographic instruments, and Renaissance theories of man as determiner of his own fortune. The power of human knowledge and discovery enables the cosmographer in effect to create the world, by inscribing the boundaries of the known world onto the blank canvas of the globe. In this sense, the Mercator *Atlas*–like the Molyneux globes–is a monument to the developing confidence of Renaissance intellectuals to separate "the mind as subject from the world as object" (van den Berg 35).

---

[77] "The science which describes and maps the general features of the universe (both the heavens and the earth)" ("cosmography, n." *OED*).

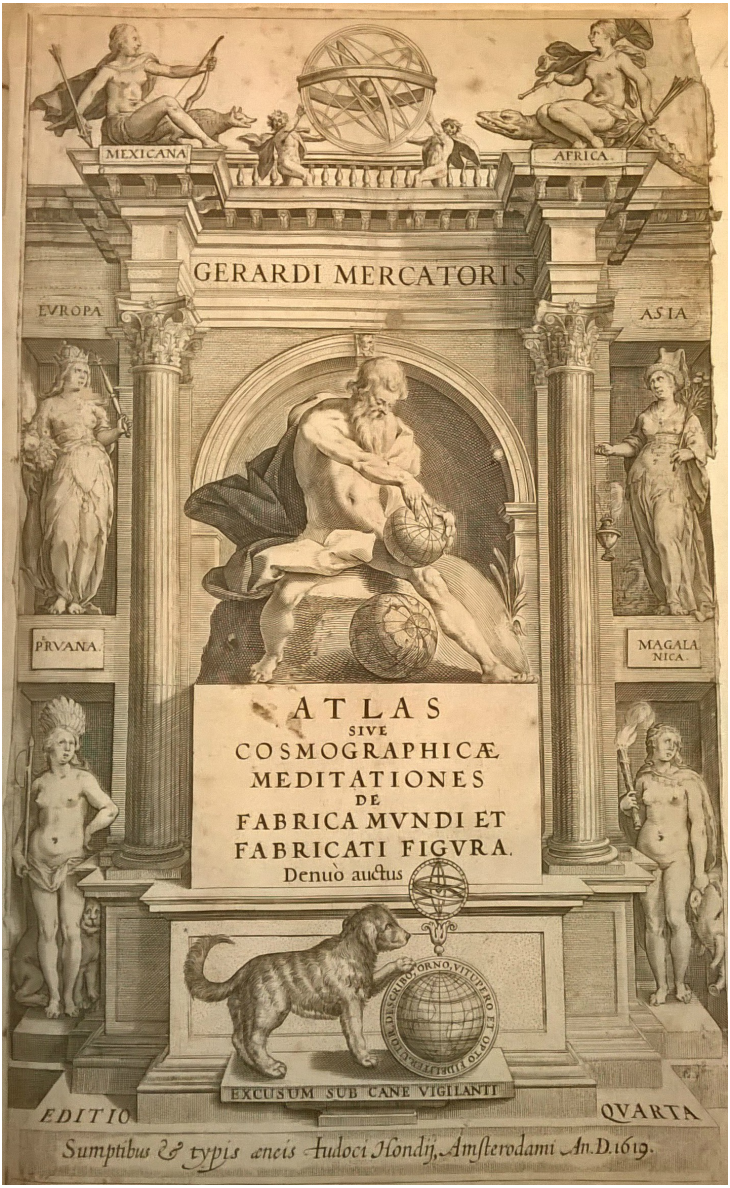

MEXICANA
AFRICA
GERARDI MERCATORIS
EVROPA
ASIA
PRVANA.
MAGALA NICA.
ATLAS
SIVE
COSMOGRAPHICÆ
MEDITATIONES
DE
FABRICA MVNDI ET
FABRICATI FIGVRA.
Denuò auctus
DESCRIBO, ORNO, VITUPERO ET OPTO FIDELITER. ATTOR
EXCUSUM SUB CANE VIGILANTI
EDITIO QVARTA
Sumptibus & typis æneis Iudoci Hondij, Amsterodami An. D. 1619.

Fig. 13: Title page of Gerardus Mercator's *Atlas*, first published in 1595 (the 1619 edition is shown here). Showing Atlas with a globe at his feet and another on his knee.

3.10 “In this distracted globe:” exploiting the symbolism of the playhouse

The decision by Shakespeare and his company to name their new playing space the *Globe*, with an associated emblem that tapped into the iconography of human subjectivity and endeavour, established an ethos that would prove to be an ingredient in its success. Van den Berg instructs that “[a] theater is an 'embodiment of thought' in a more exact sense than other buildings, because it is an architectural model of the interior world we inhabit in thought, fantasy, or dream” (28). Furthermore, the contemporary cultural significance of the name *Globe*, as discussed in the present chapter, allows us to understand how the playhouse came to represent “an architectural model of the interior of subjective experience” (ibid.). If there is a moment in the Globe plays which encapsulates this notion to a greater extent than the many others, it is Hamlet's only use of the word *globe*:

> GHOST. Fare thee well at once.
> The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,
> And gins to pale his uneffectual fire.
> Adieu, adieu, Hamlet. Remember me.
> HAMLET.
> O all you host of heaven! O earth! What else?
> And shall I couple hell? O fie! Hold, hold, my heart,
> And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
> But bear me stiffly up. Remember thee?
> Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
> In this distracted globe. Remember thee?
> (*Ham* 1.5.88-97)

As spoken here by Hamlet, “distracted globe” has at least three connotations that may reasonably be sustained in context.[78] In its immediate dramatic sense, the phrase refers to Hamlet's troubled mind, shortly after the lengthy and voluble exposition of events by his murdered father's spirit: “Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand / Of life, of crown, of queen at once dispatched" (1.5.74-75). Considering the contemporary association of *frame* with the earth or globe,[79] me may, as Thompson and Taylor note, also take Hamlet's "while memory holds a seat / In this distracted globe" to mean "while [my] memory has any power over my shattered frame" (219). This interpretation accords with contemporary usage of *distracted* (see note 78). Meanwhile, Hibbard comments that "Hamlet is rather given to applying scientific terms to himself" (190), citing the end of the Prince's letter to Ophelia, read by Polonius: "Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst this machine is to him, Hamlet" (2.2.123-25).[80] Taken as such, Hamlet sees his mind or body as a complex structure–akin to a Molyneux globe–that has been rent asunder.

---

[78] The varied and changing definition of *distracted* must be considered in order properly to interpret this multivalent phrase. Hamlet's use of the term in these lines, as printed in the 1604 quarto, is given by *OED* as the earliest recorded application of the meaning: “Much confused or troubled in mind; having, or showing, great mental disturbance or perplexity” (“distracted, adj.4.” *OED*). An earlier, now obsolete meaning is recorded as dating back to John Florio's *Worlde of Wordes* (1598): “Drawn apart, rent asunder; divided” (“distracted, adj.1.” *OED*).

In a wider sense, Hamlet's lines are given a hyperbolic force by the use of "distracted globe" to refer to the unsettled world of the play, with Thompson and Taylor offering the following paraphrase of the above-cited lines: "while memory [in general] is a force in this disordered world" (219). This meaning already carries a certain metatheatrical edge, as the real-life world outside the theatre is implicated alongside that which Hamlet inhabits: London in the twilight of Elizabeth's reign is at risk of the kind of political instability seen in Elsinore. Between these two worlds lies Shakespeare's playhouse, and the full force of these lines as metatheatre can only be apprehended in consideration of their enactment at the Globe. In the Arden third series edition of the play, Thompson and Taylor supplement their interpretations of "distracted globe"–as Hamlet's bodily frame and as the disordered world–with a tentative indication of its localised metaphorical potential: "Yet a third meaning may have occurred to the earliest auditors at the Globe" (219). I must again borrow Dutton's language and maintain that the image of "a seat" in the globe in question tips the passage away from its alternative referents and towards the theatre in which it was first enacted, *this* distracted globe. The usage of *globe* here arguably serves a tripartite function, at once alluding to Hamlet's conciousness, the wider world, and the Globe playhouse. It is the latter which is most easily lost in modern performance, particularly in non-theatrical media such as film. Yet I would argue that it is precisely this connotation which was most accessible to what Thompson and Taylor call the earliest auditors at the Globe. The audience has heard the same exposition from the Ghost as Hamlet has, and the Prince's words at this point consolidate the dramatic effect of the scene. Shakespeare capitalises on the reaction of his audience by allowing Hamlet to draw attention to their involvement.

---

[79] See note 39 above.

[80] Hibbard (209) informs that this is cited by *OED* as the earliest use of *machine* to denote the human body ("machine, n.2." *OED*).

It would, I think, be a misstep to affirm that such dramatic moments came about as a direct consequence of the name of Shakespeare's new theatre. As this chapter has demonstrated, the *theatrum mundi* conceit was already firmly rooted in contemporary culture and, of course, Shakespeare was always aware that his plays would be performed at court or elsewhere, and not just at the public playhouse. The micro- and macrocosm implied by the globe metaphor ensure that there is ample meaning to be inferred from such lines, irrespective of where they are enacted, and this also causes many an editor to neglect to mention their locally specific import. The choice of the *Globe* name, however, certainly afforded the playwright an additional layer of significance with which to fashion some of his most intensely dramatic moments. One such instant comes soon after Othello has smothered Desdemona, as he begins to realise the consequences of his act:

> OTHELLO. O insupportable, O heavy hour!
> Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse
> Of sun and moon, and that th'affrighted globe
> Should yawn at alteration.
> (*Oth* 5.2.108-09)

Ernst Honigmann, in the Arden third series edition of *Othello*, privileges literal meaning in glossing these lines; Othello thinks that “chasms should open in response to the changed appearance of sun and moon” (313). This is ostensibly the macrocosmic hyperbole which heightens the dramatic intensity of the scene at a critical juncture, but the “affrighted globe”–similarly to the “distracted globe” in *Hamlet*–is also the playhouse that is witness to the tragedy. *OED* gives the obsolete meaning “to open the mouth wide from surprise or the like; to gape” for the verb *yawn*, citing these lines in *Othello* as its earliest application (“yawn, v.4.b.” *OED*). Shakespeare here again colludes with his public to elevate his drama, and in this moment of dizzying metatheatricality he implicitly elicits a collective gasp from the audience, asking them to “yawn at alteration.”

The following chapter charts the early fortunes of the Chamberlain's Men playing company, and demonstrates the contingent origins of the Globe playhouse. The professional conditions of performance which shaped Shakespeare's work at the Globe are discussed in terms of the theatrical and political controversies affecting the company, and the economic pressures which ultimately resulted in the formation of a co-operative business model. The second half of chapter four discusses the departure of the comic Will Kempe from the Chamberlain's Men, and the intertextual relationship between *Henry V* and *Julius Caesar*, which points to Shakespeare's will to promote his plays using moments of metatheatre.

CHAPTER FOUR

“ON SUCH A FULL SEA ARE WE NOW AFLOAT”

SHAKESPEARE'S PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT

> *Mellifluous Shakespeare, whose inchanting quill*
> *Commanded mirth or passion, was but Will.*
> THOMAS HEYWOOD

Between late 1597 and the opening of the Globe in the summer of 1599, Shakespeare's company played primarily at the Curtain playhouse, the long-standing neighbour to James Burbage's Theatre in Shoreditch. Shakespeare probably wrote *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Henry V*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *Julius Caesar* during this period. The uncommonly explicit metatheatricality of his prologue to *Henry V* indicates frustrations of the dramatist in composition. The stage is an “unworthy scaffold,” the playhouse deserving of no better name than that of a small indoor arena used for cock fights. The venue as a whole does not befit the grandeur of England’s most famous victory on the battlefield:

> CHORUS. But pardon, gentles all,
> The flat unraisèd spirits that hath dared
> On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth
> So great an object. Can this cock-pit hold
> The vasty fields of France? Or may we cram
> Within this wooden O the very casques
> That did affright the air at Agincourt?
> (Prologue 8-14)

Shakespeare’s principal motivation in belittling his stock-in-trade may well be to elevate his subject matter yet further in the minds of playgoers. After all, it is not just the playhouse that is slighted; the actors and the dramatist himself are cast as “flat unraised spirits.” As such, the self-deprecating lines are appropriate for a play expected to remain in the company repertory for some time, adaptable to different venues. At the Globe, these remarks would perhaps even “have a humorous point when applied to a scaffold that the Lord Chamberlain’s Men did not think in the least unworthy” (Craik 5).

Elsewhere, however, the Chorus refers to the “girdle of these walls” (Prologue, line 19) and a “little room confining mighty men” (Epilogue, line 3), repeatedly denigrating the architecture of the playing space where *Henry V* was first performed. The several remarks together give the impression that “our bending author” was dissatisfied with his company's rented accommodation. It is all a far cry from the Globe, the “wide and universal theatre” implicitly heralded in *As You Like It*, where the potential of the new playhouse to signify the world in function as well as in name is so memorably insinuated by the melancholy Jaques, as he insists that “[a]ll the world's a stage” (2.7.137; 139). The “wooden O” of *Henry V*, so often thought to be the Globe, was more likely the Curtain in the months before the new playhouse was completed, and this was conceivably an opportunity humorously to acknowledge the fact that the company, Shakespeare included, could now be found performing at an erstwhile rival playhouse.[81] Read in the contexts of Shakespeare’s professional circumstances, the Chorus in *Henry V* provides an insight into the precarious situation in which the company found itself at the end of the sixteenth century. An understanding of that predicament, as outlined in the present chapter, goes some way to explain the contingent origins of the Globe theatre. The years immediately preceding its opening represent the most insecure period of Shakespeare’s career, and must be considered in any effort to explain the successes of the Chamberlain-King’s company after 1599.

4.1. Origins of the Lord Chamberlain's Men

James Burbage, father to Cuthbert (1565-1636) and Richard Burbage (1567-1619), but also a founding father of the Elizabethan theatre industry, died in February 1597 at a particularly infelicitous moment in the development of his business interests. His sons were left to find a solution to a situation which threatened the very existence of the Chamberlain’s Men playing company. Burbage’s fortunes had turned suddenly in 1596, after almost thirty years of sustained development and success, albeit not without violent disputes and legal wrangles along the way.[82] In 1567 he had helped innovatively to combine the platform stages used by travelling players with a galleried amphitheatre at the Red Lion in Stepney (see note 10 above). Although little is known about this early prototype, the building of the Theatre in Shoreditch a decade later indicates that the Red Lion "evidently secured Burbage's finances as well as his confidence that he could keep a permanent place for playing in London" (Gurr, "Money" 4). Confident though he may have been, Burbage took only a 21-year lease on the land for the Theatre in 1576, which perhaps suggests uncertainties as to the longevity of the emerging enterprise of public playing.

---

[81] The title page of the 1616 folio of Jonson's *Every Man In His Humour* informs that the play was acted in 1598 by the Lord Chamberlain's Men, and the list of its original “principall Comoedians” includes Shakespeare's name (*ES* 2: 197).

By the time that lease eventually expired, Burbage's Theatre was in good company on the London theatre scene, with the Curtain immediately next-door, and the Rose and the Swan both built on Bankside, in 1587 and 1595 respectively (see fig. 7). As well as these amphitheatres there were the city inns, the Bell and the Cross Keys, used as indoor venues in the winter, and also a theatre at Newington Butts, about a mile south-west of London Bridge. It was there that the Admiral's Men and the Chamberlain's Men both played for the impresario Philip Henslowe at the time of the realignment of London theatre companies in 1594 (*ES* 2: 193). The first royal patent for a company of adult players had been given in 1574 to the Earl of Leicester's Men, among them Burbage, and Elizabeth I then established a company in her own name in 1583. The Queen's Men reigned supreme until the death of their famous clown Richard Tarlton in 1588, after which the renowned actor Edward Alleyn and his company–staging the plays of Christopher Marlowe under the patronage of Charles Howard the Lord Admiral–assumed a predominance.[83] This early Admiral's company merged with the Lord Strange's Men in 1590, and "lasted until the last of the major reshuffles following a massive outbreak of plague in 1593, out of which in 1594 emerged the two most successful companies of all" (*TSS* 47). The serious outbreak of plague which began at the end of 1592 and continued throughout 1593, with around 10,000 deaths attributed to the infection in London that year (*ES* 4: 348), effectively caused the existing companies to disband. The landmark reorganisation of playing which followed would set Shakespeare on a new path to success, but he cannot yet have had any inclination that it would eventually take him and his fellows across the river to the Bankside, and to a new playhouse called the Globe.

---

[82] Burbage's brother-in-law and business partner John Brayne died in 1586, after which his widow pursued financial claims against Burbage. Margaret Brayne and the witness Robert Miles attempted to recover takings from performances at the Theatre, and a major dispute on 16 November 1590 ended with Burbage's sons intervening on his behalf: "Cuthbert, who came home in the middle of the fray, backed him up; while Richard […] snatched up a broom-staff, and as he afterwards boasted, paid Robert Miles his moiety with a beating" (*ES* 2: 392).

[83] Charles Howard, 1st Earl of Nottingham (1536-1624), also known as Howard of Effingham; Lord High Admiral, 1585-1619. A cousin of Queen Elizabeth I and Admiral of the English fleet during the naval conflict with the Spanish Armada in 1588.

In 1594 plague subsided, with plays beginning "tentatively in April and May and regularly in June," and there would be no further serious outbreaks for almost a decade (*ES* 4: 349). In May, the Lord Admiral and his father-in-law Henry Carey, the Lord Chamberlain,[84] became the patrons of officially licensed companies, each assigned to a specific playhouse, in a move which resembled the Queen's attempts to regulate playing just over a decade earlier. Gurr informs that Howard and Carey had developed an interest in the theatre from 1584 onwards:

> In that fluid year, both of them in succession became Lord Chamberlain, holding that office's often-cited duty of fostering professional playing to provide the Queen with her annual entertainments. Such a shared duty helps to explain why Carey gave [Richard] Burbage his livery and Howard gave Alleyn his. ("Venues" 483)

The leading actors adhered to family ties; Alleyn continued playing for his father-in-law Henslowe at the Rose, while Richard Burbage took the Chamberlain's Men to his father at the Theatre (*TSS* 55). A duopoly decreed by two leading privy councillors was thus established. It was primarily this high-ranking support from Howard and Carey which secured a sense of permanency in the capital for the players after 1594, but Gurr maintains that it was probably Edmund Tilney (d. 1610), the Queen's Master of the Revels, who assigned Marlowe's plays to one company, and Shakespeare's to the other ("Venues" 484).

Shakespeare at this point made the significant decision–or was perhaps forced by circumstance or authority–to write plays for the Chamberlain's Men rather than to persevere in his search for a patron to finance his poetry, after the dedication of *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and

---

[84] Henry Carey, 1st Baron Hunsdon (1526-96). The Lord Chamberlain of the Household is the senior officer in charge of the royal household and a member of the Privy Council.

The Rape of Lucrece (1594) to the Earl of Southampton (ibid. 479).[85] The career choice was quickly vindicated, as the years immediately following the important realignment of London playing companies were enormously successful for the Chamberlain's Men, a time of *Richard II*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.[86] Shakespeare, who to the best of our knowledge had only surfaced in London at the beginning of the decade (see Introduction, 28), enjoyed a burgeoning reputation and its benefits. An apparently dormant application for a coat of arms, first lodged in 1568, was finally granted to John Shakespeare 28 years later in October 1596, and it has been suggested that the decision may have been prompted by his son's fame in London.[87] William's purchase of a large property called New Place in his home town of Stratford-upon-Avon a few months later in 1597, for the sizeable sum of £60, is an indication of his personal financial security at that moment in his career (Schoenbaum 173).

One of the most significant developments in Elizabethan playing during the 1590s was that London became home to the players, and the profession was increasingly centralised. Henslowe wrote on 28 September 1593 that the recently disbanded Pembroke's Men upon their return to London were “all at home” (*Diary* 280), and this probably points to an abatement of the former tendency of players to subsist on the road as part of touring companies. Yet Gurr informs that the pre-eminent Queen's Men in the previous decade had played at a great variety of venues even in and around London, and that “[t]he practice of one company staying at a single London playhouse to work for long periods of time was still a new one in 1593” (“Authority” 254). One reason for this may be that the companies lacked adequate repertories to play continuously at one venue, but Gurr also points to a preference for indoor playing to explain the peripatetic nature of the early Elizabethan companies: “[t]he fame of Burbage's Theatre and Henslowe's Rose from 1594 can easily obscure for us the fact that they must have been the second-best places for playing in the eyes of the professional players" (ibid. 255). Although three London amphitheatre playhouses were open for business, open-air playing in the suburbs was by no means the only option available to the companies at that time. Indoor playing had a considerable pedigree. The earliest act on record concerned with the regulation of players in England is the royal proclamation of 16 May 1559, which decreed that all plays be authorised before public performance:

---

[85] Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton (1573-1624).

[86] These plays were all published in quarto versions by 1600, indicating the popularity of their early performances: *Richard II* in 1597 and twice in 1598, *Romeo and Juliet* in 1597 and 1599, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1600. The title page of the 1597 first quarto edition of *Romeo and Juliet* declares that the play “hath been often (with great applauſe) plaid publiquely” by the Chamberlain's Men.

[87] Schoenbaum supposes that William revived the application in his father's name: “there was nothing to prevent the eldest son from setting into motion the machinery for a grant in which the entire family would take pride” (167). Sutherland, “Grants of Arms,” warns that the “statement that William secured arms to show the fact that he had 'arrived' is pure assumption” (385).

> The Queen's majesty [doth] straightly forbid all manner interludes to be played either openly or privately, except the same be notified beforehand and licensed within any city or town corporate by the mayor or other chief officers of the same […] or by two of the justices of peace inhabiting within that part of the shire where any shall be played. (*TRP* 2: 115)

Gurr points out that the professional travelling companies benefited from this ruling inasmuch as they gained access to the guildhalls in order to first present their plays, and this move indoors in turn allowed them properly to regulate payment for the first time ("Authority" 252-53). At least until Tilney as Master of the Revels assumed the specific function of state censor of plays in a commission dated 24 December 1581,[88] the players were required to apply for license in municipal buildings and thereby gained an important, legitimate foothold.

