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Acting in a Global Context: Characterization from the Physical Context of Shakespeare's Spaces

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SENIOR THESIS APPROVAL

This Honors thesis entitled

“Acting in a Global Context”

and written by

Anna Joie Valdez

is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for completion of
the Carl Goodson Honors Program,
meets the criteria for acceptance,
and has been approved by the undersigned readers.

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April 20, 2018

**Acting in a Global Context:
Characterization from the Physical Context of Shakespeare's Spaces**

A Senior Honors Thesis

Presented to the Council of the Carl Goodson Honors Program

Ouachita Baptist University

**In partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of
Bachelor of Fine Arts with Honors**

By

Anna Joie Valdez

Arkadelphia, Arkansas

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INTRODUCTION

The proposition that the Elizabethan theatre space, with its lack of a “fourth wall”¹ idea between the actors and the audience, created a more interactive approach to the delivery of Shakespeare’s works is nothing new. From a technical standpoint, scholars have also suggested that analysis of the spoken text implies stage directions for both actors and technicians. These approaches are still used by directors at the New Globe in London, England, and are a heavily emphasized point in the curriculum of the Globe Association. Actors are encouraged to embrace the intimate proximity of the audience and the configuration of the balconies as a major influence in their delivery of the text.

There still seems to be a divide, however, between the approach in a Globe-like space (of which there is currently only one in existence), and that of Shakespearean delivery in any other theatrical context. The simple fact is that Shakespeare did not only write for specific audiences, but for specific spaces - some for the Elizabethan stage of the Globe, some for Jacobean spaces such as Blackfriars. These spaces intimately affected the word choices that the Bard made in order to most effectively communicate story, character, attitude, technical cues, and even blocking² in a time when stage directions were scarce and actors did not employ the type of extensive rehearsal schedule with which modern actors are now familiar.

¹ Fourth wall: the imaginary wall between the performers and the audience through which the spectators can see but that characters cannot.

² Blocking: an actor’s prescribed movements on the stage, including but not limited to entrances, exits, crosses, sitting, standing, and even combat.

Therefore, this thesis will endeavor to prove that analysis of Shakespearean text in its original physical context reveals intentional, vital information that is otherwise lost in translation, therefore making it a necessary approach for the modern thespian.

Regardless of whether or not the actor is performing in an intimate setting, or acknowledging the presence of the audience, the principles that Shakespeare wrote into his texts for the intended stage give the actor deeper clues into the thoughts, behavior, choices, and progression of the character. In addition, the application extends to the modern director and designer, who can pick up clues intended for Elizabethan-era technology, but still offer relevant insight into such ideas as timing, discovery, distance, action, and mood, all of which must be reflected in the production's technical elements to tell the story as effectively as possible.

By the very nature of the topic of this thesis, it will be somewhat prescriptive. Theatre is a craft of *doing*, and the bulk of the research done for this paper was just that - discovery through exploration, workshops, and seminars at the newly constructed Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London, England. For this reason, exploratory exercises and applied script analysis will serve the function of empirical data, and the thesis as a whole will be as much about building the thespian's "toolbox" as it is about simply disseminating information.

Information does, of course, provide the basic framework for exploration. It is therefore necessary to have a comprehensive understanding of what exactly is meant by "Shakespeare's spaces." We will begin with an overview of the two major 16th-century stage structures - known as Elizabethan and Jacobean spaces, respectively - their configurations, opportunities, and limitations. We will then move into the interaction

between Elizabethan audiences and Shakespeare's texts, specifically how their configuration should inform the actor. Third, we will explore more deeply the text itself, with an overview of specific word choices used by Shakespeare to organically create emotional arcs for the characters and story in the context of the Elizabethan space.

The interplay between the stage and the written word is an intimate one, and, in the case of Shakespeare's texts, one is incomplete without the other. This is not to say that they cannot be performed elsewhere, but considering the text first within the original physical context does reveal rich choices that would otherwise be hidden. Therefore, this thesis will finish with a brief exploration into the transfer of Elizabethan context to modern media.

I. SHAKESPEARE'S SPACES

Theatres in the 16th century were constructed much differently than the standard proscenium³ auditorium with which most theatregoers are familiar today. While Shakespeare initially wrote for Elizabethan-style spaces such as the Rose and, later, his own Globe, the emergence of private, Jacobean-style playhouses in the mid-16th century (such as Blackfriars, built in 1576) necessitates that we explore the specifics of those spaces as well. Let us begin with the former.