The access to town halls across the country "first taught the professional companies the commercial value of an enclosed theater to play in" (ibid. 253). It was a principle which they would translate to City inns when faced with increasing mayoral opposition in London, and indoor playing had soon become standard practice: "[a]s constant travelers, access to the town and city guildhalls and to London's inns made outdoor performances their fall-back position under Elizabeth. By the 1590s they had ample experience to make them prefer playing indoors" (ibid. 255). Such a preference is borne out by Carey's application to the Lord Mayor on 8 October 1594 to allow the Chamberlain's Men to play at the Cross Keys Inn during the winter season. Given that his own ruling of only a few months before had banned the use of city inns, and with a hostile mayor in office,[89] Carey was moved to promise good behaviour:

---

[88] Patent of Commission for Edmund Tilney as Master of the Revels, qtd. in *ES* 4: 285-87.

> [The players] have undertaken to me that where heretofore they began not their Plaies till towardes fower a clock, they will now begin at two, & have don betwene fower and five and will nott use anie Drumes or trumpettes att all for the callinge of peopell together, and shalbe contributories to the poore of the parishe where they plaie according to their habilities. (Qtd. in *TSC* 247-48; see appendix 4.1)

By implication, the letter indicates that large gatherings of people after dark and disruptive noise were among the concerns that the City authorities had with regards to public performance. For the Lord Chamberlain, the principal concern in protecting the professional companies was his responsibility to arrange court performances for the Queen during each Christmas season. The Chamberlain-King's company performed at court every year from 1594 onwards, throughout the remainder of Elizabeth's reign, and indeed that of James I.[90] The ongoing political struggle between the office of the mayor of London and the members of the Privy Council who were thus invested in the business of playing would continue to be a major factor in the development of Shakespeare's company during the 1590s.

4.2. Burbage's Blackfriars venture

As a solution to the problem posed by the inimical mayor, Carey and Burbage together came up with a new plan of establishing an indoor playhouse within the Blackfriars precinct, inside the City walls just south-west of St. Paul's Cathedral (see fig. 7a). As a Dominican friary dating back to 1276, the premises had a dispensation regarding City regulations, and Burbage purchased two properties there in February 1596. He spent a small fortune on converting these into a playhouse which, as Chambers informs, was ready for use by November that year (*ES* 2: 195). The Blackfriars theatre was planned in the short-term as an indoor venue for the Chamberlain's Men during winter seasons, but as I have already intimated, this need not be seen as a

---

[89] “Only five days after his inauguration in 1594 [John] Spencer wrote to the Council renewing the call to suppress all public plays” (*TSC* 4, n. 3).

[90] Typically they performed on various dates between Christmas and Shrovetide, the days immediately preceding Lent (*ES* 2: 192ff.).

merely supplementary strategy to playing at the Theatre, since playing indoors might well have been the long-term objective. The configuration of the Blackfriars would have allowed the company to raise entry prices considerably: pandering to the élite, the most expensive places in the all-seater venue would have been closest to the stage, the opposite of the amphitheatre model. Indeed, Gurr affirms that "[w]ith the Blackfriars Burbage largely invented the pricing and seating arrangements of modern theatre auditoria" ("Money" 5).

Burbage had already proven himself a progressive entrepreneur, as we have seen in the accounts of the building of the Red Lion and the Theatre earlier in his career, and the acquisition of the Blackfriars represents what should have been the latest in a series of impressive innovations. He would have been aware that the lease on the ground of his Shoreditch playhouse would expire on 13 April 1597, and he knew that the owner of that lease, Giles Allen, was reluctant to renew (ibid. 6). Writing in 2004, Gurr suggested that Burbage "may even have felt that the day of the larger-capacity amphitheatres was passing and that the brighter future of theatre lay indoors" (*TSC* 4-5). Some years later in an article entitled "Venues on the Verges," Gurr revised this assessment in light of critical debate, presenting "a starkly alternative pair of readings of James Burbage's thinking" (479). Given the scarcity of available evidence, we may speculate that Burbage either anticipated the success of private indoor playhouses which was eventually realised after 1609, or that he simply sought an appropriate venue for his company to use in the winter months, always intending to maintain fair-weather playing in the open. Gurr sees these alternatives as exemplary of the historian's dichotomy "between identifying individual prophets of historical change or seeing outcomes like the success of the Blackfriars [after 1609] as the effect of theater economics" (ibid.). As it happened, Burbage's best laid plans, whatever their motives, were frustrated. On 22 July 1596 his benefactor and powerful ally Henry Carey died, and troubles began in earnest for Burbage and his company.

The death of the first Lord Hunsdon appears to have had adverse repercussions for both the playhouse owner and the playwright. For one thing, Henry Carey's eldest son George (1547-1603), who assumed the title of 2nd Baron Hunsdon, became the company's new patron. Meanwhile, the office of Lord Chamberlain was passed to William Brooke, Lord Cobham, who remained in the post for eight months until his death on 17 March 1597.[91] Although ostensibly onside with Burbage and the company, George Carey could not support the plan for the Blackfriars theatre, and signed a residents' petition to the Privy Council that inveighed against its establishment (see appendix 4.2). The petition begins by explaining that the property purchased by Burbage is uncomfortably near the residences of both Lord Hunsdon and the Lord Chamberlain, and that a playhouse would "grow to be a very great annoyance and trouble, not only to the noblemen and gentlemen thereabout inhabiting, but also a generall inconvenience to all the inhabitants of the same precinct." For Carey, personal concerns about his wealthy neighbourhood outweighed the needs of the playing company he served as guardian. Again the fears cited by the petition relate to noise, crowds of "all manner of vagrant and lewde persons," and even the greater risk of plague outbreaks in an area that was "allready growne very populous." Having unexpectedly lost the support of the influential Henry Carey, Burbage was forced after a significant investment of capital to shelve his ingenious plans for an alternative indoor playing venue.

4.3. Success and controversy, 1596-97

The appointment of Lord Cobham to the post of Lord Chamberlain also posed a problem to the company, and more directly to its chief dramatist. René Weis, in the introduction to the 1997 Oxford Shakespeare edition of *2 Henry IV*, draws on the work of previous editors in stating that "Shakespeare had probably finished *1 Henry IV* by the spring of 1596" (9), which would mean that it was licensed by Henry Carey, first Lord Hunsdon, before his death. *1 Henry IV* was first published two years later, advertising "the humorous conceits of Sir John Falstaff" (see appendix 4.3) but that character had originally been named Oldcastle.[92] It appears that Lord Cobham, during his brief stint as Lord Chamberlain, forced Shakespeare to change the name, since Cobham was among the descendants of the fifteenth-century Protestant martyr Sir John Oldcastle, and had taken offence at his portrayal on the public stages.[93] Weis adds that "there is evidence which strongly suggests that shortly after *1 Henry IV* (with Oldcastle) Shakespeare embarked on the sequel and wrote and completed it during the second half of 1596" (13).[94] *2 Henry IV* was likely entered for licensing during Cobham's tenure as Lord Chamberlain, perhaps before the court season of 1596-97, at which point a revision of both parts may have been ordered on account of the "Oldcastle" name.

---

[91] For this period only, the company "was properly known as the Lord Hunsdon's men" (*ES* 2: 195). The former name was applicable again when George Carey succeeded Brooke to the post of Lord Chamberlain in 1597.

[92] "[I]n Shakespeare's first shew of Harrie the fift, the person with which he undertook to playe a buffone was not Falstaffe, but Sir John Oldcastle" (Richard James, qtd. in *SAB* 1: 330-31).

The Cobham intervention was just one of a number of controversies in 1596-97 that highlight the role of censorship in the Elizabethan theatre. Shakespeare's *Richard II*, written around 1595 just before *1 Henry IV*, was first published in 1597 with the scene showing the king's deposition omitted. The subject matter of a king relinquishing his throne sailed dangerously close to the material "of the governance of the estate of the commonweal" that had been banned from plays as far back as 1559 (*TRP* 2: 115), and by 1598 parallels between the ambitious nobleman the Earl of Essex and Shakespeare's Bolingbroke of *Richard II* were widely recognised, compounding the sensitivity of the deposition scene (*TSC* 179).[95] Another major scandal of the period was caused by a play entitled *The Isle of Dogs*, co-written by Thomas Nashe and Ben Jonson, and performed by Pembroke's Men at the Swan playhouse in July 1597. Shakespeare's emergent rival Jonson was arrested and imprisoned on account of seditious content. These were clearly turbulent times for the players of all the various London companies, and Chambers affirms that the *Isle of Dogs* affair was "the main exciting cause," among several, of an inhibition of playing during much of the latter half of 1597 (*ES* 2: 196).[96]

---

[93] "It is not improbable that the offence taken was by Lord Chamberlain Cobham, whose ancestress, Joan Lady Cobham, Oldcastle had married" (*ES* 2: 196).

[94] The 1600 quarto version of *2 Henry IV*, thought to be based on a manuscript prompt-book, "has a mistaken speech-prefix *Old.* where one would expect *Fal.* for Falstaff" (Fiehler 17); one of several echoes of the Oldcastle name in the play which allow both Bevington (1987, p. 9) and Weis to conclude that it must have been written before Cobham's intervention: "[i]t is very difficult to believe that Oldcastle 'echoes' […] would have crept into the text of the play after Cobham's objections were raised" (Weis 13).

[95] Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex (1565-1601). A member of the Privy Council from 1593, Essex capitalised on his involvement in the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 and the subsequent conquest of Cadiz in 1596 to gain promotion to the post of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland during the Nine Years' War, a conflict in Ireland between the English crown and Irish rebels intermittently supported by Spanish forces (1594-1603). Writing *Richard II* around 1595, Shakespeare could hardly have expected the extent of the comparisons between Essex and Bolingbroke some years later, after Essex had fallen dramatically out of favour at the royal court.

The Merry Wives of Windsor may be seen as Shakespeare's "comic counterpart" to the second tetralogy of history plays that began with *Richard II* and would end with *Henry V* (Melchiori, *Merry Wives* 18). The play is often dated to 1597, by virtue of a scholarly tradition that originates from a dedicatory epistle by John Dennis to his 1702 edition entitled *The Comical Gallant: or the Amours of Sir John Falstaffe*. Explaining his choice of play in dedication, Dennis claims that it was well liked by Queen Elizabeth I: "[t]his comedy was written at her Command, and by her direction, and she was so eager to see it Acted, that she commanded it to be finished in fourteen days; and was afterwards, as Tradition tells us, very well pleas'd at the Representation" (n. pag.). Nicholas Rowe (1674-1718) consolidated this tradition in his 1709 edition of Shakespeare's works, adding the significant detail that Elizabeth "was so well pleas'd with that admirable Character of *Falstaff*, in the two Parts of *Henry* the Fourth, that she commanded him to continue it for one Play more and to shew him in Love" (Rowe 1: ix, original emphasis). Twentieth-century scholarship more precisely associated *Merry Wives* with the Garter Feast at Westminster on 23 April 1597, which celebrated the election of several prominent courtiers (including George Carey, the newly appointed Lord Chamberlain) to the chivalric Order of the Garter.[97] Writing in 1997, Weis stated that the play "is now generally (though not universally) accepted to have been performed" at that occasion (10).

If *Merry Wives* was indeed written for a first performance around April 1597, compelling instances of topical satire may be inferred. The impetuously jealous character of Ford adopts the name "Brooke" in disguise, reproduced as such in the 1602 quarto and presumably misprinted as "Broome" in the First Folio.[98] The name may well have been a gibe aimed at William Brooke, Lord Cobham, the less than accommodating Lord Chamberlain who had succeeded Henry Carey, and perhaps even a barbed response to his recent death in mid-March 1597. Later in the same scene, Ford–as Brooke–laments to

---

[96] Chambers supposes that the Chamberlain's Men resumed playing at the Curtain, rather than the Theatre, after this inhibition was lifted in October 1597. He adds the proviso that such a transfer may not have taken place until 1598 (*ES* 2: 196).

[97] A dynastic order; the highest order of chivalry in England, founded in the fourteenth century by King Edward III. The precise dating of the play to 23 April 1597 was first suggested by Leslie Hotson in *Shakespeare versus Shallow* (1931), and supported by William Green, *Shakespeare's* Merry Wives of Windsor (1962).

[98] Weis advises that Falstaff's foregoing line "Such Brookes are welcome to me, that o'erflows such liquor" (2.2.146-47) is usually cited in support of "Brooke" as opposed to "Broome" (11, n. 2).

Falstaff that he is unable to retain the affections of a married woman, in fact his own wife. He summarises his predicament with a metaphor that would certainly have resonated with the players, if not their audience:

> SIR JOHN. Of what quality was your love then?
> FORD. Like a fair house built on another man's ground, so that I have lost my edifice by mistaking the place where I erected it.
> (*Merry Wives* 2.2.208-11)

It seems a laboured analogy before we remember the circumstances of Shakespeare's company in 1597. The intractable landlord Giles Allen refused repeatedly to renew the lease on the grounds of the Theatre, citing Burbage's arrears in rent and his failure to keep to the terms of the agreement.[99] As Tiffany Stern remarks in *Making Shakespeare*, the picture Ford paints for Falstaff is surely an insight into how it might have felt "for the Chamberlain's Men to see the building they had constructed rendered inaccessible because it was trapped on a piece of land that belonged to someone else" (13).

Giorgio Melchiori, in his introduction to the Arden third series edition of the play,[100] has persuasively argued that *Merry Wives* "could not possibly be the entertainment offered on the night of 23 April 1597 to the Queen […]" on account of "how radically a play intended for the public stage differs from a court entertainment for a special occasion" (19). Melchiori insists that only limited parts of *Merry Wives* could have been given at court, and that Shakespeare likely fleshed these out at a later date to arrive at the text which was published in the 1602 quarto. He also proposes that in preparing a shorter masque for the Garter Feast,[101] Shakespeare adapted the name of Sir John Fastolf in *1 Henry VI* to Falstaff, and then used that same name in addressing censorship demands in the two parts of *Henry IV* (ibid. 29-30). Yet if Melchiori is correct in his assertion that the comedy *Merry Wives* "could not have been written before late 1599" (ibid. 21), the allusion to the company's loss of their "edifice" would still have been telling, and by that point the players might have allowed themselves a smile as to how things had turned out.[102]

---

[99] A deposition on the lease of the Theatre site and its expiry is reproduced in appendix 4.4.

[100] Also extensively in Melchiori, *Shakespeare's Garter Plays* (1994).

[101] "A form of courtly dramatic entertainment, often richly symbolic, in which music and dancing played a substantial part" ("masque, n." *OED*).

4.4. The move across the Thames

James Burbage died in February 1597, leaving in his will the Theatre to his elder son Cuthbert, and the newly-refurbished Blackfriars to Richard. His sons were also left with an unenviable business predicament. From a point at the start of the previous year where the Chamberlain's Men had been able to contemplate a powerful position on the London theatre landscape, running an open-air amphitheatre playhouse alongside an upmarket indoor venue in a City enclave, the company now found itself unable to play at either location, and with much of its capital invested in an apparently fruitless venture. Cuthbert was rebuffed in renewed attempts to negotiate a lease for the Shoreditch site, and by September 1598 the satirist Edward Guilpin wrote of "the unfrequented Theater."[103] Marston in *The Scourge of Villanie*, published in late 1598, appears to place the Chamberlain's Men at the Curtain that year, relating "Curtain plaudities" to performances of *Romeo and Juliet*.[104] Now in rented accommodation and in financial dire straits, the company took the unprecedented step of cashing in on what were their most valuable assets, Shakespeare's playscripts:

> The release of several Shakespeare playbooks, *Richard III*, *Richard II*, *1 Henry IV* and *Love's Labour's Lost*, amongst the most popular plays in their repertoire, to the publisher Andrew Wise in 1597 and 1598 was a cash-raising device they had never used before and never used again. (Gurr, "Money" 7)

As evidenced by the demand for their plays in print, at least in dramatic terms the Chamberlain's Men were flourishing at this point. The Falstaff plays were a great success–the reputed popularity of the character with the Queen has been recounted above–and in the epilogue to *2 Henry IV*, Shakespeare had promised a conclusion to the fat knight's story: "If you be not too / much cloyed with fat meat, our humble author will / continue the story with Sir John in it" (Epilogue 24-26).[105] As well as the conspicuous asset of Shakespeare as lead dramatist, the company

---

[102] The suggestion that *Merry Wives* was written and performed in late 1599 is problematised by the departure of the comic actor Will Kempe, who played Falstaff, from the company that year. The episode is discussed in detail below.

[103] In *Skialetheia*, entered in Stationers' Register in September 1598 and qtd. in *ES* 2: 196.

[104] *The Scourge of Villanie*, entered in Stationers' Register on 8 September 1598 and qtd. in *ES* 2: 403.

enjoyed state protection as part of an officially decreed, albeit frequently transgressed, duopoly.[106] The pressing concern was the lack of a permanent place to play, at a juncture in the development of Shakespeare's company that will have required the type of foresight and resolve which would be contemplated onstage, by Brutus in *Julius Caesar,* just a few months later:

> There is a tide in the affairs of men,
> Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
> Omitted, all the voyage of their life
> Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
> On such a full sea are we now afloat;
> And we must take the current when it serves,
> Or lose our ventures.
> (*JC* 4.2.270-76)

The Globe playhouse was the solution, and the means by which it came into being are described by Gurr as "in retrospect almost miraculously clever" ("Money" 7).

The Chamberlain's Men played at court as per usual during the winter season of 1598-99, but the Burbage brothers were also seeking a new plot for themselves in the Bankside liberty, where the Rose and the Swan had already proved viable. Chambers informs that a lease for a new site there, owned by Nicholas Brend, was signed on 21 February 1599 (*ES* 2: 415), but on 28 December the Burbages had already taken the audacious step of dismantling the structure of the Theatre and carrying its timbers across the Thames to Bankside (a distance of about two miles). Allen sued for trespass and claimed that property worth £800, including the Theatre valued at £700, had been taken (Gurr, "Money" 8). In a complaint to the authorities dated 23 November 1601, he claimed that the Burbage brothers and the builder Peter Street were among a party of twelve that assembled with much commotion at the Theatre:

---

[105] The epilogue includes the denial "For Oldcastle died a martyr, and this is not the man" (29-30), supporting the notion that it was added after the play had been censored at the behest of the Lord Chamberlain (see above, 113f.).

[106] A letter dated 19 February 1598, from the Privy Council to the Master of the Revels, indicates the challenge of suppressing playing companies other than the Admiral's and Chamberlain's Men (see appendix 4.5).

> And then and there armed as aforesayd in verye ryotous outragious and forcyble manner and contrarye to the lawes of your hignes Realme [they] attempted to pull downe the sayd Theatre... and having done so did then also in most forcible and ryotous manner take and carrye awaye from thence all the wood and timber thereof unto the Banckside... and there erected a newe playe howse with the sayd Timber and wood.[107]

In light of the other disputes recounted above, the episode may be seen as further evidence of the unscrupulous and often violent practice of the Burbage dynasty. The brothers certainly could not have had an honourable business reputation, and we may speculate from the available evidence that they were conditioned to be domineering company managers, with little regard for others in the pursuit of profits. The fact is that their circumstances at the start of 1599 precluded any such conduct, as they had no choice but to enter into and maintain a cooperative arrangement with the players.

Under the terms of the new 31-year lease for the Globe, "one moiety of the interest was retained by Richard Burbage and his brother Cuthbert, who was not himself an actor; the other was assigned to Shakespeare, Pope, Phillips, Heminges, and Kempe" (*ES* 2: 203). Six prominent actors in the Chamberlain's Men thus became shareholders–so-called housekeepers–in their new playhouse, in a separate commercial arrangement from that pertaining to the acting company.[108] Shakespeare and his fellow players were unique among playing companies in managing themselves, even though the Burbages–with fifty percent between them–retained control of their assets to an extent. It was a structure which recalled the cooperation of the early travelling companies, at a time when London playing had elsewhere evolved to the more capitalist model exemplified by Henslowe and Alleyn at the Rose, and later the Fortune. David Grote in his book *The Best Actors in the World* gives the proviso that "in no way should the deal be interpreted as a theater built and owned by the Chamberlain's Men," as it so often is, because the Burbages retained the majority share and the actors merely provided the necessary capital to realise the project (78). Gurr infers a more inclusive arrangement and cites evidence that the King's Men later became the envy of other companies precisely because of the security that playhouse ownership afforded them (*TSC* 87-88). Certainly Shakespeare and his fellow "housekeepers" through their investments in the Globe had more clout in company business than any of their peers.

---

[107] From Giles Allen's complaint in Star Chamber (court of law), 23 November 1601, qtd. in *TSC*, appendix 2.10.

[108] Shares in the acting company numbered "not more than ten at most, more often eight" (*TSC* 89).

The actors' shares in the Globe exchanged hands regularly during the life of the Chamberlain-King's company, so that the counterpart to the Burbage brothers was variously comprised of between four and six parties from 1599 to 1613, when the playhouse was destroyed by fire. Necessitated by the building of the Globe, the company's management structure was already incongruous with an authoritarian late-Elizabethan society, but Gurr instructs that an additional layer of significance was acquired in 1603, with royal approval from James I: "The management system devised in 1599 became a supreme paradox in 1603, when the most uniquely democratic and co-operative organization in the whole of England came under the patronage of the most despotic figure in the country, Britain's most well-argued autocrat" (*TSC* 88). In the winter of 1598-99 then, businessmen without income and players with nowhere to play joined forces and devised a company model that would safeguard their long-term fortunes, well beyond Shakespeare's career in fact, to the closure of all theatres in 1642.

In the spring of 1599, however, a distinguished future as players by royal appointment must still have seemed distant. At this point in charting the development of Shakespeare's company and its new playhouse venture, it is instructive to reflect on the highly contingent nature of its operation as the Globe was being built. 1599 can only have been a stressful year for the Chamberlain's Men, and Grote artfully lists the various eventualities that reasonably could have thwarted their endeavours:

> If the Globe should fail for any reason, most if not all of the men would be bankrupt. And there were any number of ways in which the venture could fail: Elizabeth could close the theaters again, without warning or even reason; the builder could run into unexpected delays that prevented the opening for months; the company's old audience might decide it was too far to walk to come to see the plays on the south bank; the new plays commissioned might be failures; some actor might

> suddenly fall ill or be killed in a duel or a tavern brawl. Should any of those things have happened during 1599, the acting company would most likely have been broken up, with Richard Burbage taking the remnants on tour to escape the bailiffs. (79)[109]

This is an arresting insight into the pressures of a situation that is often overlooked because of the subsequent success of the Globe. Grote speculates that in the event of failure Shakespeare may have returned to Stratford, with some of his greatest works left unwritten. Of course, we have no means nor cause to know how Shakespeare's career might have progressed without the Globe, but certainly the likes of *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth* would not have materialised in the manner that they did, if at all. By extension, we also have an indication of the professional burden of responsibility that Shakespeare as chief dramatist carried into the new century. The demand for the prolific production of new, popular, and preferably enduring material for the stage is clear.

4.5. Will Kempe's exit and Hamlet's clown

In order to capitalise on the groundswell of popularity generated by his "Henriad," and particularly the Falstaff character played by the comical virtuoso Will Kempe, Shakespeare set about making good on his promise to complete the story of the fat knight. *Henry V* is a work of striking complexity which has engendered much scholarly debate concerning matters of date and text. The texts available to us–a quarto edition from 1600 and the Folio printing of 1623–betray the strained conditions of the play's composition and first performances, as I have partially demonstrated at the beginning of this chapter with the discussion of the apologetic prologue. An abiding enigma, in light of the seemingly unambiguous pledge in the epilogue to *2 Henry IV* (see above, 117), is the early offstage death of Falstaff announced by the Hostess, the same Mistress Quickly of the two parts of *Henry IV* (2.3.9-25). It is a seemingly counter-intuitive act of dramaturgy which is probably explained by the sudden departure of Kempe from the company. Chambers informs that he "made over his share to the other four” shortly after becoming one of the five actor-sharers in the Globe (*ES* 2: 203), while Grote convincingly argues that Kempe's investment indicates a long-term commitment to the company, and that it therefore “must have taken a major disagreement to have driven him out” (79). Gurr cites two possible motives for Kempe's departure:

---

[109] Grote also supposes that the Curtain was no longer available to the Chamberlain's Men by this point because the Earl of Derby's Men were performing there (76, 78). If this was indeed the case it compounds the gravity of the Shakespeare company's predicament.

> [P]erhaps because [his successor Robert] Armin had joined the company, or more possibly to win a bet that he could dance all the way from London to Norwich, a nine-day marathon as a solo entertainer which he enacted in February 1600 during Lent, and described in *Kemps nine daies wonder* (1600). (*TSC* 231)

The loss of Kempe was certainly a blow to the Chamberlain's Men on the eve of a new era, especially as his comic talents were so specialised.[110] Completing the Henriad without Falstaff was perhaps not quite *Hamlet* without the Prince, but it would surely have disappointed loyal audiences.

Although we cannot be certain, there is good reason to suppose that Shakespeare wrote *Henry V* in the first half of 1599, and that the Chamberlain's Men at least intended it to be the play to inaugurate their new residence. If Shakespeare was indeed forced to write out the part of Falstaff because of Kempe's departure, the inference would be that most of the play was written after 21 February, when Kempe signed the lease and was presumably still in the fold. Even so, this could be a *post hoc* fallacy, and I suggest that Kempe may have departed *because* he was omitted from *Henry V*, perhaps just after the court season of 1598-99.[111] His omission from the play–or even dismissal from the company–could have been the major disagreement to which Grote refers. This is of course a speculative scenario, yet it may find support in Hamlet's pointed advice to the players on the need for careful management of stage clowns:

> And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them; for there be of them that will themselves laugh to set on some

---

[110] “[T]here can be little doubt that Falstaff was designed for this performer, for Falstaff is a wholly invented character. Although the name comes from the historical sources, the characterization is completely new” (Grote 55).

[111] Kempe signed the lease for the Globe site on the day after the company's final court performance that season (*ES* 2: 202-03).

> quantity of barren spectators to laugh too, though in the mean time some necessary question of the play be then to be considered. That's villainous, and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it.
>
> (*Ham* 3.2.38-45)

With Kempe's acrimonious departure in mind, this passage, probably written in the following year, can be read as the dramatist's gibe at his former clown, alluding to an in-house spat that may well have been public knowledge given the comic's fame. Even if Kempe did leave of his own volition, Hamlet's words could perhaps be a humorously sarcastic assertion that the Chamberlain's Men were better off without him. Grote advises that there is reason to think that Kempe returned to the company after a few months, not least because he retained his share in the acting company for some time after selling his stake in the playhouse.[112] Nonetheless, Shakespeare and his company would have been sorely affected by the upheaval of even a temporary absence, particularly as Kempe also played the part of Dogberry in *Much Ado About Nothing*, the major comedy in the company repertory during 1598-99 (Humphreys, *Much Ado* 3). That Hamlet's thoughts on clowning were informed by recent events in Shakespeare's career may be borne out by the additional lines found only in Q1:

> And then you have some again that keeps one suit of jests, as a man is known by one suit of apparel, and gentlemen quote his jests down in their tables before they come to the play, as thus: “Cannot you stay till I eat my porridge?” and “You owe me a quarter's wages”, and “My coat wants a cullison”, and “Your beer is sour”, and blabbering with his lips and thus keeping in his cinquepace of jests, when God knows,

---

[112] The evidence is inconclusive. Chambers states that “[Kempe's] place was probably taken by Robert Armin […] who describes himself in two successive issues of his *Fool upon Fool* (1600 and 1605), first as 'clonnico del Curtanio', and then as 'clonnico del Mondo', and who had therefore probably joined the Chamberlain's men before their actual transfer to the Globe” (*ES* 2: 203). Grote insists Armin could not have joined until 1600 on account of this same reference: “[Armin] published two joke collections, *Foole Upon Foole* and *Quips Upon Questions* [...] during 1600, and both identified him as the Clown of the Curtain, so he was rather obviously still there long after the Globe opened in the summer of 1599” (84). Gurr surmises that Armin “joined Chamberlain's either early in 1599 at the Curtain, or later when Kemp left the company” (*TSC* 218).

> the warm clown cannot make a jest unless by chance,
> as the blind man catcheth a hare. (9.21-28)[113]

Hamlet may here be "preserving or imitating contemporary comic catch-phrases" (Irace 104), but the lines can alternatively be read, together with those also found in Q2 and F, as an insight into a testing professional relationship between the playwright and a famous actor who had become too self-important. Perhaps Kempe's jests had simply lost their appeal. The lines exclusive to Q1 may have been an addition from an actor's recollection, or they may imply subsequent cuts made in the preparation of the Q2 and F texts on account of the fading topicality of Kempe's exit. In addition, the editors of the Arden third series edition of *Hamlet* note that Hamlet's exclamation "O God, your only jig-maker!" (3.2.120), in teasing Ophelia at the performance of the "Mousetrap," may be an allusion to the jig-maker Kempe, as "Hamlet bitterly casts himself as the clown" (Thompson and Taylor 305).

4.6. *Henry V*, *Julius Caesar*, and the building of the Globe:

Together with a deficient setting at the ageing Curtain, the absence of Falstaff from *Henry V* gave Shakespeare much to apologise for, which may explain the unusual employment of a conciliatory chorus for that play.[114] The most substantial indication of a date for the play, which allows us in part to assign its probable first performance to the Curtain–despite the surmise that it was intended to inaugurate the Globe–is the sharply topical reference embedded in the speech given by the chorus at the start of act 5. Shakespeare incites the audience imaginatively to associate the homecoming of King Henry from Agincourt with major events past and present:

> But now behold,
> In the quick forge and working-house of thought,
> How London doth pour out her citizens.
> The Mayor and all his brethren, in best sort,

---

[113] "Obs. corruption of *cognizance* n., a badge, etc." ("cullison, n." *OED*). This citation of Q1 is taken from Irace, ed. *The First Quarto of Hamlet*.

[114] On the rarity of choric figures in Shakespeare's works other than in *Henry V*: "Apart from the prologues to *Romeo and Juliet* and *Troilus and Cressida*, and the Ancient Gower of *Pericles*, there are only the opening Rumour painted with tongues and the apologetic Epilogue to *2 Henry IV*" (Gurr, *King Henry V* 6). *The Two Noble Kinsmen* also employs a prologue and an epilogue.

> Like to the senators of th'antique Rome
> With the plebeians swarming at their heels,
> Go forth and fetch their conqu'ring Caesar in–
> As, by a lower but high-loving likelihood,
> Were now the General of our gracious Empress–
> As in good time he may–from Ireland coming,
> Bringing rebellion broachèd on his sword,
> How many would the peaceful city quit,
> To welcome him!
>
> (*Henry V* 5.0.22-34)

The "General of our gracious Empress" is the Earl of Essex, who departed on a military expedition on behalf of the Queen to suppress rebel forces in Ireland on 27 March 1599.[115] Commenting on the striking transparency of this allusion by Shakespeare, Gary Taylor has described it as "the only explicit, extra-dramatic, incontestable reference to a contemporary event anywhere in the canon" (7).[116] Although the involvement of Essex in this venture had been rumoured since November 1598, his appointment as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland was finally confirmed only in January, so we are on safer ground in supposing that Shakespeare wrote at least this passage after the Christmas season of 1598-99. Craik states that "*Henry V* was acted between March 1599, once it was generally known that Essex was going to Ireland, and September of that year," but he adds the proviso that the choruses may have been late additions to a play written somewhat earlier. Craik himself, however, sees the choruses as "an integral part of the design" (3). The date of the Earl's disgraced return to England on 28 September 1599 is sometimes cited, as by Craik, as a *terminus ante quem* for composition of *Henry V.* Yet Essex had "encountered the first blasts of Elizabeth's anger" already in July, upon repairing to Dublin following a botched foray to Munster, so it is likely that his failures were public knowledge by midsummer 1599 (Williams, P. 368). Taylor thus concludes that "completion of Shakespeare's play can be firmly dated from January to June 1599" (5).

The above details allow us to suppose that Shakespeare put the finishing touches to *Henry V* in the early months of 1599, most likely March and April, and had probably initially intended for it to be first performed at the Globe that summer.[117] Its conditions of production and performance, however, were far from ideal, with Gurr citing several signs of discontinuity in composition:

---

[115] See note 95 above.

[116] Craik addresses–and swiftly dismisses–an alternative explanation of the allusion that has been offered, which points to Charles Blount, successor to Essex (2-3).

> Characters are introduced and then abandoned […], the Chorus tells of the army shipping from Dover when he has already announced the port as Southampton (3.0.4), and he ignores the comic characters who open Acts 2 and 5, so that their arrival makes nonsense of his announcements about the locality and the passage of time. (Gurr, *King Henry V* 2)

Another indication of a problematic production process for *Henry V* may be seen in Act 4, where the Chorus excuses the "ridiculous" representation of the battle of Agincourt that is to follow:

> And so our scene must to the battle fly,
> Where O for pity, we shall much disgrace,
> With four or five most vile and ragged foils,
> Right ill-disposed in brawl ridiculous,
> The name of Agincourt.
> (*Henry V* 4.0.48-52)

From what we can discern in the extant texts, not so many as "four or five most vile and ragged foils" ever appear, and the battle takes place offstage. As mentioned at the start of the present chapter, such an apology might serve to elevate its subject matter irrespective of where it is staged, but the absence of even an attempt at a major battle scene in the play suggests that what had been planned for the Globe was cut for the Curtain. This incongruous apology may be another indicator of textual alteration on account of working conditions, and it supports the notion that Shakespeare's dramaturgy was confined by the "girdle" of the old playhouse.

The more likely play to have been Shakespeare's first offering at the Globe is *Julius Caesar*. As mentioned in the Introduction to this study (34), it was seen performed there by Thomas Platter on 21 September 1599, and this was not necessarily its first performance. Therefore, *Henry V* and *Julius Caesar* were probably written consecutively over the few months which spanned the building of the Globe. These plays may thus be seen as bookends to two very different periods in Shakespeare's career: that of controversy and uncertainty at the Theatre and Curtain between 1596 and 1599, and that of professional security and great artistic development at the Globe between 1599 and 1608. As such, it should be noted that the troubled textual history of *Henry V*, with its excisions and alterations caused by turbulent political and professional circumstances, contrasts with the "unusually clean" text of *Julius Caesar*, which was first published in the 1623 Folio and contains remarkably few errors (Humphreys, *Julius Caesar* 73). Moreover, where *Henry V* asks its audience for forgiveness, *Julius Caesar* is unapologetic and ambitious in its staging. Act 5 of *Julius Caesar* delivers what act 4 of *Henry V* does not attempt, insofar as its stage directions, in act 5 of the Folio text, call for armies to pass over the stage. We may infer that Shakespeare's enlarged cache of dramatic resources, at a playhouse presumably custom-built to his specifications, enabled him to set his sights higher than the strained conditions surrounding *Henry V* had allowed. The notion that *Julius Caesar* was a success on the stage is supported by words of praise–at Jonson's expense–many years later, from Leonard Digges (1588-1635):

---

[117] In her article entitled "The Globe and *Henry V* as Business Document," Melissa D. Aaron suggests that, just as the Chamberlain's Men staged Jonson's *Every Man Out Of His Humour* at the Globe to follow *Every Man In His Humour* at the Curtain, *Henry V*–as the sequel to the successful *2 Henry IV*–might have been planned to open the Globe, as it "would encourage a reluctant audience to travel and see the brand-new theater in Southwark, in the same way that *Every Man In* might have served as an appeal to come and see *Every Man Out*" (280).

> So have I seene, when Cesar would appeare,
> And on the Stage at halfe-sword parley were,
> *Brutus* and *Cassius*: oh how the Audience
> Were ravish'd, with what wonder they went thence,
> When some new day they would not brooke a line,
> Of tedious (though well laboured) *Catiline*.[118]

4.7. Shakespeare's self-promotional intertextuality:

In *Hamlet*, probably first staged a year after *Julius Caesar*, and which "gave its audience a new Shakespeare" (Bloom 383), the dramatist can be seen to capitalise on the success of his initial Roman offering at the Globe. A seemingly gratuitous exchange between

---

[118] Digges, "Upon Master William Shakespeare, the Deceased Author, and his Poems" (published posthumously in 1640), qtd. in *SAB* 1: 456. Jonson's play *Catiline* was published in 1611 and performed by the King's Men.

Polonius and the Prince rewards a knowledgeable audience with its jovially metatheatrical allusion to a past performance:

> HAMLET. My lord, you played once i'th' university, you say.
> POLONIUS. That I did, my lord, and was accounted a good actor.
> HAMLET. And what did you enact?
> POLONIUS. I did enact Julius Caesar. I was killed i'th' Capitol. Brutus killed me.
> HAMLET. It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf there.
> (*Ham* 3.2.94-102)

The passage is almost certainly a nod to Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, which ran shortly before or even alongside *Hamlet* in the repertory, but it is possible that the intertextual reference is yet more pointed. Glossing these lines, Thompson and Taylor point out that the company's lead actor Burbage, playing Hamlet, probably also played Brutus in *Julius Caesar*, while Heminges played Polonius and Caesar (304). The same actor claiming here to have been killed in the Roman Capitol may indeed have uttered the famous words "Et tu, Brute?" in Shakespeare's earlier play. Furthermore, there is a sharpened proleptic irony to his description of his own onstage death in another play. Hamlet may not yet have struck Polonius behind the arras, but in *Julius Caesar* Burbage had already proven his credentials in "killing" ostensibly the same man now opposite him, which lends the moment a certain piquancy.

Taken as an isolated instance of dialogue between two Shakespeare plays of the same period, the passage cited above perhaps does not sustain claims that self-publicising and cross-referencing within the repertory were commercial strategies employed by the playwright and his company. However, several other such moments across the Globe plays should be considered in order to perceive a recurrent pattern of deliberate intertextuality. Hamlet again refers back to Caesar in the Gravedigger scene as he ruminates on the transience of humankind:

> Imperial Caesar, dead and turned to clay,
> Might stop a hole to keep the wind away.
> O that that earth which kept the world in awe
> Should patch a wall t'expel the winter's flaw!
> (*Ham* 5.1.208-11)

As Hibbard has noted (330), one line in particular here, which calls Caesar's body “that earth,” echoes Antony's memorable speech over Caesar's corpse: “O pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth” (*JC* 3.1.257). *Macbeth* likewise contains an implicit reference to a near-contemporary play in the company repertory:

> MACBETH. There is none but he
> Whose being I do fear, and under him
> My genius is rebuked as, it is said,
> Mark Antony's was by Caesar.
> (*Mac* 3.1.55-58)

The lines are in dialogue with the passage in *Antony and Cleopatra* that sees Antony forewarned by the soothsayer:

> ANTONY. Say to me
> Whose fortunes shall rise higher: Caesar's or mine?
> SOOTHSAYER.
> Caesar's. Therefore, O Antony, stay not by his side.
> Thy daemon, that thy spirit which keeps thee, is
> Noble, courageous, high, unmatchable,
> Where Caesar's is not. But near him thy angel
> Becomes afeard, as being o'erpowered. Therefore
> Make space enough between you.
> (*AC* 2.3.14-21)

Classical allusions such as these of course serve to elevate a given subject by association with noble figures of antiquity, and if Shakespeare was busily writing his plays in quick succession or even alongside each other, some unconscious echoes must be expected. The various examples cited here, however, do seem to me to be part of a wider strategy of deliberate self-promotion, advertising forthcoming plays or alluding to past successes.

I now return to the aforementioned Essex allusion to ask whether Shakespeare, frustrated by a protracted Globe build and a troublesome project in *Henry V*, might have set his sights on *Julius Caesar* to open his and the company's new venture on Bankside. I propose that this rarest of direct topical references to London represents part of Shakespeare's most ambitious instance of self-aggrandising propaganda, at a juncture in his career when it was most needed. Not only does Shakespeare align himself with the most popular public figure of the day,[119] a strategy he would afterwards stay well clear of, but he also whets the appetite of the paying public to witness Essex return in triumph from the Irish wars. I argue that Shakespeare exploited public enthusiasm for the Essex campaign to publicise and promote the two plays he staged over the summer of 1599, but particularly *Julius Caesar*, as another look at key lines from the Chorus shall demonstrate:

> Like to the senators of th'antique Rome
> With the plebeians swarming at their heels,
> Go forth and fetch their conqu'ring Caesar in–
> As, by a lower but high-loving likelihood,
> Were now the General of our gracious Empress–
> As in good time he may–from Ireland coming.
> (*Henry V* 5.0.26-31)

Shakespeare here subtly elevates the status of Caesar's triumph above that of the anticipated return of Essex, and makes a pointed reference to the major event of the opening of *Julius Caesar*, a play he probably expected to run alongside *Henry V* in the company repertory. Williams explains that Ireland had become "the supreme priority for the Crown" (366), and so these lines may be seen to relate the foremost concerns of contemporary Elizabethan politics to two famous historical triumphs in Shakespeare's plays that summer; the one verbally rendered by a chorus on an "unworthy scaffold," and the other shown onstage at the new playhouse.

The following chapter explores Shakespeare's rich socio-cultural environment during his tenure at the Globe. The Bankside district on the south bank of the Thames was infamous for its licentious and "idle" pursuits, and it helped to shape Shakespeare's dramatic output during the Globe years. Among the other entertainments on offer for Londoners who crossed the river was animal-baiting, a sport of great cruelty that shared audiences with the playhouses. The local specificity of Shakespeare's works may be identified by associating moments from the plays with these rich cultural contexts. All the while, London dramatists faced opposition from the Puritan church and the recurrent threat of playhouse closures due to outbreaks of the plague, and such concerns may also be traced in surviving play texts.

---

[119] Penry Williams informs that although hardly short of opponents at court, Essex retained popular support during 1598-99: "While the Court seemed evenly divided between the enemies and the friends of Essex, London was filled with his followers" (371).

CHAPTER FIVE

"THE GLORY OF THE BANK"

SHAKESPEARE'S SOCIO-CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

> *The flag is up on the playhouse by the bankside.*
> *The bear Sackerson growls in the pit near it,*
> *Paris garden. Canvasclimbers who sailed with*
> *Drake chew their sausages among the*
> *groundlings. Local colour. Work in all you know.*
> *Make them accomplices.*
> *ULYSSES*–JAMES JOYCE

The London appellation *Bankside* is loosely defined. Today the term has been supplanted by *The South Bank*, which denotes the riverfront of an altogether larger stretch of the Thames, informally from Tower Bridge to Westminster Bridge. Sixteenth-century Bankside extended roughly from the southern foot of London Bridge to the site of the present-day Blackfriars Bridge, a distance of just under a mile (see fig. 1). Completed in 1209, London Bridge was the only crossing over the Thames in London for over five hundred years before Westminster Bridge was built in 1750.[120] The district at the southern end of the bridge thus represented an important point of access to the City and other areas across the Thames: "[a]t the end of the thirteenth century a number of town houses of great ecclesiastics and other magnates were established by the riverbank, which provided an easy means of access to Westminster" (Brandon and Brooke 61). Medieval Bankside was comprised of five manors, including the Guildable Manor immediately adjacent to London Bridge, Paris Garden, and the Clink Liberty.[121] The Guildable Manor was the original town of Southwark, which gradually came under the jurisdiction of the City after the Charter of Edward III in

---

[120] The bridge that stood in Shakespeare's time is often referred to as "Old London Bridge," but archaeological evidence indicates that the Romans had built a wooden bridge close to the site in the first century AD.

[121] A *liberty* in this sense is defined as "an area of local administration distinct from neighbouring territory and possessing a degree of independence" ("liberty, n.1. 6.c." *OED*).

1327.[122] Furthest towards the west was Paris Garden–originally named Parish Garden–which was surrounded by a stream or open sewer (see fig. 7a). The unpalatable setting allowed Thomas Dekker (d. 1632) in *The Gull's Hornbook* (1609) to draw the following false comparison: "How wonderfully is the world altered! And no marvel, for it has lien sick almost five thousand years; so that it is no more like the old *théâtre du monde*, than old Paris Garden is like the king's Garden at Paris" (17). These lines are frequently read as an allusion to the Globe–the "world"– and the Theatre–the "old *théâtre du monde*."