A. ELIZABETHAN THEATRES

The concept of the dedicated theatre playhouse was a decidedly new one. Until the construction of James Burbage's Theatre in 1576, public performances of plays were held at inns such as the Red Lion, the Bull, and the Cross Keys. Their audiences were homogeneously poor rabble, criminals with whom the upper and middle classes would never associate. The introduction of the amphitheater playhouse during the Elizabethan era facilitated a more universal representation of all social classes in a single venue.

This venue owed its origins to an incredibly barbaric practice: bear-baiting. Before the Globe was constructed, another arena called the Bear Garden was built only a block away from where the Globe would eventually stand. The first of several arenas of its kind⁴, "Bear Garden" was a deceptively romantic name for an arena in which a bear would be chained to a stake and forced to fight for its life against a pack of dogs. The battles were always bloody and brutal, which helps to explain the geographical rise of

³ Proscenium: the partial wall that frames the front of a stage, hiding the wings on the sides and the lights, backdrops, and curtains hung above. A theatre or auditorium utilizing this front-only view with the aid of this wall may also be referred to as a proscenium stage, proscenium theatre, or proscenium auditorium, as above.

⁴ While Bear Garden was the first bear-baiting arena in London, the practice itself had its origins in Roman times, when prisoners would be forced to fight animals such as bears to the death in the Colosseum. In contrast, British bear-baiting, while wildly inhumane, never involved human contenders.

bear gardens on the south side of the Thames, away from the city proper (and, therefore, the church). A letter by Robert Laneham, written in 1575, describes bear-baiting at Kenilworth Castle, attended by Queen Elizabeth and recounted with the amusement by which it was generally regarded:

“Thursday, the fourteenth of July, and the sixth day of her Majesty’s coming, a great sort of bandogs [mastiffs] were then tied in the outer court and thirteen bears in the inner. . .

Well, the bears were brought forth into the court, the dogs set to them, to argue the points even face to face...

It was a sport very pleasant, of these beasts, to see the bear with his pink eyes leering after his enemies’ approach, the nimbleness and wayt [wait] of the dog to take his advantage, and the force and experience of the bear again to avoid the assaults. If he were bitten in one place, how he would pinch in another to get free, that if he were taken once, then what shift, with biting, with clawing, with roaring, tossing and tumbling, he would work to wind himself free from them. And when he was loose, to shake his ears twice or thrice with the blood and the slather about his physiognomy, was a matter of goodly relief.”

Besides laying the foundation for the theatre district’s seedy reputation, bear baiting also laid the physical framework for the Elizabethan theatre. Bear gardens featured a polygonal sand-filled enclosure surrounded by three stories of bench seats,

protected by railings. This arena-style setup became the immediate framework for the now-recognizable 16th-century outdoor playhouse. (See Figure 1.1)

When James Burbage's Theatre was built at Shoreditch, the design was taken directly from that of the arenas. A high platform stage was placed along one of the walls, and the lower two of the back galleries were converted into a tiringhouse, the theatre's functional backstage. It was upon this example that other dedicated spaces, such as Shakespeare's Globe (built in 1599⁵), were constructed.

The stage was divided into two parts, the main stage and the "inner stage" or "discovery space." The latter was behind three sets of stage doors, one large set in the middle and two smaller ones on either side. As a general rule, the middle doors could be used for processional entrances and divided spaces (like the tomb in *Romeo and Juliet*), while the smaller ones were better suited for entrances and exits by smaller groups or individuals.

In addition to the stage, thrusting out from the back wall, a roof held up by two massive columns protected the stage and the players from the elements. The thatched roof over the walls of the theatre did the same for the three stories of balconies, but the ground around the stage remained completely unprotected. This was one of the reasons for the resulting configuration of the audience: while modern theatres sell the seats closest to the stage at the highest price, this area was filled with "groundlings," the lowest-class, lowest-paying spectators. They weren't even seated; for the entirety of the play, they would stand, many of them close enough to touch the stage, and all of them roughly eye-

⁵ The original Globe burned down in 1613 and was consequently rebuilt a year later. Therefore, the current reproduction standing on Bankside in modern day is actually the third iteration of the Globe - the fourth if one considers that the first Globe was built from the timbers of Burbage's dismantled Theatre.

level with the actors' shins. This would end up playing a major role in the atmospheric context of the space, namely the audience's behavior.