5.1. "Some gallèd goose of Winchester": Prostitution in the liberties

The land of the Clink Liberty was owned by the Bishop of Winchester from the twelfth century onwards. As well as its notorious prison,[123] the Clink and its environs had a long history of prostitution in and around its many brothels or "stews."[124] As Gamini Salgado comments in *The Elizabethan Underworld* (1977), the fact that "an area which consisted mainly of brothels should have been episcopal property will surprise no one who knows anything about the activities of early prelates or about the equivocal attitude of the Church towards the sin of lust and lechery" (37). The area was broadly tolerant of prostitutes, and although a royal proclamation by Henry VIII in 1546 officially suppressed their trade, it continued to be a major feature on Bankside.[125] Shakespeare's time was no exception:

> Lord Hunsdon, Elizabeth I's Lord Chamberlain, was enriched by the brothels in the manor of Paris Garden, which the Queen had granted him. When Philip Henslowe took out his lease on the Rose, it was a known brothel. The word 'Rose' had a number of other references including a street term for a prostitute […]. (Brandon and Brooke 87)

---

[122] *The City of London's Southwark Charter of 1327*. All these areas are now covered by the more extensive London Borough of Southwark.

[123] The Clink prison, established in the twelfth century, was burnt to the ground in 1780.

[124] The term "stew" originates from Roman steam-baths: "The association between such baths and bawdy houses was already common in Rome and was doubtless reinforced by the practice of sweating as a cure for venereal disease. Bankside was Stews' Bank by the time of Henry VIII [r. 1509-47] and stews became a general term for brothels in Elizabethan England" (Salgado 40-41).

[125] "Henry's decree lasted only as long as his life which came to a syphilitic end the following year" (Salgado 41).

The so-called stewholders of Southwark and the Clink fell under the jurisdiction of the Bishop, which explains Shakespeare's reference to a “galled goose of Winchester” in the valedictory speech given by Pandarus at the end of *Troilus and Cressida*. The passage is effectively an address to the “traders in the flesh,” the bawds of Bankside, and its lines are permeated by the localised, lurid language and wordplay of the “hold-door” sex trade:

> Good traders in the flesh, set this in your painted cloths:
> As many as be here of panders' hall,
> Your eyes, half out, weep out at Pandar's fall.
> Or if you cannot weep, yet give some groans,
> Though not for me yet for your aching bones.
> Brethren and sisters of the hold-door trade,
> Some two months hence my will shall here be made.
> It should be now, but that my fear is this:
> Some gallèd goose of Winchester would hiss.
> Till then I'll sweat and seek about for eases,
> And at that time bequeath you my diseases.
> (*Troilus and Cressida* 5.11.44-54)[126]

The term *galled* could refer either to venereal disease or to annoyance,[127] and this pun underscores the conscious antagonism of Pandarus in his address to the audience. It is an unusually pugnacious attitude for Shakespeare to adopt towards his public, one that perhaps reflects the satirical fashions of London playing during the final years of Elizabeth's reign. Commenting on the speech, Anthony Dawson identifies similarities with other writers at the beginning of the seventeenth century:

> The tone is compatible with the kinds of grotesque physicality and cheerful disdain prominent among writers like Marston or Chapman, though its cheekiness distinguishes it from their sensationalism or the contempt one sometimes senses behind the satiric flourishes of Ben Jonson. (10)

---

[126] *Oxf* prints Pandarus's intrusion at the end of the play as an additional passage. The act and scene notation given here is from the New Cambridge Shakespeare edition of the play, edited by Anthony Dawson (2003). Dawson glosses the line “Brethren and sisters of the hold-door trade”: “Brothel-keepers (who have to guard the doors) […] the audience is satirically linked to 'traders in the flesh'” (233 n.).

[127] “1.a. Affected with *galls* or painful swellings”; “2. Irritated, vexed” (“*galled*, adj.2.” *OED*).

An element of such “cheerful disdain” is discernible in *Othello*, act 4, scene 2. Although Othello is gravely beset with suspicion and anger shortly after he has resolved to kill Desdemona, from a perspective of metatheatre at the Globe the scene also implicates and humorously derides those constituents of the playhouse audience who came from the local stews. Othello begins a series of associations with the sex trade by calling Emilia a “simple bawd,” and Desdemona a “subtle whore” (4.2.21-22). This is quickly followed by his slandering words aimed at Emilia:

> Some of your function, mistress,
> Leave procreants alone, and shut the door,
> Cough or cry 'Hem' if anybody come.
> Your mystery, your mystery–nay, dispatch.
> (*Oth* 4.2.29-32)

To Othello, Emilia's “function” is that of a bawd or stewholder, her “mystery” is her trade, and her responsibility is to guard the door. Recalling Pandarus, she is here imagined as a sister of the hold-door trade, and the scenario must have been comically familiar to a Bankside audience.

Around a decade before his professional move across the river, Shakespeare had already used *Winchester goose* as an insult in *1 Henry VI* (1.4.52), which indicates that the prostitutes of Bankside had a firmly rooted and widespread reputation. Indeed, Jonson included the same term in his later poetic description of Bankside, incorporated in *An Execration upon Vulcan.* Written in 1623, this poem is an imaginative vituperation of the Roman god of fire in response to a blaze in Jonson's study that destroyed a number of his unpublished works.[128] The Bankside passage (lines 123-55) provides a valuable insight into the lasting reputation and associated lore of this notorious liberty, and as such it is reproduced in full in the appendix to this chapter (5.1). Jonson remembers that, ten years prior, “the Globe, the glory of the Bank” (line 32), had also been razed by “that cruel stratagem” of fire, leading him to recount the reactions of the local community to that memorable event. The following shorter extract indicates an uneasy relationship between prostitution, playing, and religious authorities in the area:

---

[128] “This is usually supposed to have been a major conflagration of his library […] it is likely that Jonson […] inflated the scale of the catastrophe in order to magnify the works that were destroyed. No book that survives from his library shows any sign of fire-damage” (*CBJ* 175, n.).

> The brethren, they straight noised it out for news:
> 'Twas verily some relic of the stews,
> And this a sparkle of that fire let loose
> That was raked up in the Winchestrian goose,
> Bred on the Bank in time of popery,
> When Venus there maintained the mystery.
> (*An Execration upon Vulcan,* lines 139-44)

Jonson here paraphrases Puritan opponents to the licentious diversions of the Bankside. The "brethren" attributed the destruction of the Globe to the same venereal diseases that infected Winchester's prostitutes. These perceived evils were in turn associated with the pre-Reformation "time of popery."

That the playhouse was known to be a favoured locale of the sex trade is borne out by Jonson's quip which follows shortly thereafter:

> "Nay", sighed a sister, "'Twas the nun Kate Arden
> Kindled the fire!" But then did one return:
> "No fool would his own harvest spoil or burn!"
> (Ibid., lines 148-50)

A "nun" or whore is accused of having started the fire that burnt down the Globe, but the retort reminds that she would not likely conspire against the site of her "own harvest."[129] With the theatres and bawdy houses operating so closely together, it is no surprise that a palpable anxiety relating to the threat of venereal disease and its consequences is common in the drama of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, as with the references by Pandarus to aching bones and his intention to induce sweating in search of a cure (see above, 133). By extension, Salgado sees in Lear's madness "a more universal and even more powerful denunciation of woman's sexual parts as the source of corruption and destruction" (45), as he raves about his unfaithful daughters:

---

[129] *Nunnery* was a colloquialism for a brothel ("nunnery, n. 1.b." *OED*). It is possible to interpret Hamlet's injunction to Ophelia in this sense, but a slang meaning makes little sense in context: "Get thee to a nunnery. Why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners?" (3.1.123-24). Hibbard helpfully remarks: "Hamlet means precisely what he says here. Only by entering a nunnery can Ophelia ensure that she will not become *a breeder of sinners*" (243).

> Down from the waist
> They're centaurs, though women all above.
> But to the girdle do the gods inherit;
> Beneath is all the fiend's. There's hell, there's darkness,
> There's the sulphury pit, burning, scalding,
> Stench, consummation.
> (*KL* 20.119-24)

In *Julius Caesar*, as Portia pleads with her husband Brutus to divulge his preoccupations, Shakespeare adroitly weaves preconceptions of the liberties into her speech. To emphasize her growing impatience, Portia draws a comparison between an estranged wife and a prostitute in the liberties:

> Within the bond of marriage, tell me, Brutus,
> Is it excepted I should know no secrets
> That appertain to you? Am I your self
> But as it were in sort or limitation?
> To keep with you at meals, comfort your bed,
> And talk to you sometimes? Dwell I but in the suburbs
> Of your good pleasure? If it be no more,
> Portia is Brutus' harlot, not his wife.
> (*JC* 2.1.279-86)

A Globe audience would surely identify Paris Garden and the Clink as the localities implied by the allusive “suburbs” of Brutus's “good pleasure.” Yet various areas of Shakespeare's London, not just the Bankside, had a reputation for “idle” pursuits. A contemporary epigram by Samuel Rowlands, published in 1600, indicates the ample choice of debauched activities available to Londoners, but also that the area around the Globe was not the only destination for those at a loose end:

> Speake Gentlemen, what shall we do today?
> Drinke some brave health upon the Dutch carouse
> Or shall we to the *Globe* and see a Play?
> Or visit *Shorditch*, for a Baudie house?
> Let's call for Cardes or Dice, and haue a Game,
> To sit thus idle, is both sinne and shame.
> (Epigram 7, sig. A7, original emphasis)[130]

---

[130] A facsimile copy of the epigram can be found in appendix 5.2.

Shakespeare and his fellow players, formerly at the Theatre and Curtain in Shoreditch, had long been close to the bawdy houses and carouses of the liberties.[131] The epigram shows that religious zealots were not alone in associating plays with the other disreputable pastimes. Clearly Rowlands and his peers identified visits to the playhouse as coterminous with gambling, prostitution, and heavy drinking.

5.2. “There the men are as mad as he”: Shakespeare's foreign scenes

Shakespeare at various moments engaged with audiences at the playhouse through veiled references to the diverse entertainments on offer in the liberties. One of the many strategies employed to achieve this metatheatrical effect, drawing attention to the play as an event that involved and even implicated its audience, is the satirisation of English society embedded in ostensibly foreign scenes. If he was uncommonly brazen in slandering his public in *Troilus and Cressida*, there are other moments where Shakespeare more playfully derides the audience by association. Hamlet exploits his anonymity to ask the Gravedigger why “young Hamlet” was sent to England, and the response is a humorous slur:

> FIRST CLOWN. Why, because a was mad. A shall recover his wits there; or if a do not, 'tis no great matter there.
> HAMLET. Why?
> FIRST CLOWN. 'Twill not be seen in him there. There the men are as mad as he.
> (*Ham* 5.1.147-51)

In *Othello,* his next tragedy after *Hamlet,* Shakespeare elaborates on this joke somewhat. The actor playing Iago surely ingratiates himself to his public in extolling the drinking prowess of the English when compared to other nationalities:

> IAGO. I learned it in England, where indeed they are most potent in potting. Your Dane, your German, and your swag-bellied Hollander–

---

[131] The verb *carouse* means to “drink freely and repeatedly”; the noun is defined as “[t]he action or fashion of 'drinking carouse'” (“carouse, v.1.a.; n.1.” *OED*). See also *Ham* 5.2.242; *Oth* 2.3.49; *AC* 4.9.34, 4.13.12.

> drink, ho!–are nothing to your English.
> CASSIO. Is your Englishman so exquisite in his drinking?
> IAGO. Why, he drinks you with facility your Dane dead drunk. He sweats not to overthrow your Almain. He gives your Hollander a vomit ere the next pottle can be filled.
> (*Oth* 2.3.70-78)[132]

In terms of dramaturgy, the moment serves to remind the audience of the play's foreign setting in Cyprus, but it is also a humorous innuendo firmly located in London's well-lubricated liberties.

The conversation among French noblemen on the eve of Agincourt in *Henry V*, meanwhile, is a foreign scene that facilitates a sideswipe at the English intellect:

> CONSTABLE. If the English had any apprehension, they would run away.
> ORLÉANS. That they lack–for if their heads had any intellectual armour, they could never wear such heavy headpieces.
> (*Henry V* 3.7.132-36)

The discussion then turns to the heedless bravery of the English, in terms of a pointed reference to the popular sport of baiting bears with large dogs (mastiffs), which was described by many a foreign visitor to London in Shakespeare's time:

> RAMBURES. That island of England breeds very valiant creatures. Their mastiffs are of unmatchable courage.
> ORLÉANS. Foolish curs, that run winking into the mouth of a Russian bear, and have their heads crushed like rotten apples. You may as well say, 'That's a valiant flea that dare eat his breakfast on the lip of a lion.'
> CONSTABLE. Just, just. And the men do sympathize with the mastiffs in robustious and rough coming on, leaving their wits with their wives.
> (*Henry V* 3.7.137-45)

---

[132] *Potting* denotes the drinking of beer, ale, etc.

Although not mentioned in Rowland's epigram, animal-baiting was another entertainment on Bankside, and one which had a considerable impact on Shakespeare's work.

5.3. “Bear-like I must fight the course”: Animal-baiting

Animal-baiting in Elizabethan London was synonymous with Paris Garden. It was there in the 1540s that the practice gained legitimacy under royal patronage, and the first baiting ring was erected (Bowsher 151ff.). Two other such amphitheatres were built in the area before Shakespeare's London career, and one of these collapsed in 1583, prompting a redoubled Puritan outcry. The disaster was attributed to God's will, as evidenced by the Reverend John Field's account: “Being thus ungodly assembled, to so unholy a spectacle […] the yeard, standings, and galleries being ful fraught, being now amidest their joilty, when the dogs and Bear were in the chiefest Battel, Lo the mighty hand of God uppon them” (qtd. in Bowsher 154).[133] The City Corporation[134] was also opposed to animal-baiting, but had no jurisdiction over the Paris Garden liberty. The same concerns which would arise from public playing–the gathering of large crowds and the risk of plague outbreaks–applied to the animal-baiting houses that operated on Bankside throughout the second half of the sixteenth century. The pastime should not, however, be seen as marginalised in Elizabethan society because of the location of its venues on the London periphery, or because of strong opposition from religious authorities and City administrators. Animal-baiting was recognised as a legitimate sport, and remained popular right up to–and even for some years beyond–the closure of all theatres in 1642 (Lee 428f.).

In August 1613 Philip Henslowe, who had abandoned his Rose playhouse, signed a contract for the building of the Hope near the site of the sixteenth-century bear garden, which he also owned (see fig. 14). Ever the determined businessman, Henslowe decided to offer playing and animal-baiting at the same new venue. The historian Julian Bowsher comments on the possible motives behind this choice:

---

[133] John Field, a Blackfriars preacher who attacked both animal-baiting and playgoing, was the father of Nathan Field (d. 1620), a sharer in the Globe and member of the King's Men (*TSC* 227-28).

[134] The Corporation of London, the municipal governing body of the City.

> There may have been practical reasons why it was to be a dual-purpose building–apart from profit. The conservative authorities might not have sanctioned yet another playhouse development on Bankside, but one aligned with animal-baiting–one of King James I's favourite pastimes–may have been more politically acceptable. (110)

It was as an animal-baiting arena that the venue would ultimately endure. The players were understandably dissatisfied at having to work and perform in the same space where the various animals were kept, and all too often killed, for sport. After the playing companies moved elsewhere in 1619 the Hope was used exclusively for animal-baiting, and it remained in use until 1656. Its prominent place on Bankside in the first half of the sixteenth century is evidenced by the famous *Long View of London* etching by Wenceslaus Hollar (1607-77). Produced in Antwerp in 1647 using six plates, the *Long View* is an extensive panorama based on Hollar's drawings in London between 1636 and 1644 (Foakes, *Illustrations* 37). The artist's viewpoint is atop St. Saviour's church, now Southwark Cathedral, and towards the west of the panorama the etching depicts the second Globe alongside the "Beere bayting" ring, although their labels are erroneously reversed (see fig. 15).[135] Hollar's work shows in great detail the growing Bankside district, and it indicates the enduring, conjoint appeal of public plays and animal-baiting many years after Shakespeare's career.

The travel diary of the German lawyer Paul Hentzner, which records his experiences across Europe during the years 1597-1600, provides an invaluable detailed account of animal-baiting in London:

> There is still another place, built in the form of a theatre, which serves for the baiting of bulls and bears; they are fastened behind, and then worried by great English bull-dogs […]. To this entertainment there often follows that of whipping a blinded bear, which is performed by five or six men, standing circularly with whips, which they exercise upon him without any mercy, as he cannot escape from them because of his chain; he defends himself with all his force and skill,

---

[135] "The theatres are not named in Hollar's preparatory drawings for the 'Long View' […] and the wrong identification in the etching is probably an accidental consequence of the production of the etching in Antwerp in 1647" (Foakes, *Illustrations* 37).

> throwing down all who come within his reach and are not active enough to get out of it, and tearing the whips out of their hands and breaking them.[136]

A brutal spectacle indeed, and one that we today may find difficult to reconcile with Shakespeare's plays–long since considered "high art"–as comparable entertainments (see fig. 16). Yet the public playhouse and the bear-baiting ring, later combined at the Hope, were direct competitors during Shakespeare's tenure at the Globe, both charging a penny for basic admission. Tiffany Stern has gone as far as to suggest that the need for the playing companies "to offer an entertainment at least as compelling as the visceral, bloody, brutal sport" of animal-baiting brought about some of the violence staged at the playhouses (*Making* 19). Stern cites among other examples the "sparkling and oddly erotically charged blood of *Julius Caesar,*" and the "heavy, dark sticky blood that pervades *Macbeth*" (ibid.). Immediately after Duncan's assassination, Shakespeare exploits the bloodthirst of an audience steeped in ritual violence. Macbeth's aureate language at once emphasizes the profundity of the visual spectacle and elevates it to an unforeseen sophistication:

> Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
> Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
> The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
> Making the green one red.
> (*Mac* 2.2.58-61)

Sandra Clark and Pamela Mason, in the 2015 Arden third series edition of *Macbeth*, remark that the new word *multitudinous* "would have been striking in its polysyllabic and Latinate conjunction with the rare word *incarnadine*" (183). The blood spilt at the nearby baiting ring could hardly have been heralded by such riveting speech.

Shakespeare's plays repeatedly betray the playwright's familiarity with animal-baiting, and the currency of its terminology. To begin the spectacle, the bulls or bears, described by Hentzner as being "fastened behind," were tied with a long chain or rope to a stake in the middle of the ring (see fig. 16). Shakespeare chose to employ this perilous situation as a metaphor in his first offering on Bankside, for the

---

[136] See Hentzner, *Travels in England During the Reign of Queen Elizabeth* in list of references.

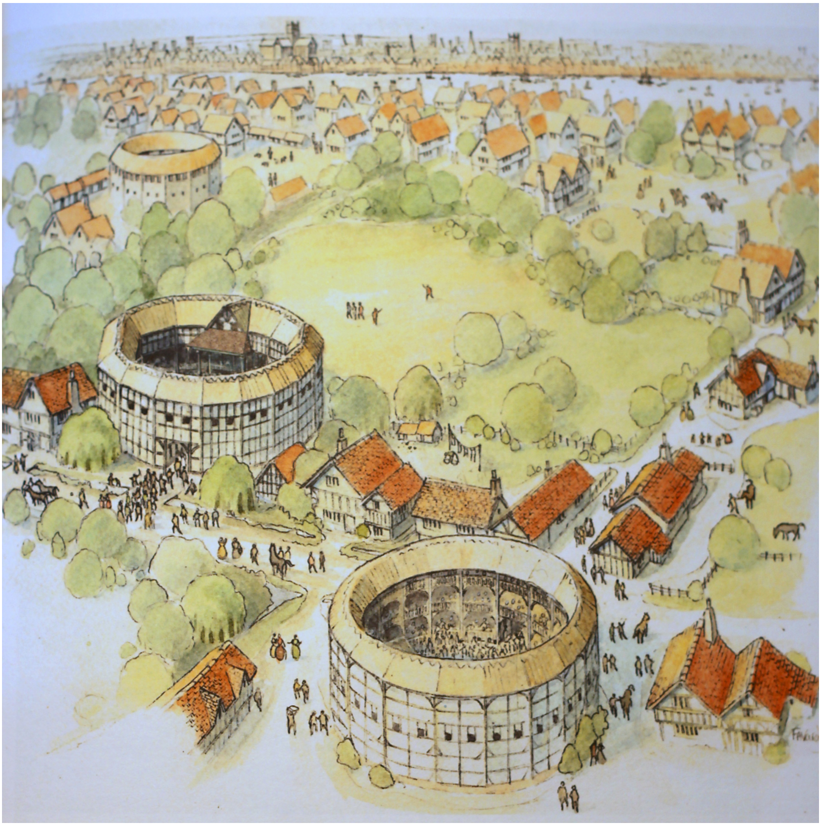


Fig. 14: An artist's reconstruction of Bankside, ca. 1602, by Faith Vardy. Showing the Globe in the foreground and Henslowe's Rose behind. The sixteenth-century bear garden is shown in the background; this was pulled down to make way for the Hope playhouse in 1614.

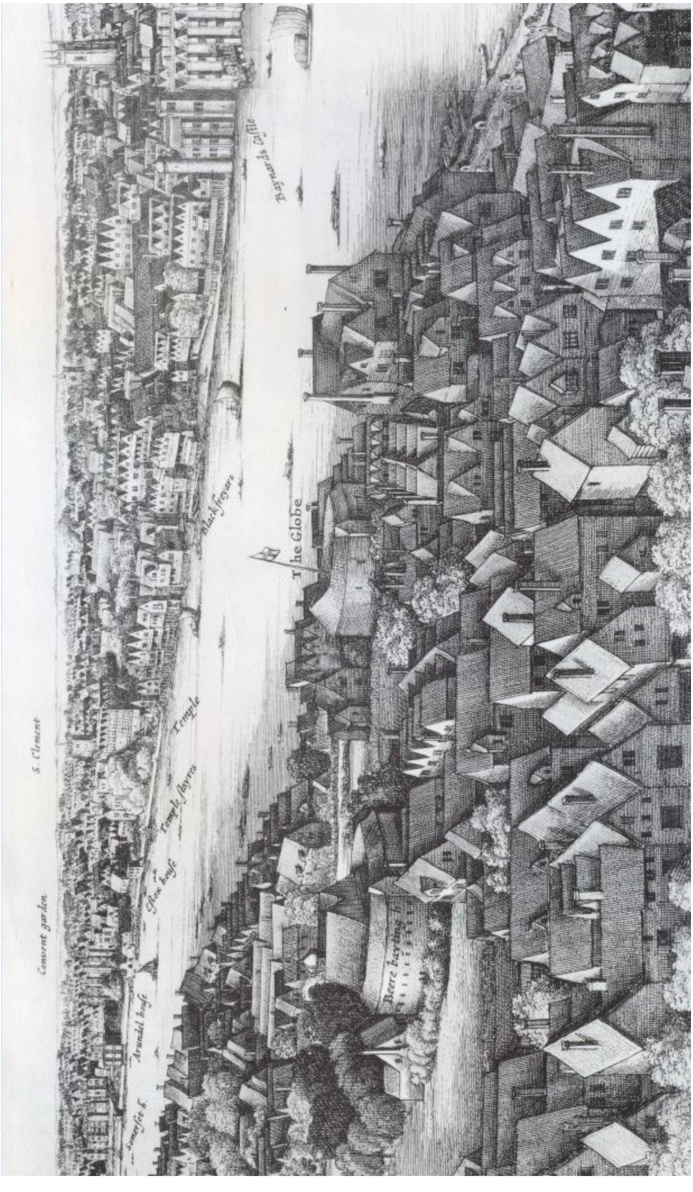

Somerſet h.
Convent garden
Arundel houſe
Eſsex houſe
S. Clement
Temple ſtayres
Temple
Black fryars
The Globe
Baynards Caſtle
Beere bayting h.

Fig. 15: Section of *Long View of London* (1647) by Wenceslaus Hollar (1607-77). Showing the second Globe and the bear-baiting ring on Bankside, with their names erroneously reversed.

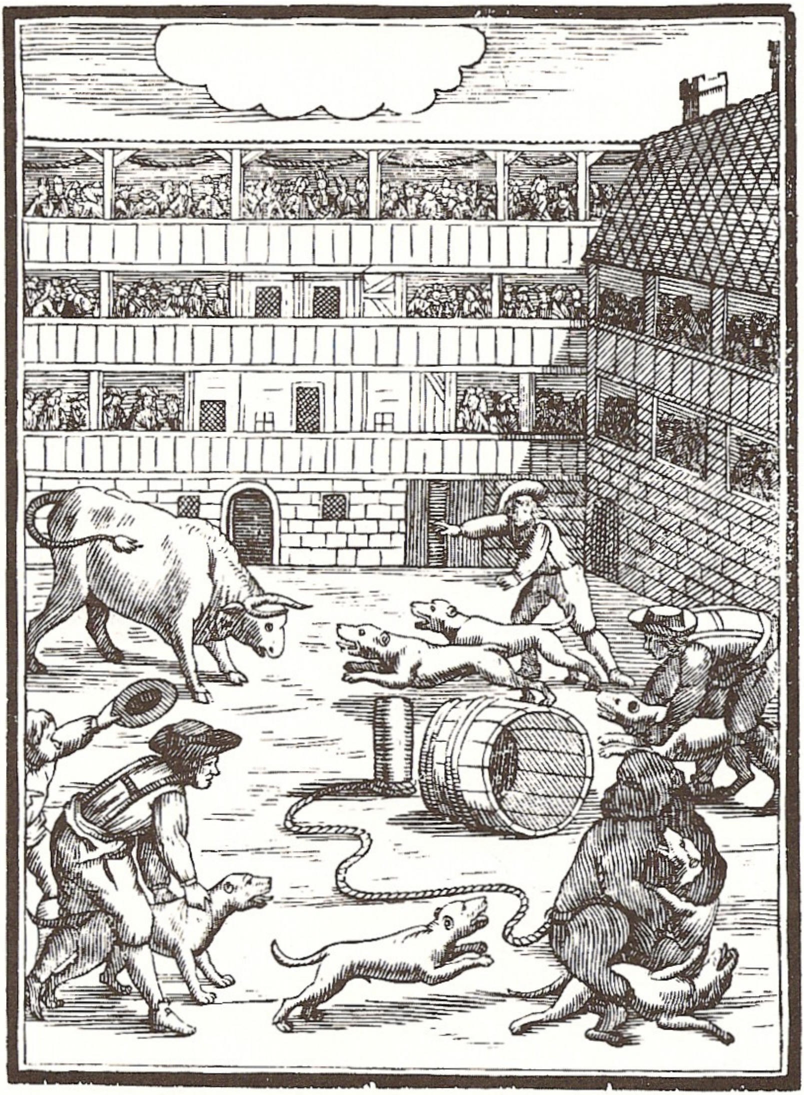


Fig. 16: Seventeenth-century German woodcut of animal-baiting in the Fechthaus, Nürnberg. Showing a bear fastened to the stake in the middle of the arena.

meeting of the embattled Second Triumvirate[137] in act 4, scene 1 of *Julius Caesar*:

> ANTONY. And let us presently go sit in council,
> How covert matters may be best disclosed,
> And open perils surest answerèd.
> OCTAVIUS. Let us do so, for we are at the stake
> And bayed about with many enemies;
> And some that smile have in their hearts, I fear,
> Millions of mischiefs.
> (*JC* 4.1.45-51)

As Gloucester is tied down and threatened with blinding in *King Lear*, the most appropriate words he can find for his situation are also reminiscent of the cruel fate of the baited bear: "I am tied to th' stake, and I must stand the course" (14.52).[138] We may remember Hentzner's words about a blinded bear in the extract given above, and consider the particularly callous irony of Gloucester's identification with the animal at this point, just a few lines before he has his own eyes plucked out in surely the most brutal act of violence in all the Globe tragedies. In a moment of intertextuality that is suggestive of sequential composition, the words are directly echoed by Macbeth just after he has seen Birnam Wood come to Dunsinane: "They have tied me to a stake. I cannot fly, / But bear-like I must fight the course" (5.7.1-2). In *Troilus and Cressida*, meanwhile, Achilles considers his fading fortunes in similar terms: "I see my reputation is at stake. / My fame is shrewdly gored" (3.3.220-21).

We may reach several conclusions from such frequent references to animal-baiting in the plays. For one thing, there were similarities between these two Bankside entertainments that we could hardly expect today. Both were vehemently opposed by Puritans, especially for transgressing the sanctity of the Sabbath.[139] The pamphleteer Phillip Stubbes, in a wide ranging denunciation of English social customs entitled *The Anatomie of Abuses*, first published in 1583, presents an imagined dialogue wherein both stage plays and bear-baiting are decried: "Having shewed the true use of the Sabboth, let us goe forward to speake of those abuses particularly, whereby the Sabboth of the Lord is prophaned" (101). Stubbes is incredulous at the barbarity of bear-baiting:

---

[137] Political alliance formed by Mark Antony, Lepidus, and Octavian in 43 BC.

[138] *Course* in this sense denotes "each of several successive attacks" in bear-baiting ("course, n. 27.b" *OED*).

[139] Where bear-baiting was concerned, "the chief matches invariably took place on Sundays, a fact which accentuated the Puritan hostility" (Lee 432).

> [B]esides that it is a filthy, stinking, lothsome game, is it not a perillous exercise: wherin a man is in danger of his life every minute of an houre […] yet what exercise is this meete for any Christian: what Christian heart can take pleasure to see one poore beast to rent, teare, and kill another, and all for his foolish pleasure. (133)

As so often, Shakespeare's personal opinions on the treatment of the animals remain elusive, and should not be divined from his dramatic use of animal-baiting metaphors. However, he was clearly familiar with the sport, and most likely to a greater extent than by mere repetition of proverbial language. Indeed, the following remark made by Edmond Malone in 1796 suggests that Shakespeare was all too well acquainted with the bear-baiting arena, as its sometime neighbour before the Globe was built: "From a paper now before me, our poet appears to have lived in Southwark near the Bear-Garden, in 1596" (qtd. in *ES* 2: 88).[140] While such a document has sadly never been found, other records from Southwark pipe rolls have confirmed to a reasonable degree Shakespeare's temporary residence in the borough in the late 1590s (Schoenbaum 162ff.).[141]

It may be speculated, as above, that Shakespeare worked bear-baiting metaphors and extreme violence into his plays to head off commercial competition.[142] Yet while there is insufficient evidence to discern his moral or professional attitudes towards the practice, there is no doubt that the Globe shared audiences with the baiting rings. In this context Shakespeare displays a distinct inclination towards local topicality in order to entertain his public. While it was impossible for Shakespeare to portray real-life personages on his stage, because of ever-present censorship, it is notable that he was able to refer directly to a renowned beastly attraction of sixteenth-century Bankside. In *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, a play with an uncommonly local setting, Abraham Slender talks of bear-baiting as part of his hapless attempt to woo Anne Page, and he mentions the famous bear named Sackerson:

---

[140] Malone (d. 1812) recorded this information in his unfinished *Life of Shakespeare*, which was published in 1821 by James Boswell, the Younger (1778-1822), as part of the 21-volume edition of Shakespeare's works commonly known as the "Third Variorum" (alternatively "Boswell-Malone"). See "Malone" in list of references. The document to which he refers does not appear in this 1821 collection and has not been traced.

[141] Pipe rolls are the financial records of the Treasury, maintained in England from the twelfth to the nineteenth century.

[142] Such a proposition is problematised somewhat by the difficulty in apprehending contemporary attitudes to violence as compared to our own.

> SLENDER. Be the bears i'th' town?
> ANNE. I think there are, sir. I heard them talked of.
> SLENDER. I love the sport well – but I shall as soon quarrel at it as any man in England. You are afraid if you see the bear loose, are you not?
> ANNE. Ay, indeed, sir.
> SLENDER. That's meat and drink to me, now. I have seen Sackerson loose twenty times, and have taken him by the chain. But I warrant you, the women have so cried and shrieked at it that it passed. But women, indeed, cannot abide 'em. They are very ill-favoured, rough things.
> (*Merry Wives* 1.1.268-79)

Sidney Lee, in his essay on bear-baiting published in the volume *Shakespeare's England* (1916), remarked that the names given to the bears had entered popular parlance, and that Sackerson was among those who “were for the sporting public of London vulgar idols” (431-32).

In a recent article entitled “Shakespeare and the Three Bears,” Nick De Somogyi states that this moment in *Merry Wives* represents “the only reference by name to a living flesh-and-blood contemporary [Shakespeare] ever made in his writing” (103).[143] The bear's name is found in the First Folio printing of the play, but De Somogyi has drawn attention to its absence from the 1602 first quarto, an inferior text which was probably a memorial reconstruction from performance. Sackerson's great and abiding fame in London, supported by numerous other contemporary references,[144] makes it “unlikely that the player responsible for this pirated text can simply have forgotten him” (ibid.

---

[143] De Somogyi justifies his assertion: “I have given that statement a great deal of thought, but apart from the dedications to Southampton in the prelims [sic] to *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, and the many players' names that found their way into his published speech-prefixes, I cannot find another example” (103). The reference in *Henry V* to the Earl of Essex, “the General of our gracious Empress,” discussed in the previous chapter, is the closest Shakespeare comes to mentioning a living personage by name.

[144] For example, in George Chapman's *Sir Giles Goosecap*, published in 1606. The reference to “the bear Sackerson” by James Joyce in *Ulysses* (1922), cited in the epigraph to the present chapter, also attests to the endurance of this particular legend.

104). De Somogyi conjectures that the name may have been cut by travelling players: “Perhaps [...] Sackerson was a local London hero, and Shakespeare's reference to him [was] deliberately altered or deleted as otiose for a provincial tour” (ibid.). In any case, the moment is significant for Shakespeare's willingness to immortalise the famous bear and locate *Merry Wives* so firmly in his immediate creative environment. For this choice De Somogyi also advances an explanation, laying out a possible connection between Shakespeare and Sackerson the bear. Shortly before the realignment of London playing companies in 1594, Shakespeare's early plays were staged by the Lord Strange's Men company at Henslowe's Rose,[145] and the household of the Earl of Derby also included the “bearward” John Sackerson, after whom the famous bear was presumably named.[146] As such, De Somogyi sees an up-and-coming Shakespeare as having shared the limelight with the famous Sackerson, and is moved to ask: “Might the sympathy Shakespeare constantly exhibited towards the plight of the baited bear in his plays, notable for its time, have originated in a sense of fellow feeling?” (ibid. 106).

5.4. “To split the ears of the groundlings”: Social diversity and division at the Globe

In the famous passage beginning “Speak the speech, I pray you,” which has frequently been taken to employ Hamlet as Shakespeare's spokesman,[147] the Prince instructs the visiting players on acting techniques, and postulates the purpose of playing. There is here a further indication of the playwright's lively and satirical taunting of at least some sections of his audience at the public playhouse. Those who paid the least, at a single penny, were the standing patrons in the yard, whom Hamlet implicates with the term *groundlings*:

> O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious, periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the

---

[145] Strange's Men were named after Ferdinando Stanley (1559-94), Lord Strange, the 5th Earl of Derby.

[146] John Sackerson of Nantwich was first traced by Frederick G. Blair in “Shakespeare's Bear 'Sackerson'” in *Notes and Queries* (1953).

[147] See Thompson and Taylor 295, n.

> most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows and noise. (*Ham* 3.2.8-13)[148]

Shakespeare's words here are surely locally minded, casting aspersions on the largest and most vociferous contingent of his Globe audience. As Thompson and Taylor comment (296), the *OED* lists this moment as the first use of the word *groundlings* to denote “a frequenter of the 'ground' or pit of a theatre; hence a spectator […] of average or inferior tastes, an uncritical or unrefined person” (“groundling, n.3”). There is an additional layer of significance to this term as used by Hamlet, however.

The encyclopaedic *Naturalis Historia* (“Natural History”), by the Roman scholar Pliny the Elder (23-79 AD), was translated into English in 1601 by Philemon Holland (1552-1637). Holland in this work was, according to *OED*, the first to apply the term *groundling* to “various small fishes which live at the bottom of the water” (“groundling, n.1” *OED*; see appendix 5.3). There is no need speculatively to affirm that Shakespeare's reading of this landmark translation of Pliny found its way into Hamlet's speech, since Holland's use of the word in 1601 implies its currency in contemporary English and, particularly in a river city, it is reasonable to expect local familiarity with such terms. Shakespeare may well have considered the name for lowly, bottom-feeding creatures, with mouth agape, as the ideal put-down for Hamlet to inflict on those standing beneath him in the yard of the Globe. It is worth reiterating that it would be unwise to attempt to draw firm conclusions about Shakespeare's personal attitudes towards the various sections of society that attended his plays, but in this context, the remark certainly consolidates the characterisation of Hamlet. Shakespeare ennobles the bookish Prince by further distancing him from the playhouse rabble; this after the many intimations of his superior intellect and dignity–the word “noble” and its variants appear eleven times before this point in the play, and always with reference to either Hamlet or his deceased father. Indeed, shortly before this episode with Hamlet and the players, Ophelia laments: “O what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!” (3.1.153). From the outset the young Prince, through patrilineage, is differentiated from all others in Elsinore, and his “groundlings” slur effects the same kind of distancing in terms of his metatheatrical relationship with the audience.

---

[148] A dumb show is presented later in this same scene, at line 129. These were prefaces “in which the actors mimed some action relevant to the plot of the play to follow. Shakespeare's other references to them are derogatory” (Thompson and Taylor 296, n.).

Social division in the playhouse is also implied by the opening scene of *Julius Caesar*, the tragic precursor to *Hamlet*. The Roman plays allow for an examination of class relations through their depiction of social tensions between the plebeians–"the people of Rome"–and the senate, the military, and the aristocracy. The first characters to enter in act 1 scene 1 of *Julius Caesar* are two tribunes of the people, Flavius and Murellus, who hold a certain contempt for their constituents: "these two, while detesting tyranny, show no respect for, nor fellow-feeling with, the people" (Daniell 155).[149] It is quite possible that the opening lines spoken by Flavius represent Shakespeare's dramatic inauguration of the Globe, and his chastisement of the "certain commoners" (1.1.0 SD) assembled onstage surely extends, by implication, to the groundlings in the yard:

> Hence, home, you idle creatures, get you home!
> Is this a holiday? What, know you not,
> Being mechanical, you ought not walk
> Upon a labouring day without the sign
> Of your profession?–Speak, what trade art thou?
> (*JC* 1.1.1-5)

A close examination of these opening lines will show the extent to which Shakespeare's dramaturgy in a play with an ostensibly Roman setting was infused with local and contemporary socio-cultural concerns.

Audiences at the Globe reflected the wide range of social classes in London, with merchants and artisans joining trainee lawyers from the Inns of Court at the Temple (see fig. 7a),[150] and wealthy City residents alongside the poorer denizens of the liberties. The following extract from Andrew Gurr's chapter on the social composition of London audiences underlines the diversity of audience that the city afforded Shakespeare at the Globe:

> London could provide the playhouses with an exceptionally high number of literate urban workers, as well as a huge population of the unemployed, and by far the greatest concentration

---

[149] Tribunes were officers appointed to protect the interests of the plebeians and maintain the republican tradition.

[150] The Inns of Court are London legal societies with the exclusive right of admitting people to the English bar.

> of gentry and rich citizenry in the country. It is a reasonable assumption that London's playgoers had a similarly exceptional level of literacy, wealth and poverty. (Gurr, *Playgoing* 65)

The epigram by Rowlands cited above (see appendix 5.2) points to the willingness of Londoners spontaneously to visit the liberties for an afternoon's entertainment. Those who were not Bankside residents could reach the playhouses, animal-baiting rings, and stews from the City either by crossing London Bridge, or by means of a wherry–a light rowing boat–across the Thames. The drawing known as *Going to Bankside* (ca. 1619), from Michael van Meer's friendship album,[151] depicts both of these alternatives, with a richly attired and well-heeled group making the river crossing in the foreground (see fig. 17). We know from evidence such as Henry Carey's letter to the Lord Mayor, quoted in the previous chapter (see appendix 4.1), that plays took place during the afternoon and finished before dusk. It is therefore likely that many in the Globe audience, be they trainee lawyers or apprentice craftsmen, were absconding from their vocation in order to attend, and this in turn reinforced the reputation of playgoing as an "idle" pursuit. Flavius and Murellus exchange words with a carpenter and a cobbler (1.1.6,11), corresponding to the artisanal professions of many audience members, and Shakespeare's choice for Flavius to immediately denounce those assembled as "idle creatures" means that Rome is, from the very outset, also London.

Notably, van Meer's drawing shows a woman as part of the well-dressed group travelling to Bankside. Taking into account all the available documentary evidence for the period between 1567 and the closure of the theatres in 1642, Gurr concludes "that the wives of citizens were regular playgoers throughout the whole period," and that while "[l]adies went relatively rarely to the common playhouses before 1600," they "were in numbers at the Globe from 1599 to 1614" (*Playgoing* 76). Indeed, a rare direct reference from Shakespeare to a female audience comes in the epilogue to *As You Like It*, one of the earliest plays to be staged at the Globe:

---

[151] "Friendship albums, which were popular among German university students, included names, signatures, coats of arms, and views of people and places encountered on their travels" (Bate and Thornton 20).

> ROSALIND. My way is to conjure you; and I'll begin with the women. I charge you, O women, for the love you bear to men, to like as much of this play as please you. And I charge you, O men, for the love you bear to women–as I perceive by your simpering none of you hates them–that between you and the women the play may please.
>
> (*As You Like It*, Epilogue)

Richard Levin, in his article entitled "Women in the Renaissance Theatre Audience," helpfully instructs that "all the comments about the reactions of women in the audience come from men, for we have no testimony from the women themselves" (167), while Gurr states that "the assumption that female playgoers were motivated by sex, whether for pleasure or money, remained a male prejudice throughout the period" (*Playgoing* 76). This impression was mitigated to some extent later in the period, after the opening of the Blackfriars theatre, as members of the City gentry, of both genders, more regularly attended plays.

5.5. "The cause of plagues are playes": religion, plague, and the stage

Returning to *The Anatomie of Abuses*, we may discern typical Puritan attitudes in the reign of Elizabeth towards "Stage-playes and Enterludes" (101ff.).[152] In his invective aimed at the theatre, Stubbes directly links plays to idleness:

> […] there is no mischiefe which these Playes maintaine not. For, doe they not nourish Idlenesse? And *otia dant vitia*. Idlenesse doth minister vice. Doe they not draw the people from hearing the word of God, from godly Lectures and Sermons? For you shall have them flocke thither thicke and three folde, when the Church of God shall be bare and emptie. (105; see appendix 5.4)

---

[152] Of interest here is the language commonly employed by preachers such as Stubbes, rather than any supposed direct textual link.

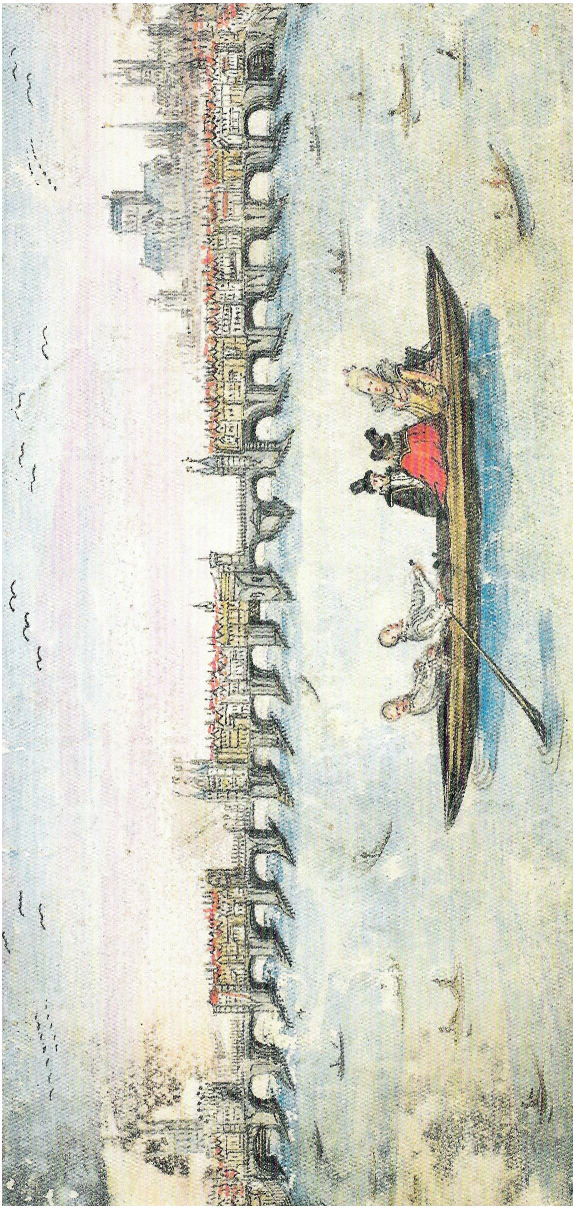


Fig. 17: *Going to Bankside* (ca. 1619) from Michael van Meer's friendship album. Facing westward towards London Bridge.