Figure 1.1 Illustration of a 16th Century Bear Baiting Ring

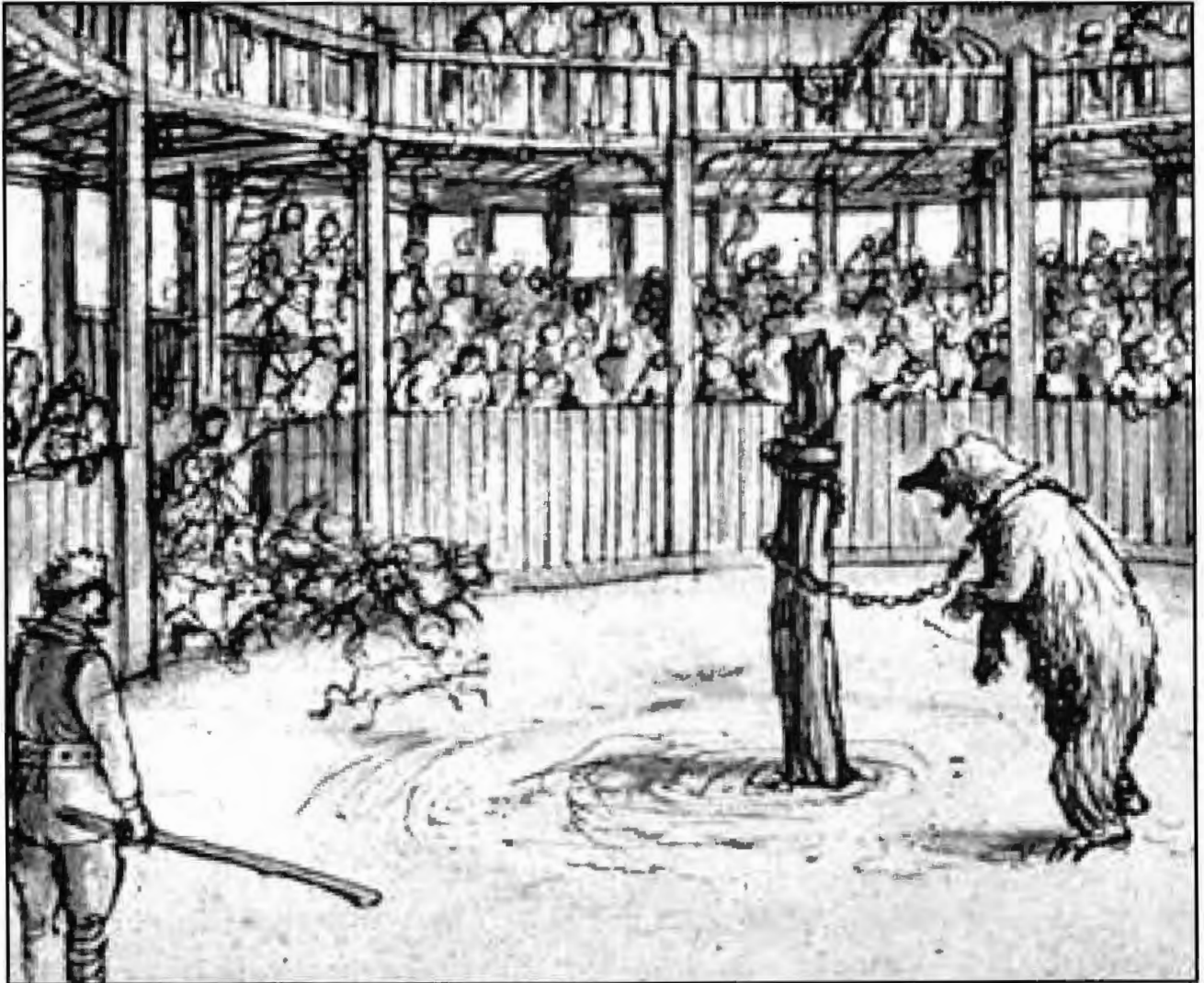
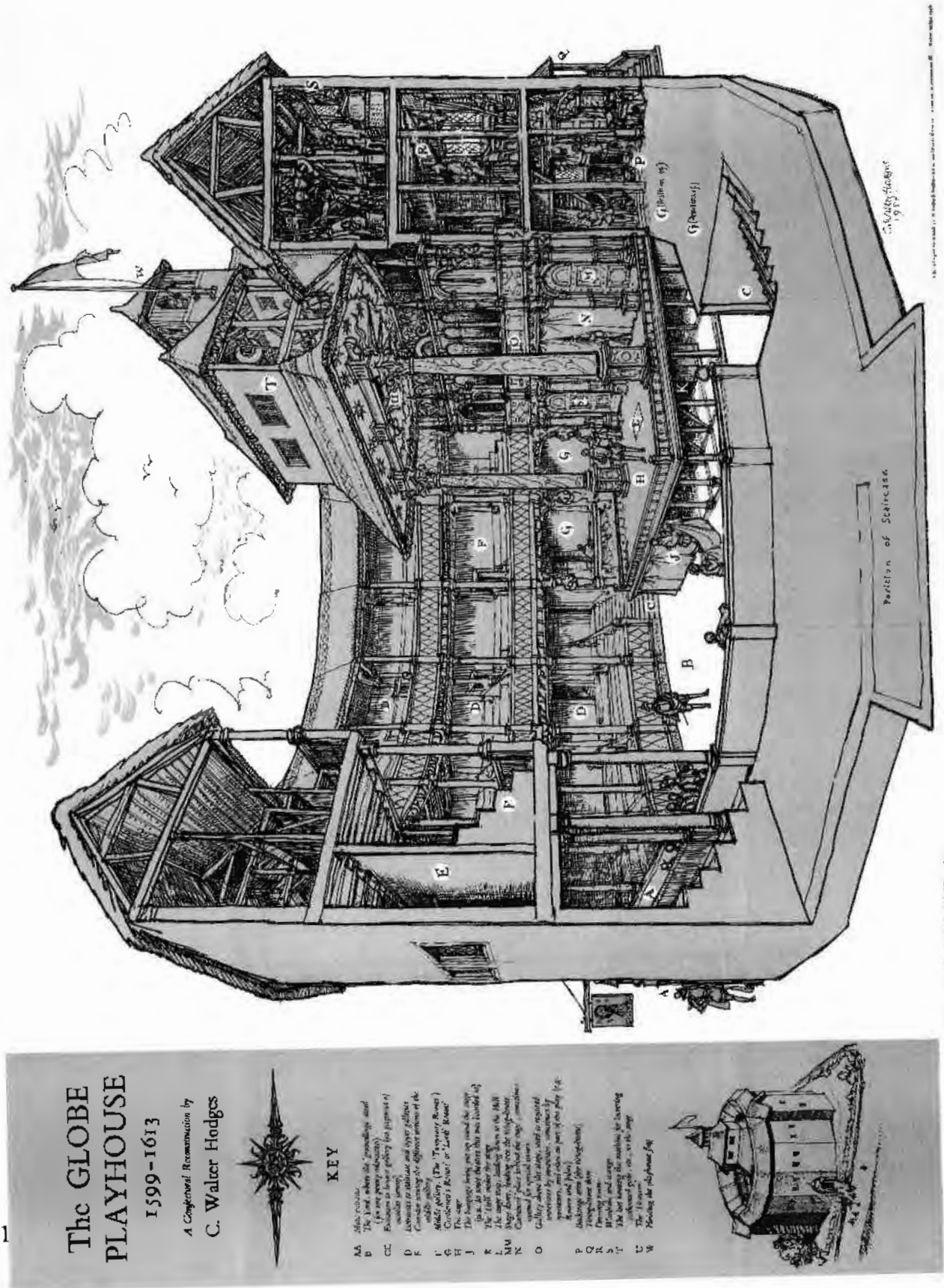