These words echo the oft-cited lines from John Stockwood's *Sermon Preached at Paules Crosse* (24 August 1578), which bemoan the popularity of plays at the expense of religion: “Wyll not a fylthye playe, wyth a blast of a Trumpette, sooner call thyther a thousande, than an houres tolling of a Bell, bring to the Sermon a hundred?” (qtd. in *ES* 4: 199).[153] Thomas White, in a sermon given the previous year, called the playhouses “scholes of vice, dennes of theeves, and Theatres of all leudnesse” (qtd. in *ES* 4: 197).

Beyond a competition for audiences, such staunch Puritan opposition to the business of playing from its very beginnings has its roots in the Protestant Reformation during the reign of Henry VIII (r. 1509-47). Public playing, originally a convenient outlet for reformers to promote their views, soon took the place of the religious rituals that had been expunged by the institutional iconoclasm which followed the dissolution of the monasteries. James Shapiro affirms that the public theatre in England exploited a void which was left in the wake of the Reformation: “In retrospect, it seems natural enough for the stage to fill a need once met by Catholic ritual” (*1599: A Year in the Life* 151). This development, in turn, caused hard-line reformers such as Stubbes and White to defame players as sinners and dissemblers. For Puritans in Shakespeare's London, then, just as for disaffected republicans in the Roman setting of *Julius Caesar*, the veneration of images was to be condemned. The fact that Shakespeare, at the very beginning of his tenure on Bankside, implicitly called his audience “idle creatures” is particularly interesting if a pun on “idolatry” is inferred. Certainly any associations that audience members drew between the disdainful tribunes and Puritan detractors of Bankside entertainments would have been consolidated by Flavius's order to “Disrobe the images / If you do find them deck'd with ceremonies” (1.1.64-65).

Significantly, White in his sermon also attributes the plague to stage plays, as he voices his support for the prohibition of plays during outbreaks:

> [B]eholde the sumptuous Theatre houses, a continuall monument of Londons prodigalitie and folly. But I understande they are nowe forbidden bycause of the plague. I like the pollicye well if it holde still, for a disease is but bodged or patched up that is not cured in the cause, and the cause of

---

[153] Paules Crosse–St. Paul's Cross–was an open air pulpit in the grounds of Old St. Paul's.

> plagues is sinne, if you looke to it well: and the cause of sinne are playes: therefore the cause of plagues are playes. (Qtd. in *ES* 4: 197)

The policy of closing the theatres during plague outbreaks did indeed "hold still" throughout Shakespeare's career, as large public gatherings of people were seen to compound the spread of the disease. At the time of the first performances of *Julius Caesar* in 1599, London and its playing companies had enjoyed several years with relatively little plague disruption, following a long closure of the theatres in 1593-94 (*ES* 4: 345ff.).[154] However, the worst outbreak of the period, with over 30,000 recorded deaths from plague–in a city of just over 200,000 people–came in 1603, with theatre closures lasting into the following year. This was followed by a serious outbreak in 1606, and another in 1608-09, which was the heaviest since 1603. It was during the enforced break in public performing from July 1608 to December 1609 that the King's Men made arrangements to occupy the Blackfriars indoor theatre (*ES* 2: 214). The plague was thus a constant threat, not just in the obvious sense of its devastating lethality, but also to the livelihoods of playwrights, playing companies, and playhouse owners in London. Moreover, the plague was surely the one topical subject that was guaranteed to unite a socially disparate audience, as the mortality rates indicate. The impassioned plea from Murellus for the assembled crowd to "Pray to the gods to intermit the plague" (1.1.54) thus assumes metatheatrical significance. In this way, Shakespeare is able to more firmly locate Murellus's speech (1.1.32-55), which is a notable departure from his source in Plutarch's *Lives*,[155] in the immediate London context of the play as performed at the Globe.

---

[154] The figures cited here are taken from *ES*, appendix E, entitled "Plague Records" (4: 345-51). Chambers compiled the figures from various contemporary sources, including John Stow's *Annales* chronicle of England.

[155] Plutarch (ca. 46-120 AD), Greek biographer and philosopher, chiefly known for his *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans*.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

Remember thee?
Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe.
HAMLET

This dissertation has had as its primary objective what Robert Weimann calls a "fair conjunction of textual scholarship and historical criticism" (see chapter two, 50). By locating moments from the selected plays in the environments of their conception and initial enactment, the present study has endeavoured to verify and, ultimately, demonstrate the historicity of the extant play texts. All the while, I have avoided conjectural discussions of latent political meanings to be drawn from these works, focussing instead on a "more rigorously historical" (Kastan 30) examination of the physical, professional, and socio-cultural environments in which Shakespeare wrote and first staged his plays. In doing so, I do not disavow the significance of my own background and environment in shaping my interpretative analysis. A personal concern to locate the Globe tragedies in Shakespeare's London, and to foreground "the way place imposed itself on the writing as well as the performance of Shakespeare" (Stern, *Making* 33), has played an important role in this work from the outset. The theoretical retrospect presented in chapter two of this dissertation has situated the subsequent analysis of Shakespeare's plays in the context of an ongoing debate concerning the relationship between literary and history studies. This study has sought to avoid the complex anecdotes that typify New Historicist discourse, and to embrace instead the principles of David Scott Kastan's "New Boredom" by paying attention to the specific conditions which shaped the plays. I have employed J. L. Styan's phrase "conditions of performance" (see Introduction, 26) as an overarching term for the various facets of Shakespeare's creative environment.

Returning to Kastan's four specific categories of thinking about a literary work in order to apprehend its historicity, as outlined in *Shakespeare After Theory* (see chapter two, 49), we may see that the present study has considered Shakespeare's plays variously as verbal structures, as cultural gestures, as material objects, and as commodities. The third chapter, on the ethos of the Globe, outlines some important aspects of the ideological environment in which Shakespeare's career was inserted. It does so with a concerted focus on the literary currency of Renaissance philosophy and emergent ideas of human subjectivity, which are embodied in some of the great characters of Shakespearean tragedy: Brutus, Hamlet, Iago, and Edmund. In close readings of selected passages such as Hamlet's "parade of fashionable melancholy"[156] or Edmund's satirisation of "the excellent foppery of the world," I have analysed the texts firstly as verbal structures, but always in the context of their function as cultural gestures. This function is commonly achieved by means of metatheatrical allusions to the playhouse, the city, or the wider society in which the drama was first enacted. By drawing attention to the status of the drama as a theatrical pretence, Shakespeare was able to elevate a given play to a point where, beyond its immediate dramatic significance, it also served as a metaphor for the wider world outside. Thus Rome, Elsinore, or Venice were never too far from London in the minds of playgoers. Importantly, Shakespeare appears deliberately to have used this device at the most critical junctures of his dramaturgy, in order to heighten dramatic intensity by colluding with his audience. Moments of metatheatre are discernible in the immediate aftermath of the assassination of Caesar (*JC* 3.1.112-14), after the Ghost's revelations to Hamlet (*Ham* 1.5.95-97), after Othello's smothering of Desdemona (*Oth* 5.2.108-10), in Macbeth's reaction to the news of his wife's death (*Mac* 5.5.23-25), and just as Cleopatra contemplates her ultimate fate (*AC* 5.2.212-17).

Chapter three also addresses the question of the textuality of history, insofar as it examines in detail some of the received notions of theatre history–such as the purported motto of the Globe–and indicates the instability of historical "facts." Despite a long tradition of scholarly uncertainty which dates back to eighteenth-century editors of Shakespeare's works, the discussion of global iconography in Europe gives good reason to surmise that the emblem associated with the Globe theatre was a terrestrial globe, and that this helped the playhouse to act as a symbol of a contemporary Renaissance ethos which imposed itself on Shakespeare's writing. Today, most obviously because of the famous aphorism "all the world's a stage," the *theatrum mundi* conceit is firmly associated with the Shakespearean stage, and more specifically the Globe. This study has shown that the choice of name for the playhouse was rooted in a pan-European fascination for cartographic globes and territorial expansion. The playhouse thus came to represent, in name, form, and function, the ambitions and values of its time. Its seemingly unambiguous symbolism for universal concerns may go some way to explain the shift in emphasis in Shakespeare's dramatic career which followed his move across the Thames in 1599. We may remember the words of Robert Hues on the merits of the cartographic globe, and now apply the same sentiments to Shakespeare's playhouse:

---

[156] Philip Edwards's memorable phrase for Hamlet's speech at 2.2.259-76 (Edwards 142).

> I hold it very superfluous to goe about to prove that a Globe is of a figure most proper and apt to expresse the fashion of the Heavens and Earth as being most agreeable to nature, easiest to be understood, and also very beautifull to behold. (*Tractatus de Globis* 16)

Bernard Beckerman remarked that the Globe playhouse “has become the symbol of an entire art” (*Shakespeare at the Globe* ix). The findings of chapter three allow us to conclude that in the first years of the seventeenth century, the symbolic qualities of its name and basic structure helped to shape that art which we now revere.

Chapter four, on Shakespeare's professional environment, has explained in detail the exacting moments Shakespeare and his colleagues had to overcome before they could enjoy the stability and success that the Globe afforded them. In tracing the various political and theatrical controversies which affected the Chamberlain's Men in the years prior to the building of their new playhouse, and in showing that politics and the theatre were in fact inextricably linked, the chapter has shed light on the contingent nature of the move to Bankside and, by extension, of the favourable conditions of performance which brought about the Globe tragedies. The chapter considers Shakespeare's plays primarily as material objects and commodities, focussing on the professional pressures and financial demands which the company faced. Shakespeare's works were their most valuable assets, and it is clear from the company history recounted in this study that he was under great pressure in 1599 to continue to deliver popular, lucrative material. Evidence of political wrangles and problems with censorship suggest that Shakespeare may have chosen a dramatic shift in emphasis, away from English history plays and towards ostensibly “universal” tragedies, in order to mitigate such problems. Considering the fraught circumstances of the move to the new playhouse, the Chamberlain's

Men could ill afford further inhibitions of playing like that caused by the *Isle of Dogs* controversy, for example.

James Burbage's failed Blackfriars playhouse venture is significant in the context of this study because it points to a preference–presumably financially motivated–for playing indoors. The 1609 move to the Blackfriars theatre came over a decade later than planned, but it was in that decade that the Globe tragedies came into being, indelibly marked by the conditions of performance at that “wide and universal theatre.” Significantly, the decision by the King's Men in 1613 to rebuild the Globe after its destruction by fire, which cannot have been an economically prudent step, suggests that in the fourteen years of its first run, the players themselves had come to see it as the symbol of their art, worthy of an expensive rebuilding project. Another noteworthy inference taken from the discussion in chapter four of this study is that the co-operative management structure of Shakespeare's company at the Globe was, with regard to the prior conduct of the Burbages, just as unlikely as the move to the playhouse itself. Of particular interest is the extent to which some of the conditions of performance that had a positive effect on Shakespeare's great plays may be seen to have largely serendipitous origins.

Chapter five has laid bare the rich cultural environment that London's Bankside district provided for Shakespeare at the Globe. Alongside the plays of Shakespeare and plenty of other dramatists, prostitution, heavy drinking, and animal-baiting ensured that the area was infamous across London. Here again the extant play texts are considered principally as cultural gestures, as in the discussion of how Shakespeare implicitly located ostensibly foreign scenes in the world of the playhouse, by means of metatheatrical jokes, insults, and allusions. The local specificity of the plays is eminently discernible at such moments. The vitality of the Bankside is particularly significant in terms of the changes to performance conditions that occurred after the King's Men began playing also at the more exclusive Blackfriars. The chapter also demonstrates in part how contemporary social tensions can be inscribed in the play text, particularly the moral struggle between the stage and the Puritan church.

Overall, this dissertation has demonstrated the profound historicity of the Globe tragedies and other plays from the period. The study does not purport to offer a comprehensive historical reading of the selected plays; rather, it considers Shakespeare's six tragedies written between 1599 and 1608 as a series of events that responded to and interacted with the environments of their conception and enactment. I have used moments from each of the tragedies to illustrate the myriad ways in which Shakespeare's dramatic art was moulded by its conditions of performance. The shaping forces of the Globe playhouse, of the professional London theatre industry, and of the city of London in general are all discernible in the play texts available to us. The study contributes to a growing body of critical literature that is primarily concerned with the role of Shakespeare's London environment and how it may be seen to have shaped his work. The recently published volume *Shakespeare in London* (Crawforth, Dustagheer, and Young, 2014), and the commercially successful *1606: William Shakespeare and the Year of Lear* by James Shapiro (2015), are fine examples of a brand of historical scholarship that seeks to locate the plays in the environments of their conception and early enactment. In Brazil, too, studies such as *Medida Por Medida: O Direito em Shakespeare*[157] by José Roberto De Castro Neves–already in its fourth edition–are taking advantage of a relatively fresh interest in the local and contextual specificities of Shakespeare's art.

Samuel Johnson (1709-84) was famously quoted by his biographer James Boswell to have remarked that “when a man is tired of London, he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford.”[158] In the four hundred years since Shakespeare's death, countless similar sentiments have been expressed with reference to his works. There is every reason to affirm that his great plays, and in particular his Great Tragedies, furnish the playgoer, the actor, or the student with “all that life can afford,” and it would no doubt be reductive to claim that they owe all their considerable artistic merits to a single playhouse, or a single city. Nonetheless, as this study has shown, an inadequate apprehension of the conditions of performance that appertained to the plays surely results in a compromised understanding of the great multitude of meanings that the extant texts are capable of generating. The appropriate conclusion must be that both Shakespeare's dramatic imagination *and* the city of London in which he wrote are full of all that life can afford, and it is in their most remarkable coalescence that the Globe tragedies were conceived, as “the abstracts and brief chronicles” of London.

---

[157] “*Measure for Measure*: The Law in Shakespeare.”

[158] Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson* (1791).

LIST OF REFERENCES

Aaron, Melissa D. "The Globe and *Henry V* as Business Document." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 40.2 (2000): 277-92. *JSTOR*. Web. 05 Dec. 2015.

Abel, Lionel. *Metatheatre: A New View of Dramatic Form*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1963.

Abrams, M. H. *The Mirror and the Lamp*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1953.

Acts of the Privy Council of England. Ed. J. R. Dasent. 32 vols. London: HMSO, 1890-1907.

Adams, John Cranford. *The Globe Playhouse*. 1942. 2nd ed. London: Constable, 1961.

Adams, Joseph Quincy. *Shakespearean Playhouses*. Cambridge, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1917.

Apollodorus. *The Library of Greek Mythology*. Trans. Robin Hard. 1997. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008. Oxf. World's Classics.

The Arte of English Poesie. London, 1589. Facsim. ed. Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1971.

Baldick, Chris, ed. *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004.

Barthes, Roland. "Inaugural Lecture, Collège de France." *A Barthes Reader.* Ed. Susan Sontag. London: Cape, 1982. 459-69.

Bate, Jonathan. *Soul of the Age: The Life, Mind, and World of William Shakespeare*. London: Viking, 2008.

Bate, Jonathan, and Dora Thornton. *Shakespeare: Staging the World*. London: British Museum Press, 2012.

Beckerman, Bernard. *Dynamics of Drama: Theory and Method of Analysis*. New York: Knopf, 1970.

---. *Shakespeare at the Globe: 1599-1609*. New York: Macmillan, 1962.

Belsey, Catherine. “Literature, History, Politics.” *New Historicism and Renaissance Drama*. Eds. Richard Wilson and Richard Dutton. New York: Longman, 1992. 33-44.

Bevington, David, ed. *1 Henry IV.* By William Shakespeare. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987. Oxf. Shakespeare.

Bevington, David, Martin Butler, and Ian Donaldson, eds. *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*. 7 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2012.

Blair, Frederick G. “Shakespeare's Bear 'Sackerson.'” *Notes and Queries* 198 (1953): 514-15. *Oxford UP Journals Digital Archive*. Web. 09 Dec. 2015.

Bloom, Harold. *The Invention of the Human*. New York: Penguin-Riverhead, 1998.

Boswell, James. *The Life of Samuel Johnson*. 1791. Ed. Charles Grosvenor Osgood. Abridged ed. *Project Gutenberg*. Web. 28 Jan. 2016.

Bowsher, Julian. *Shakespeare's London Theatreland: Archaeology, History and Drama*. London: Museum of London Archaeology, 2012.

Bowsher, Julian and Pat Miller. *The Rose and the Globe–Playhouses of Shakespeare’s Bankside, Southwark*. London: Museum of London Archaeology, 2009. MOLA Monograph 48.

Brandon, David, and Alan Brooke. *Bankside: London's Original District of Sin*. Stroud, Glos.: Amberley, 2013.

Braunmuller, A. R., ed. *Macbeth*. By William Shakespeare. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997. New Cam. Shakespeare.

Brooke, Nicholas, ed. *Macbeth*. By William Shakespeare. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1990. Oxf. Shakespeare.

Brotton, Jerry. *Trading Territories: Mapping the Early Modern World*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1997.

Brown, John Russell. *Shakespeare's Plays in Performance*. London: Arnold, 1966.

Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1595-97. Ed. M. A. Everett Green. Public Record Office. London, 1869.

Campbell, Eila M. J. "The Early Development of the Atlas." *Journal of the Geographical Association* 34.4 (1949): 187-95. *ProQuest*. Web. 21 Sep. 2015.

Chambers, Edmund K. *The Elizabethan Stage*. 4 vols. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1923.

---. *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems*. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930.

Clark, Sandra, and Pamela Mason, eds. *Macbeth*. By William Shakespeare. London: Bloomsbury-Arden, 2015. Arden Shakespeare 3rd Series.

Cohen, Adam Max. "Englishing the Globe: Molyneux's Globes and Shakespeare's Theatrical Career." *Sixteenth Century Journal* 37.4 (2006): 963-84. *JSTOR*. Web. 08 Oct. 2015.

Coyle, Martin. "Shakespeare: Theatrical and Historical Contexts." *Literature in Context.* Eds. Rick Rylance and Judy Simons. Basingstoke, Hants: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001. 15-32.

Craik, T. W., ed. *Henry V.* By William Shakespeare. London: Routledge-Arden, 1995. Arden Shakespeare 3rd Series.

Crawforth, Hannah, Sarah Dustagheer, and Jennifer Young. *Shakespeare in London*. London: Bloomsbury-Arden, 2014.

Daniell, David, ed. *Julius Caesar*. By William Shakespeare. London: Bloomsbury-Arden, 1998. Arden Shakespeare 3rd Series.

Dawson, Anthony B., ed. *Troilus and Cressida*. By William Shakespeare. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003. New Cam. Shakespeare.

Dekker, Thomas. *The Gull's Hornbook*. 1609. London: De La More Press, 1904.

Dennis, John. *The Comical Gallant*. 1702. *English Prose Drama Full-Text Database.* Web. 20 Nov. 2015.

De Somogyi, Nick. "Shakespeare and the Three Bears." *New Theatre Quarterly* 27.2 (2011): 99-113. *ProQuest*. Web. 28 Dec. 2015.

Dollimore, Jonathan. *Radical Tragedy.* 1984. 3rd ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

---. "Shakespeare, Cultural Materialism and the New Historicism." *New Historicism and Renaissance Drama*. Eds. Richard Wilson and Richard Dutton. New York: Longman, 1992. 45-56.

Dougherty, M. V. Rev. of Oration on the Dignity of Man: *A New Translation and Commentary*, eds. Francesco Borghesi, Michael Papio, and Massimo Riva. *Renaissance Quarterly* 66.2 (2013): 585-87. Print.

Dover Wilson, John, ed. *Hamlet*. By William Shakespeare. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1934.

Drakakis, John. "Terence Hawkes obituary." *Guardian* 21 Feb. 2014. N. pag.

Dutton, Richard. "*Hamlet*, *An Apology for Actors*, and the Sign of the Globe." *Shakespeare Survey* 41 (1979): 35-43. Print.

Edwards, Philip, ed. *Hamlet*. By William Shakespeare. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985. New Cam. Shakespeare.

Euclid's Elements of Geography. 1661. *Early English Books Online*. Web. 23 Oct. 2015.

Fiehler, Rudolph. “How Oldcastle Became Flastaff.” *Modern Language Quarterly* 16 (1955): 16-28. *Duke UP Journals Online*. Web. 06 Dec. 2015.

Foakes, R. A. *Illustrations of the English Stage 1580-1642*. London: Scolar Press, 1985.

Foakes, R.A., ed. *King Lear*. By William Shakespeare. London: Bloomsbury-Arden, 1997. Arden Shakespeare 3rd Series.

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.

Green, William. *Shakespeare's* Merry Wives of Windsor. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1962.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*. 1980. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005.

Gross, A. M. “The Role of the Globe Theatre in Shaping Shakespeare's *Tragedy of Julius Caesar*.” Diss. UFSC, 2012. Print.

Grote, David. *The Best Actors in the World: Shakespeare and His Acting Company*. London: Greenwood Press, 2002.

Gurr, Andrew. “The Authority of the Globe and the Fortune.” *Material London, ca. 1600*. Ed. Lena Cowen Orlin. Philadelphia, PA: U. of PA Press, 2000. 251-67.

---. ed. *King Henry V*. By William Shakespeare. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992. New Cam. Shakespeare.

---. “Money or Audiences: The Impact of Shakespeare’s Globe.” *Theatre Notebook*. 42.1 (1988): 3-14. Print.

---. *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*. 1987. 3rd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004.

---. *The Shakespeare Company, 1594-1642*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004.

---. *The Shakespearean Stage*. 1970. 4th ed. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009.

---. "Venues on the Verges: London's Theater Government between 1594 and 1614." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 61.4 (2010): 468-89. Print.

Halio, J. L., ed. *The Tragedy of King Lear*. By William Shakespeare. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992. New Cam. Shakespeare.

Hawkes, Terence. *Meaning by Shakespeare*. London: Routledge, 1992.

---. *Presentist Shakespeares*. London: Routledge, 2007.

---. *Shakespeare in the Present*. London: Routledge, 2002.

Heninger, Jr., S. K. *The Cosmographical Glass: Renaissance Diagrams of the Universe*. San Marino, CA: Huntingdon Lib., 1977.