Figure 1.2 Cutaway Illustration of the Original Globe Theatre



The GLOBE PLAYHOUSE

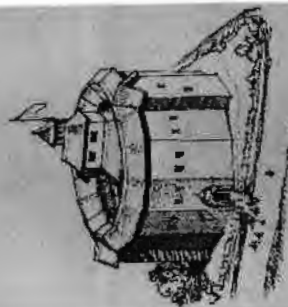
1599-1613

A. Conjectured Reconstruction by
C. Walter Hodges



KEY

- A. Side entrance.
- B. The Lord, when the "groundlings" and (for one penny subscription) "Bachelors or lower gallery" (see page 64) would sit.
- C. C. Entrance to the galleries.
- D. Entrance to the galleries.
- E. Middle gallery. (The "Taverner's Room")
- F. The stage.
- G. The stage trap, leading down to the "hell" (see page 64).
- H. The stage trap, leading up to the "heaven" (see page 64).
- I. The stage trap, leading to the "trap-door" (see page 64).
- J. The stage trap, leading to the "trap-door" (see page 64).
- K. The stage trap, leading to the "trap-door" (see page 64).
- L. The stage trap, leading to the "trap-door" (see page 64).
- M. The stage trap, leading to the "trap-door" (see page 64).
- N. The stage trap, leading to the "trap-door" (see page 64).
- O. The stage trap, leading to the "trap-door" (see page 64).
- P. The stage trap, leading to the "trap-door" (see page 64).
- Q. The stage trap, leading to the "trap-door" (see page 64).
- R. The stage trap, leading to the "trap-door" (see page 64).
- S. The stage trap, leading to the "trap-door" (see page 64).
- T. The stage trap, leading to the "trap-door" (see page 64).
- U. The stage trap, leading to the "trap-door" (see page 64).
- V. The stage trap, leading to the "trap-door" (see page 64).
- W. The stage trap, leading to the "trap-door" (see page 64).



Finally, there is the technological aspect to consider (or, depending on how one views it, the lack thereof.)

One major advantage of the outdoor playing space was the ability to create and exploit such special effects as trapdoors (some estimates say the original Globe had as many as four) and practical sound effects (such as thunder sheets and real cannons, the latter of which was tragically responsible for the destruction of the first Globe in 1613). A major disadvantage, however, was in lighting control, which was simply nonexistent.

Most play performances at this time would begin around 2:00 in the afternoon, which meant the only shift in lighting available would have been the setting sun. This posed its own challenge in establishing the physical and temporal setting of a scene, which will be explored later in this text.

In summary, the design of the Elizabethan theatre meant that Shakespeare, as a writer and actor, would have faced the challenges of:

- Sightlines for the wealthiest spectators at the top and sides of a three-story building.
 - The added difficulty posed by the two onstage columns.
- A lower-class, uneducated populace surrounding the stage.
- A lack of lighting control.

While the Globe stage is most widely associated with Shakespeare's plays, it is important to note that it and stages like it were not the only spaces for which he wrote. The appearance of a second kind of theatre emerged, bringing with it its own challenges and considerations, some similar, some unique. Therefore, we now turn to the lesser-known Jacobean theatre.

B. JACOBEOAN PLAYHOUSES

Also known as private playhouses, Jacobean theatres first appeared at roughly the same time that public playhouses were gaining popularity. While still markedly different from the average theatre of today, there were some notable differences between Jacobean theatres, like Blackfriars (built 1576⁶), and Elizabethan stages like Burbage's Theatre and the Globe.

First of all, these private playhouses were much smaller. Whereas outdoor theatres like the Globe could seat/stand upwards of 1500 people, the benches of the Jacobean halls had a capacity closer to 300.

Second, their social configuration was much different. While public playhouses were open to the "rabble," private playhouses were more expensive to attend and therefore featured a much less diverse class representation. They also followed the convention more widely recognized today of selling seats close to the stage for a higher price. In fact, gallants were known to purchase seats on the stage itself, where they could be seen for the entirety of the performance!

Attached to the New Globe in London is a reproduction Jacobean theatre known as the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse. I was therefore able to see firsthand the differences in design, one of the most notable being the adjustment of the thrust⁷ nature of the stage. While that still very much exists in the space, there's a complete absence of distance between the sides of the stage and the side galleries. The pit,⁸ therefore, which includes bench seating, only faces the front section of the stage, creating a slightly more proscenial

⁶ Blackfriars actually became two separate halls, with a second playhouse of the same name being built on the same property twenty years later in 1596.