Henry V. Dir. Laurence Olivier. Perf. Laurence Olivier. 1944. ITV Studios, 2003. DVD.

Henslowe, Philip. *Henslowe's Diary*. Ed. R. A. Foakes and R. T. Rickert. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1961.

Hentzner, Paul. *Travels in England During the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*. Trans. Richard Bentley. Ed. Horace Walpole. 1797. *Project Gutenberg*. Web. 28 Dec. 2015. Trans. of *Itinerarium Germaniæ, Galliæ, Angliæ, Italiæ, cum Indice Locorum, Rerum atque Verborum*. Nuremburg: 1612.

Herbert, John R. *The Map That Named America*. Library of Congress, Sept. 2003. Web. 03 Nov. 2015. <http://loc.gov/loc/lcib/0309/maps.html>

Heywood, Thomas. *An Apology for Actors*. 1612. London, 1841.

---. "The English Traveller." 1633. *Thomas Heywood: Three Marriage Plays*. Ed. Paul Merchant. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1996. 106-85.

Hibbard, G. R., ed. *Hamlet*. By William Shakespeare. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987. Oxf. Shakespeare.

Hinman, Charlton, ed. *The First Folio of Shakespeare*. Norton Facsimile ed. London: Norton, 1996.

Hodges, C. Walter. *The Globe Restored: A Study of the Elizabethan Theatre*. 1953. 2nd ed. London: Oxford UP, 1968.

Honigmann, E. A. J. "The Date of *Hamlet*." *Shakespeare Survey* 9 (1956): 24-34. Print.

Honigmann, E. A. J., ed. *Othello*. By William Shakespeare. London: Bloomsbury-Arden, 1997. Arden Shakespeare 3rd Series.

Hotson, Leslie. *Shakespeare Versus Shallow.* London: Nonesuch Press, 1931.

Hues, Robert. *Tractatus de Globis et Eorum Usu*. 1594. Trans. John Chilmead. 1638. Ed. Clements R. Markham. 1889. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010. Cam. Library Collection.

Hughes, Paul L. and James F. Larkin, eds. *Tudor Royal Proclamations*. 3 vols. London: Yale UP, 1969.

Humphreys, A. R., ed. *Julius Caesar.* By William Shakespeare. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1984. Oxf. Shakespeare.

---. *Much Ado About Nothing*. By William Shakespeare. London: Methuen, 1981. Arden Shakespeare 2nd Series.

Ingleby, C. M., ed. *The Shakespeare Allusion-Book: A Collection of Allusions to Shakespeare from 1591 to 1700*. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1932.

Irace, Kathleen O., ed. *The First Quarto of* Hamlet. By William Shakespeare. 1603. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998. New Cam. Shakespeare.

Jenkins, Harold, ed. *Hamlet*. By William Shakespeare. London: Methuen, 1982. Arden Shakespeare 2nd Series.

Jensen, Ejner J. "A New Allusion to the Sign of the Globe Theater." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 21.1 (1970): 95-97. Print.

Johnson, Samuel. *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets*. 1779-81. *Project Gutenberg*. Web. 28 Jan. 2016.

Joyce, James. *Ulysses*. 1922. Ed. Jeri Johnson. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993. Oxford World's Classics.

Kastan, David S. *Shakespeare After Theory*. London: Routledge, 1999.

Kliman, Bernice W., and Paul Bertram, eds. *The Three-Text Hamlet*. By William Shakespeare. 2nd ed. New York: AMS Press, 2003.

Lee, Sidney. "Bearbaiting, Bullbaiting, and Cockfighting." *Shakespeare's England*. Vol. 2. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1916. 428-36.

Levin, Richard. "Women in the Renaissance Theatre Audience." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 40.2 (1989): 165-74. Print.

Levy, David H. "The Bard and Astronomy." *Astronomy* 37.7 (2009): 60. *ProQuest*. Web. 08 Nov. 2015.

Loengard, Janet S. "An Elizabethan Lawsuit: John Brayne, his Carpenter, And the Building of the Red Lion Theatre." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 34.3 (1983): 298-310. Print.

Malone, Edmond, ed. *The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare*. 10 vols. London: 1790.

Malone, Edmond, and James Boswell, eds. *The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare*. 21 vols. London: 1821. Third Variorum.

Markham, Clements R. Introduction. *Tractatus de Globis et Eorum Usu*. By Robert Hues. 1594. Trans. John Chilmead. 1638. Ed. Clements R. Markham. 1889. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010. xi-l. Cam. Library Collection.

Marston, John. *The Works of John Marston*. Ed. A. H. Bullen. 3 vols. London, 1887.

Melchiori, Giorgio, ed. *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. By William Shakespeare. London: Thomson Learning, 2000. Arden Shakespeare 3rd Series.

---. *Shakespeare's Garter Plays:* Edward III *to* Merry Wives of Windsor. London: Associated UP, 1994.

Mercator, Gerardus. *Atlas*. 1595. Amsterdam, 1619. British Lib., London.

Meres, Francis. *Palladis Tamia: Wits Treasury*. 1598. *Early English Books Online*. Web. 01 Sep. 2015.

Montrose, Louis. “Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture.” 1989. *Literary Theory: An Anthology*. Ed. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan. 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell, 2004. 584-91.

Muir, Kenneth, ed. *Macbeth*. By William Shakespeare. Rev. ed. London: Methuen, 1984. Arden Shakespeare 2nd Series.

Neves, José Roberto de Castro. *Medida Por Medida: O Direito em Shakespeare*. 4th ed. Rio de Janeiro: LMJ Mundo Jurídico, 2015.

Ortelius, Abraham. *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*. 1570. Antwerp, 1612. British Lib., London.

Pico della Mirandola, Giovanni. “Oration on the Dignity of Man.” 1486. Trans. Elizabeth Forbes. *Journal of the History of Ideas* 3.3 (1942): 347-54. *JSTOR*. Web. 28 Oct. 2015.

Pliny. *Naturall History*. Trans. Philemon Holland. 1601. *Early English Books Online*. Web. 30 Dec. 2015. Trans. of *Naturalis Historia.*

Rivkin, Julie and Michael Ryan, eds. *Literary Theory: An Anthology*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell, 2004.

Roberts, Julian, and Andrew G. Watson, eds. *John Dee's Library Catalogue*. By John Dee. London: Bibliographical Soc., 1990.

Rowe, Nicholas, ed. *The Works of Mr. William Shakespeare*. By William Shakespeare. 6 vols. 1709. Facsim. Ed. London: Pickering & Chatto, 1999.

Rowlands, Samuel. *The Letting of Humours Blood in the Head-Vaine*. 1600. *Early English Books Online*. Web. 15. Nov. 2015.

Salgado, Gamini. *The Elizabethan Underworld*. 1977. Stroud, Glos.: Sutton Publishing, 1997.

Schanzer, Ernest. "Hercules and His Load." *Review of English Studies* 19.73 (1968): 51-53. Print.

---. "Thomas Platter's Observations on the Elizabethan Stage." *Notes and Queries* 201 (1956): 465-67. *Oxford UP Journals Digital Archive*. Web. 30 Jan. 2016.

Schoenbaum, Samuel. *William Shakespeare: A Documentary Life*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975.

Shakespeare, William. *The First Folio of Shakespeare.* 1623. Norton Facsimile ed. Ed. Charlton Hinman. London: Norton, 1996.

---. *Hamlet. Fi*rst Quarto. 1603. Facsim. ed. London: Shakespeare Association, 1951. Shakespeare Quarto Facsimiles.

---. *1 Henry IV.* First Quarto. 1598. Facsim. ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966. Shakespeare Quarto Facsimiles.

---. *Henry V.* 1600. Facsim. ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957. Shakespeare Quarto Facsimilies.

Shapiro, James. *1599: A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare*. London: HarperCollins, 2005.

---. *1606: William Shakespeare and the Year of* Lear. London: Faber & Faber, 2015.

Sherman, William H. Rev. of *John Dee's Library Catalogue*, ed. Julian Roberts and Andrew Watson. *Renaissance Quarterly* 45.4 (1992): 871-72. Print.

Sidney, Philip. “Apology for Poetry.” London, 1595. *Elizabethan Critical Essays*. Ed. Gregory G. Smith. 1904. Vol. 1. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1950. 148-207.

Spevack, Marvin, ed. *Julius Caesar*. By William Shakespeare. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988. New Cam. Shakespeare.

Steevens, George, ed. *The Works of Shakespeare*. By William Shakespeare. 10 vols. 1778. Facsim. ed. London: Routledge, 1995. Johnson-Steevens ed.

Stern, Tiffany. *Making Shakespeare*. London: Routledge, 2004.

---. “Was *Totus Mundus Agit Histrionem* ever the Motto of the Globe Theatre?” *Theatre Notebook* 51.3 (1997): 122-27. Print.

Stubbes, Phillip. *The Anatomie of Abuses*. 1595. *Early English Books Online*. Web. 12 Dec. 2015.

Styan, J. L. *Drama, Stage and Audience*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1975.

Sugden, Edward H. *A Topographical Dictionary to the Works of Shakespeare and His Fellow Dramatists*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1925.

Sutherland, Raymond Carter. “The Grants of Arms to Shakespeare's Father.” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 14.4 (1963): 379-85. Print.

Taylor, Gary, ed. *Henry V.* By William Shakespeare. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1982. Oxf. Shakespeare.

Thompson, Ann, and Neil Taylor, eds. *Hamlet*. By William Shakespeare. London: Bloomsbury-Arden, 2006. Arden Shakespeare 3rd Series.

Tillyard, E. M. W. *The Elizabethan World Picture*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1943.

Tooley, R. V. *Maps and Map-Makers*. 4th ed. London: Batsford, 1970.

Van den Berg, Kent T. *Playhouse and Cosmos: Shakespearean Theater as Metaphor.* London: Associated UP, 1985.

Vitruvius. *De Architectura*. Trans. Frank Granger. 2 vols. 1931. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1962.

Weimann, Robert. Rev. of *Shakespeare After Theory*, by David Scott Kastan. *Modern Language Quarterly* 62.2 (2001): 189-92. Print.

Weis, René, ed. *The Second Part of King Henry the Fourth*. By William Shakespeare. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997. Oxf. Shakespeare.

Wells, Stanley, ed. *King Lear.* By William Shakespeare. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000. Oxf. Shakespeare.

Wells, Stanley, et al., eds. *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987.

Wells, Stanley, and Gary Taylor eds. *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works*. 1986. 2nd ed. Eds. Stanley Wells, Gary Taylor, John Jowett, and William Montgomery. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005.

Whitfield, Peter. *The Image of the World: 20 Centuries of World Maps*. London: British Library, 1994.

Wilders, John, ed. *Antony and Cleopatra*. By William Shakespeare. London: Bloomsbury-Arden, 1995. Arden Shakespeare 3rd Series.

Williams, Penry. *The Later Tudors: England 1547-1603*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995. The New Oxf. History of England.

Williams, Raymond. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1977.

Wilson, Richard. "Historicising New Historicism." *New Historicism and Renaissance Drama*. Eds. Richard Wilson and Richard Dutton. New York: Longman, 1992. 1-18.

Wilson, Richard, and Richard Dutton, eds. *New Historicism and Renaissance Drama*. New York: Longman, 1992.

Yates, Frances A. *Theatre of the World*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 1

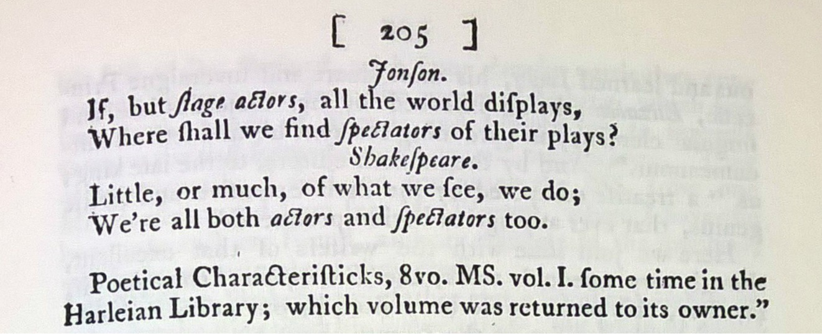
1.1 Letter from Sir Henry Wotton to Sir Edmund Bacon, dated 29 June 1613. Detailing the destruction of the Globe by fire during a performance. Qtd. in *WS* (2: 343-44).

> I will entertain you at the present with what has happened this week at the Bank's side. The King's players had a new play, called *All is True*, representing some principal pieces of the reign of Henry VIII, which was set forth with many extraordinary circumstances of pomp and majesty, even to the matting of the stage; the Knights of the Order with their Georges and garters, the Guards with their embroidered coats, and the like: sufficient in truth within a while to make greatness very familiar, if not ridiculous. Now, King Henry making a masque at the Cardinal Wolsey's house, and certain chambers being shot off at his entry, some of the paper, or other stuff, wherewith one of them was stopped, did light on the thatch, where being thought at first but an idle smoke, and their eyes more attentive to the show, it kindled inwardly, and ran around like a train, consuming within less than a hour the whole house to the very grounds. This was the fatal period of that virtuous fabric, wherein yet nothing did perish but wood and straw, and a few forsaken cloaks; only one man had his breeches set on fire, that would perhaps have broiled him, if he had not by the benefit of a provident wit put it out with bottle ale.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 3

3.1 Anecdote presented in the *Johnson-Steevens Edition* (1778) of the works of Shakespeare (1: 204-05), mentioning the supposed latin motto of the Globe. See "Steevens" in list of references.

> "Verses by Ben Jonson and Shakespeare, occasioned by the motto to the Globe Theatre.–*Totus mundus agit histrionem*.
>
> *Jonson.*
> If, but *stage actors*, all the world displays,
> Where shall we find *spectators* of their plays?
>
> *Shakespeare.*
> Little, or much, of what we see, we do;
> We're all both *actors* and *spectators* too.



[205]

Jonſon.

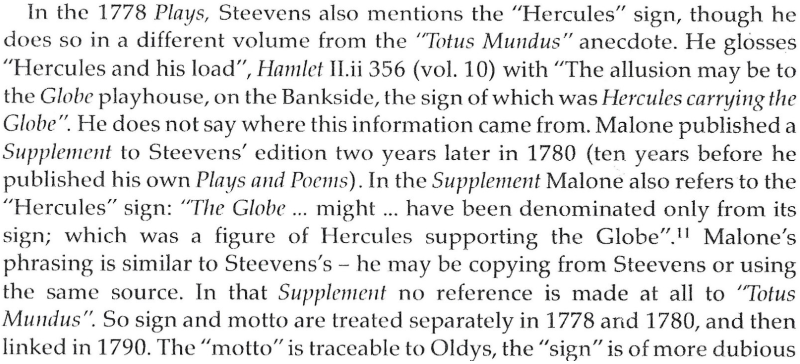
If, but *ſtage actors*, all the world diſplays,
Where ſhall we find *ſpectators* of their plays?

Shakeſpeare.

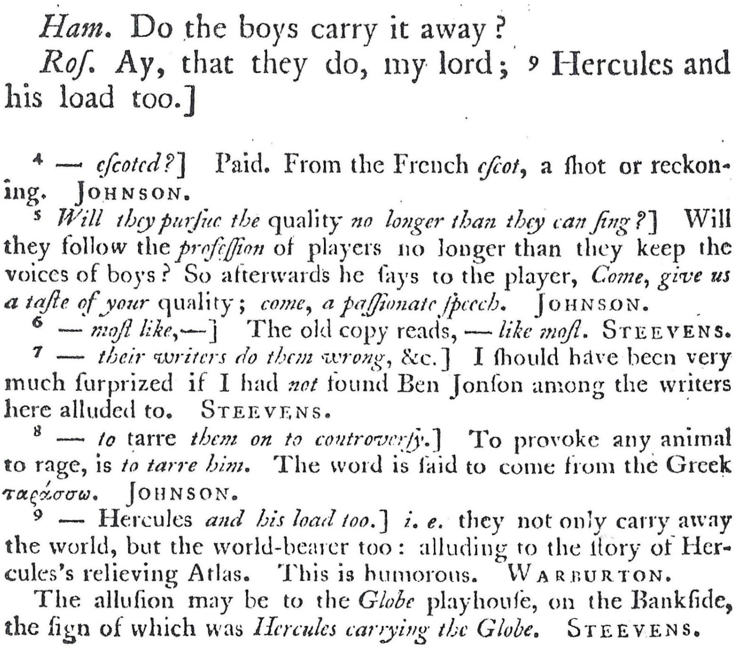
Little, or much, of what we ſee, we do;
We're all both *actors* and *ſpectators* too.

Poetical Characteriſticks, 8vo. MS. vol. I. ſome time in the Harleian Library; which volume was returned to its owner."

3.2 Extract from Stern, "Was *Totus Mundus Agit Histrionem* Ever the Motto of the Globe Theatre?" (124). In this passage Stern explains the separate origins of "Hercules" and "*Totus Mundus*." Below, Steevens's gloss of the "Hercules and his load" line in the 1778 *Johnson-Steevens Edition* (10: 256).



In the 1778 *Plays,* Steevens also mentions the "Hercules" sign, though he does so in a different volume from the "*Totus Mundus*" anecdote. He glosses "Hercules and his load", *Hamlet* II.ii 356 (vol. 10) with "The allusion may be to the *Globe* playhouse, on the Bankside, the sign of which was *Hercules carrying the Globe*". He does not say where this information came from. Malone published a *Supplement* to Steevens' edition two years later in 1780 (ten years before he published his own *Plays and Poems*). In the *Supplement* Malone also refers to the "Hercules" sign: "*The Globe* ... might ... have been denominated only from its sign; which was a figure of Hercules supporting the Globe".[11] Malone's phrasing is similar to Steevens's – he may be copying from Steevens or using the same source. In that *Supplement* no reference is made at all to "*Totus Mundus*". So sign and motto are treated separately in 1778 and 1780, and then linked in 1790. The "motto" is traceable to Oldys, the "sign" is of more dubious



Ham. Do the boys carry it away?
Roſ. Ay, that they do, my lord; [9] Hercules and his load too.]

[4] — *eſcoted?*] Paid. From the French *eſcot*, a ſhot or reckoning. JOHNSON.

[5] *Will they purſue the* quality *no longer than they can ſing?*] Will they follow the *profeſſion* of players no longer than they keep the voices of boys? So afterwards he ſays to the player, *Come, give us a taſte of your* quality; *come, a paſſionate ſpeech.* JOHNSON.

[6] — *moſt like,*—] The old copy reads, — *like moſt.* STEEVENS.

[7] — *their writers do them wrong,* &c.] I ſhould have been very much ſurprized if I had *not* found Ben Jonſon among the writers here alluded to. STEEVENS.

[8] — *to* tarre *them on to controverſy.*] To provoke any animal to rage, is *to tarre him.* The word is ſaid to come from the Greek ταράσσω. JOHNSON.

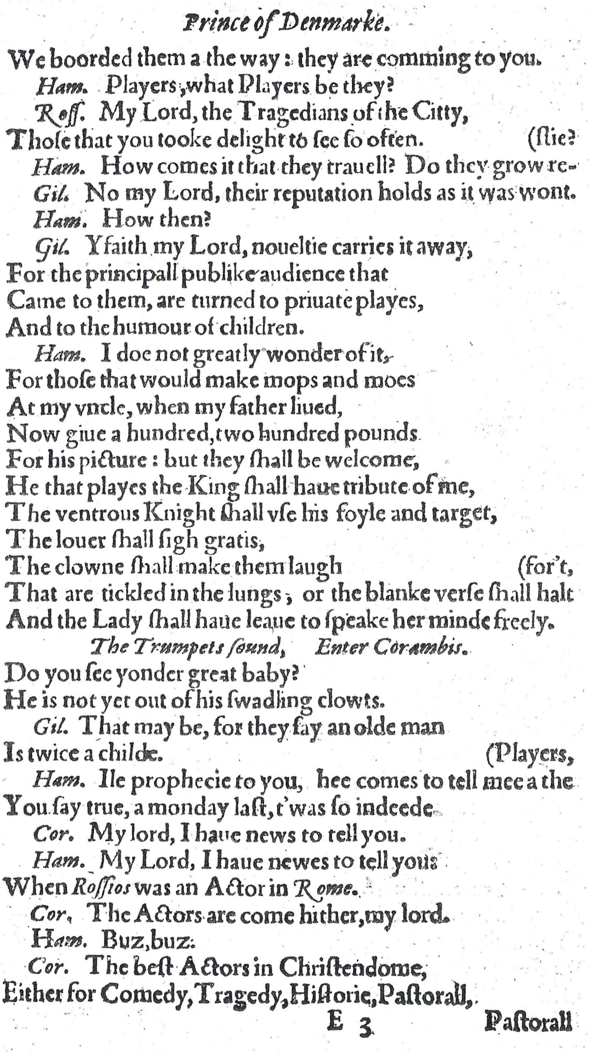
[9] — Hercules *and his load too.*] *i. e.* they not only carry away the world, but the world-bearer too: alluding to the ſtory of Hercules's relieving Atlas. This is humorous. WARBURTON.

The alluſion may be to the *Globe* playhouſe, on the Bankſide, the ſign of which was *Hercules carrying the Globe.* STEEVENS.

3.3 Passage from Marston's *Antonio and Mellida*, as featured in Jensen's article “A New Allusion to the Sign of the Globe Theatre” (1970). See also “Marston” in list of references.

PIERO. Faith! We can say our parts; but we are ignorant in what
mould we must cast our actors.
ALBERTO. Whome do you personate?
PIER. Piero, Duke of Venice.
ALB. O! ho! then thus frame your exterior shape
To haughty form of elate majesty,
As if you held the palsy-shaking head
Of reeling chance under your fortune's belt
In strictest vassalage: grow big in thought,
As swoln with glory of successful arms.
PIER. If that be all, fear not: I'll suit it right.
Who cannot be proud, stroke up the hair, and strut?
ALB. Truth; such rank and custom is grown popular;
And now the vulgar fashion strides as wide,
And stalks as proud upon the weakest stilts
Of the slight'st fortunes, as if Hercules
Or burly Atlas shoulder'd up their state.
(Induction, lines 3-19)

3.4 Facsimile copy of the conversation between Hamlet, “Rossencraft,” and “Gilderstone” in the 1603 first quarto of *Hamlet* (sig. E3).



Prince of Denmarke.

We boorded them a the way : they are comming to you.
Ham. Players;what Players be they?
Roſſ. My Lord, the Tragedians of the Citty,
Thoſe that you tooke delight to ſee ſo often. (ſlie?
Ham. How comes it that they trauell? Do they grow re-
Gil. No my Lord, their reputation holds as it was wont.
Ham. How then?
Gil. Yfaith my Lord, noueltie carries it away,
For the principall publike audience that
Came to them, are turned to priuate playes,
And to the humour of children.
Ham. I doe not greatly wonder of it,
For thoſe that would make mops and moes
At my vncle, when my father liued,
Now giue a hundred,two hundred pounds
For his picture : but they ſhall be welcome,
He that playes the King ſhall haue tribute of me,
The ventrous Knight ſhall vſe his foyle and target,
The louer ſhall ſigh gratis,
The clowne ſhall make them laugh (for't,
That are tickled in the lungs, or the blanke verſe ſhall halt
And the Lady ſhall haue leaue to ſpeake her minde freely.
The Trumpets ſound, Enter Corambis.
Do you ſee yonder great baby?
He is not yet out of his ſwadling clowts.
Gil. That may be, for they ſay an olde man
Is twice a childe. (Players,
Ham. Ile prophecie to you, hee comes to tell mee a the
You ſay true, a monday laſt, t'was ſo indeede.
Cor. My lord, I haue news to tell you.
Ham. My Lord, I haue newes to tell you:
When *Roſſios* was an Actor in *Rome.*
Cor. The Actors are come hither, my lord.
Ham. Buz,buz.
Cor. The beſt Actors in Chriſtendome,
Either for Comedy,Tragedy,Hiſtorie,Paſtorall,
E 3 Paſtorall

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 4

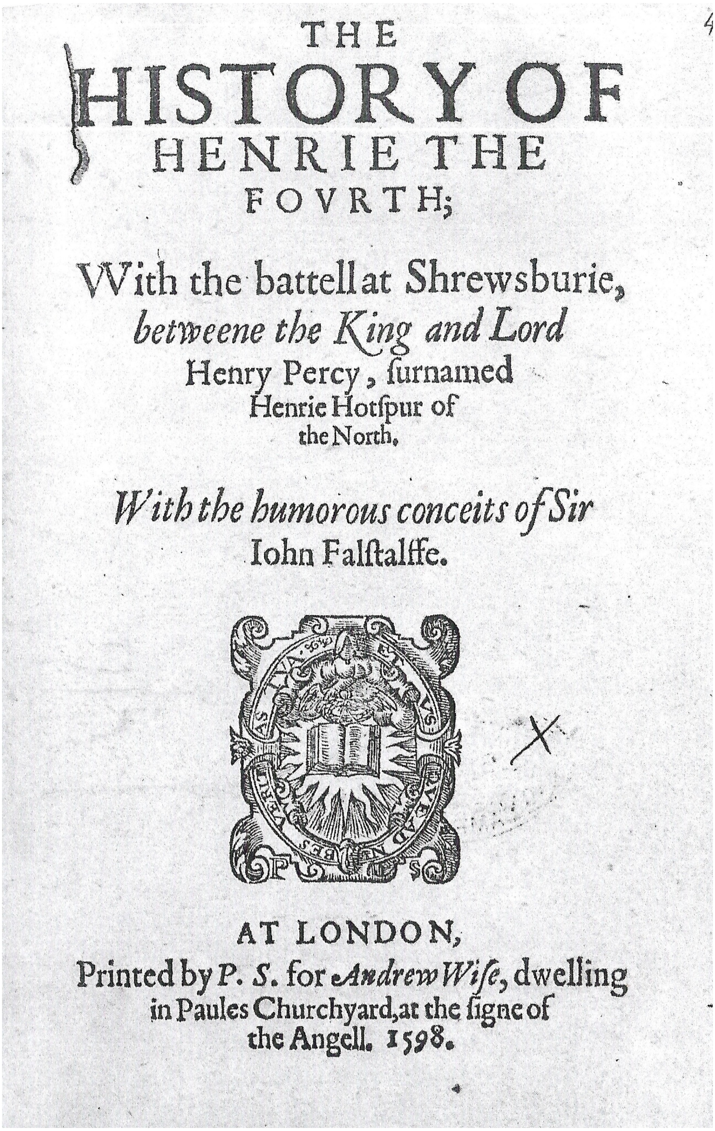
4.1 A letter from Henry Carey, Lord Chamberlain, to the Lord Mayor, dated 8 October 1594. Qtd. in *TSC* (247-48).

> where my nowe companie of Players have byn accustomed for the better exercise of their qualitie, & for the service of her Majestie if need soe requier to plaie this winter time within the Citye at the Cross kayes in Gracious street, These are to requier & praye your Lordship the time being such as thankes be to god there is nowe no danger of the sicknes) to permitt & suffer them so to doe; The which I praie you the rather to doe for that they have undertaken to me that where heretofore they began not their Plaies till towardes fower a clock, they will now begin at two, & have don betwene fower and five and will nott use anie Drumes or trumpettes att all for the callinge of peopell together, and shalbe contributories to the poore of the parishe where they plaie according to their habilities.

4.2 Petition to the Privy Council by 31 Blackfriars residents (November 1596). Signed by “G. Hunsdon”–George Carey–among others. From *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1595-97* (cclx.116).

> To the right honorable the Lords and others of her Majesties most honorable Privy Council, – Humbly shewing and beseeching your honors, the inhabitants of the precinct of Blackfryers, London, that whereas one Burbage hath lately bought certaine roomes in the same precinct neere adjoyning unto the dwelling houses of the right honorable the Lord Chamberlaine and the Lord of Hunsdon, which romes the said Burbage is now altering and meaneth very shortly to convert and turne the same into a comon playhouse, which will grow to be a very great annoyance and trouble, not only to all the noblemen and gentlemen therabout inhabiting, but allso a generall inconvenience to all the inhabitants of the same precinct, both by reason of the great resort and gathering togeather of all manner of vagrant and lewde persons that, under cullor of resorting to the playes, will come thither and worke all manner of mischeefe, and allso to the great pestring and filling up of the same precint, yf it should please God to send any visitation of sickness as heretofore hath been, for that the same precinct is already growne very populous; and besides, that the same playhouse is so neere the Church that the noyse of the drummes and trumpetts will greatly disturbe and hinder both the ministers and parishioners in tyme of devine service and sermons; – In tender consideracion whereof, as allso for that there hath not at any tyme heretofore been used any comon playhouse within the same precinct, but that now all players being banished by the Lord Mayor from playing within the Cittie by reason of the great inconveniences and ill rule that followeth them, they now thincke to plant themselves in liberties; – That therefore it would please your honors to take order that the same roomes may be converted to some other use, and that no playhouse may be used or kept there; and your suppliants as most bounden shall and will dayly pray for your Lordships in all honor and happiness long to live.

4.3 Title page of the first quarto of *The History of King Henry the Fourth* (1598), advertising “the humorous conceits of Sir John Falstaffe.”



THE
HISTORY OF
HENRIE THE
FOVRTH;

With the battell at Shrewsburie,
betweene the King and Lord
Henry Percy, ſurnamed
Henrie Hotſpur of
the North.

With the humorous conceits of Sir
Iohn Falſtalffe.

AT LONDON,
Printed by *P. S.* for *Andrew Wiſe*, dwelling
in Paules Churchyard, at the ſigne of
the Angell. 1598.

4.4 Richard Burbage's deposition on the lease of the Theatre site and its expiry, in the Court of Requests, Burbage v. Allen, 15 May 1600 (events concerning 13 April 1597). Quoted by Wallace, *The First London Theatre* (237-38).

> [William Smythe] saythe he hathe seene An Indenture of Lease whereby it appeared that the defendt and Sara his wyffe did about the thirteenthe daye of Aprill in the eighteenthe yeare of her majesties raigne that nowe is demise unto him the said James Burbadge Certayne garden groundes lyinge and beinge in Hollywell in the parishe of St Leonardes in Shoreditche in the Countye of Middlesex for the terme of one and twentye yeares yealdinge and payinge therefore yearlye duringe the said terme Foureteene poundes per Annum with provisoe in the same lease that the defendt within or at thend and terme of the first ten yeares in the said Lease he the said defendt should make him the said James Burbadge or his Assignes A newe lease for one and twentye yeares then to Commence at thend of the said first tenn yeare... he knowethe the Complainant did about twoe yeares nowe laste paste or there aboutes and diverse times synce then, require the said defendt to make him A new Lease of the premisss accordinge ot the Agreement mencioned in the First lease, but the Defendt denied to make him any suche lease, alledginge that the premisss weare not bettered by James Burbadge according to his Covenant, and that there weare Arerages of Rent behind and unpayde.

4.5 Letter from the Privy Council to the Master of the Revels, dated 19 February 1598. From *Acts of the Privy Council* (28: 327).

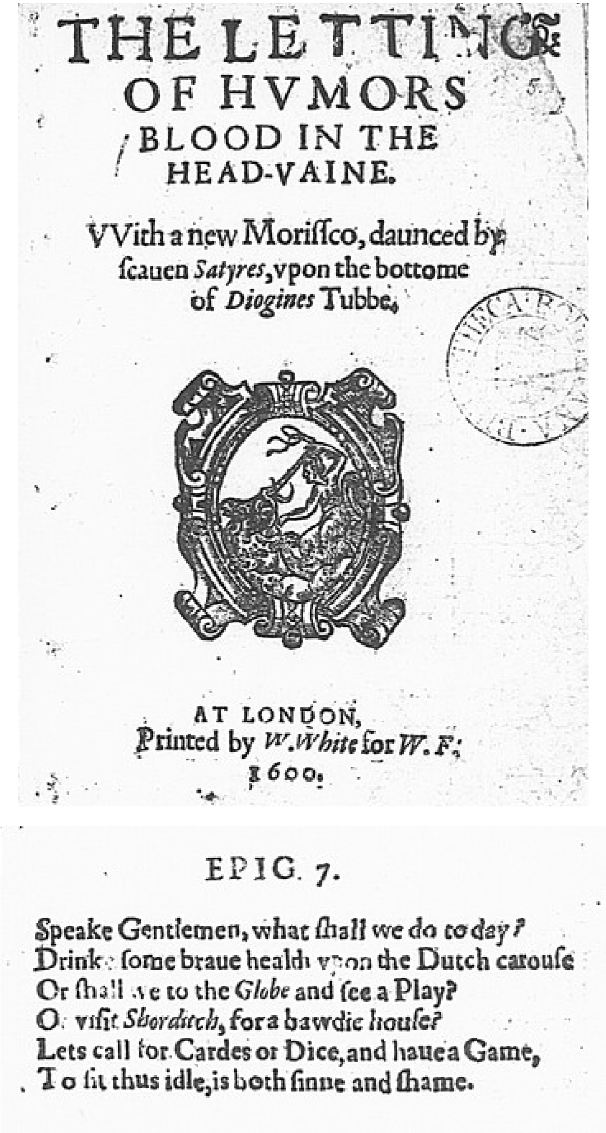
> licence hath been graunted unto two companies of stage players retayned unto us, the Lord Admiral and Lord Chamberlain, to use and practise stage playes, whereby they might be the better enhabled and prepared to shew such plaies before her Majestie as they shalbe required at tymes meete and accustomed, to which ende they have bin cheefelie licensed and tollerated as aforesaid, and whereas there is also a third company who of late (as wee are informed) have by waie of intrusion used likewise to play, having neither prepared any plaie for her Majestie nor are bound to you, the Masters of the Revelles, for perfourming such orders as have bin prescribed and are enjoyned to be observed by the other two companies before mencioned. Wee have therefore thought good to require you uppon receipt heereof to take order that the aforesaid third company may be suppressed and none suffered hereafter to plaie but those two formerlie named belonging to us, the Lord Admyrall and Lord Chamberlaine.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 5

5.1 Excerpt describing Bankside (lines 129-55) from the long poem *An Execration Upon Vulcan* by Ben Johnson (1623). In *CBJ* (7: 165-71).

But, oh, those reeds! Thy mere disdain of them
Made thee beget that cruel stratagem
(Which some are pleased to style but thy mad prank)
Against the Globe, the glory of the Bank.
Which, though it were the fort of the whole parish,
Flanked with a ditch, and forced out of a marish,
I saw with two poor chambers taken in
And razed, ere thought could urge, 'This might have been!'
See the world's ruins! Nothing but the piles
Left! And wit since to cover it with tiles.
The brethren, they straight noised it out for news:
'Twas verily some relic of the stews,
And this a sparkle of that fire let loose,
That was raked up in the Winchestrian goose,
Bred on the Bank in time of popery,
When Venus there maintained the mystery.
But others fell with that conceit by the ears,
And cried it was a threat'ning to the bears,
And that accursèd ground, the Paris Garden.
“Nay”, sighed a sister, “'Twas the nun Kate Arden
Kindled the fire!” But then did one return:
“No fool would his own harvest spoil or burn!
If that were so, thou wouldst advance
The place that was thy wife's inheritance.”
“Oh, no”, cried all. “Fortune, for being a whore,
'Scaped not his justice any jot the more;
He burnt that idol of the revels too.

5.2 Title page and epigram by Samuel Rowlands from *The Letting of Humours Blood in the Head-Vaine* (1600).



THE LETTING
OF HVMORS
BLOOD IN THE
HEAD-VAINE.

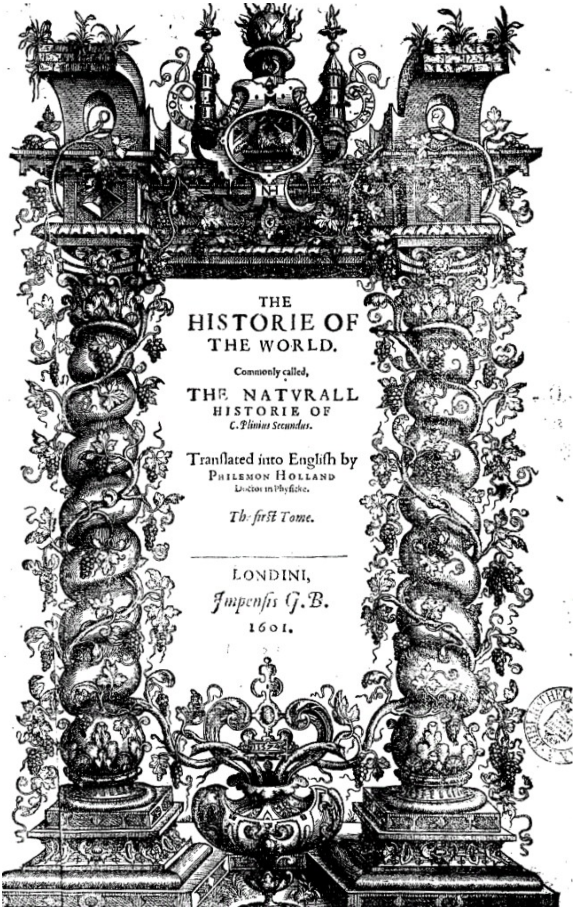
VVith a new Moriſſco, daunced by
ſeauen *Satyres*, vpon the bottome
of *Diogines* Tubbe.

AT LONDON,
Printed by *W. White* for *W. F.*
1600.

EPIG. 7.

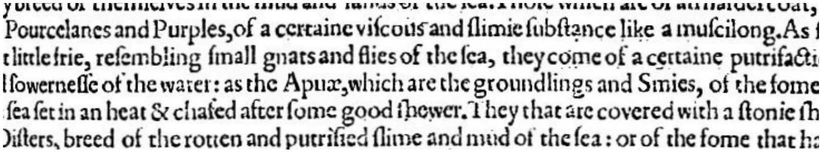
Speake Gentlemen, what ſhall we do to day?
Drinke ſome braue health vpon the Dutch carouſe
Or ſhall we to the *Globe* and ſee a Play?
Or viſit *Shorditch*, for a bawdie houſe?
Lets call for Cardes or Dice, and haue a Game,
To ſit thus idle, is both ſinne and ſhame.

5.3 Title page from the 1601 English translation, by Philemon Holland, of Pliny's *Naturalis Historia*. The excerpt shows the use of the term *groundlings* to denote “Apuae,” or small fish.



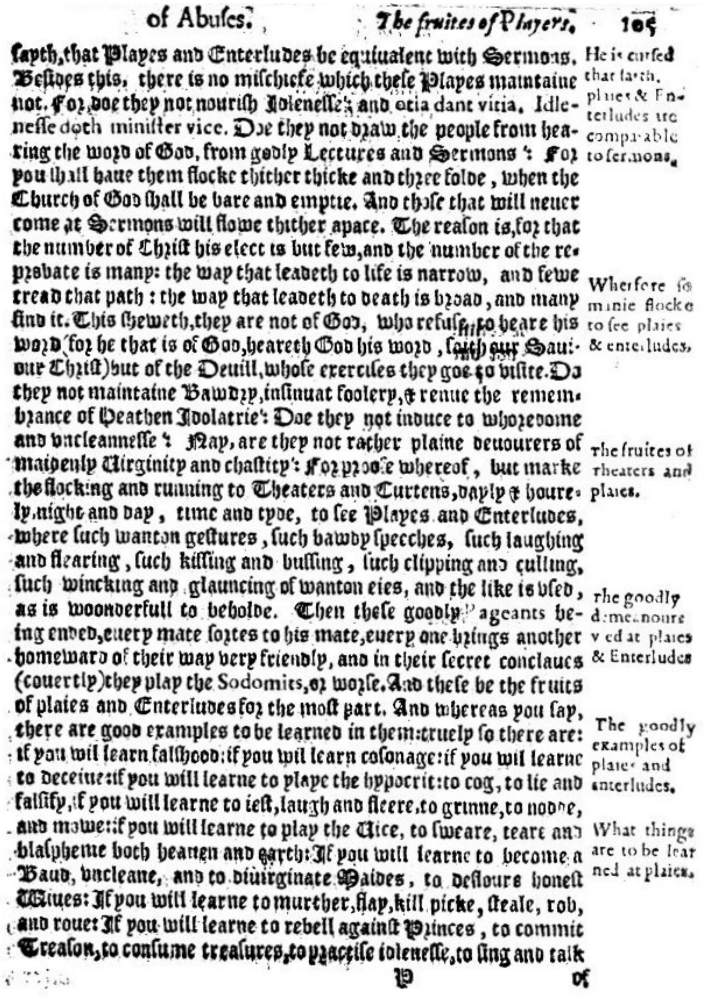
THE
HISTORIE OF
THE WORLD.
Commonly called,
THE NATVRALL
HISTORIE OF
C. Plinius Secundus.
Tranſlated into Engliſh by
PHILEMON HOLLAND
Doctor in Phyſicke.
The firſt Tome.

LONDINI,
Impenſis G.B.
1601.



y breed of themſelves in the mud and ſands of the ſea. Thoſe which are of an harder coat,
Pourcelanes and Purples, of a certaine viſcous and ſlimie ſubſtance like a muſcilong. As
t little frie, reſembling ſmall gnats and flies of the ſea, they come of a certaine putrifacti
l ſowerneſſe of the water: as the Apuæ, which are the groundlings and Smies, of the fome
ſea ſet in an heat & chaſed after ſome good ſhower. They that are covered with a ſtonie ſh
)iſters, breed of the rotten and putrified ſlime and mud of the ſea: or of the fome that h

5.4 Extract on stage plays from *The Anatomie of Abuses* by Phillip Stubbes, first published 1583 (this extract is taken from the complete 1595 edition). The Theatre and Curtain playhouses are referenced in the centre of the page.



of Abuſes. *The fruites of Players.* 105

ſayth, that Playes and Enterludes be equiualent with Sermons. Beſides this, there is no miſchiefe which theſe Playes maintaine not. For, doe they not nouriſh Idleneſſe? and otia dant vitia. Idleneſſe doth miniſter vice. Doe they not draw the people from hearing the word of God, from godly Lectures and Sermons? For you ſhall haue them flocke thither thicke and three folde, when the Church of God ſhall be bare and emptie. And thoſe that will neuer come at Sermons will flowe thither apace. The reaſon is, for that the number of Chriſt his elect is but few, and the number of the reprobate is many: the way that leadeth to life is narrow, and fewe tread that path: the way that leadeth to death is broad, and many find it. This ſheweth, they are not of God, who refuſe to heare his word (for he that is of God, heareth God his word, ſaith our Sauiour Chriſt) but of the Deuill, whoſe exerciſes they goe to viſite. Do they not maintaine Bawdry, inſinuat foolery, & renue the remembrance of Heathen Idolatrie? Doe they not induce to whoredome and vncleanneſſe? Nay, are they not rather plaine deuourers of maidenly Virginity and chaſtity? For proofe whereof, but marke the flocking and running to Theaters and Curtens, dayly & hourely, night and day, time and tyde, to ſee Playes and Enterludes, where ſuch wanton geſtures, ſuch bawdy ſpeeches, ſuch laughing and flearing, ſuch kiſſing and buſſing, ſuch clipping and culling, ſuch wincking and glauncing of wanton eies, and the like is vſed, as is woonderfull to beholde. Then theſe goodly Pageants being ended, euery mate ſortes to his mate, euery one brings another homeward of their way very friendly, and in their ſecret conclaues (couertly) they play the Sodomits, or worſe. And theſe be the fruits of plaies and Enterludes for the moſt part. And whereas you ſay, there are good examples to be learned in them: truely ſo there are: if you wil learn falſhood: if you wil learn coſonage: if you wil learne to deceiue: if you will learne to playe the hypocrit: to cog, to lie and falſify, if you will learne to ieſt, laugh and fleere, to grinne, to nodde, and mowe: if you will learne to play the Vice, to ſweare, teare and blaſpheme both heauen and earth: If you will learne to become a Baud, vncleane, and to diuirginate Maides, to deflours honeſt Wiues: If you will learne to murther, flay, kill, picke, ſteale, rob, and roue: If you will learne to rebell againſt Princes, to commit Treaſon, to conſume treaſures, to practiſe idleneſſe, to ſing and talk

P of

He is curſed that ſaith, plaies & Enterludes are comparable to ſermons.

Wherfore ſo manie flocke to ſee plaies & enterludes.

The fruites of Theaters and plaies.

The goodly demeanoure vſed at plaies & Enterludes

The goodly examples of plaies and enterludes.

What things are to be learned at plaies.