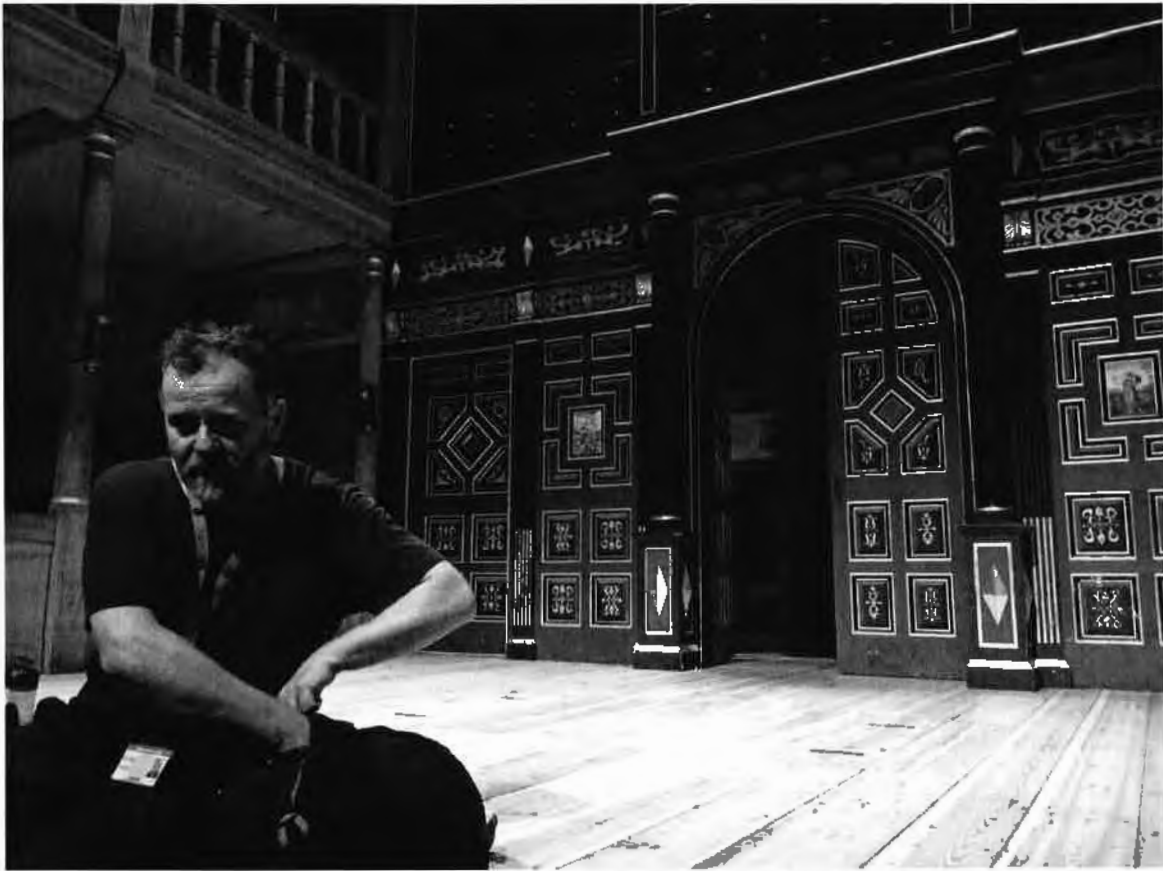
⁷ Thrust: a stage surrounded by the audience on three sides.

⁸ Pit: the audience area on the floor up against the stage. Usually includes seating in a small theatre or an area for the orchestra in a larger one.

feel while still placing important audience members to the sides of the action. Perhaps even more radical to the modern viewer is the fact that the lack of a roof directly over the stage allowed seats to be sold in one extra gallery: directly behind and above the stage! In this sense, despite the majority of the audience being in a thrust configuration, the space must be treated in many ways in-the-round⁹ to account for the richest patrons above the tiringhouse.

⁹ In-the-round: a configuration in which the audience surrounds the stage on all sides.

Figure 1.3 Photo of the Interior of the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse in London, UK, featuring Colin Hurley, Indoor Playing Workshop Instructor



The indoor space created more opportunities for lighting control at the expense of the practical sound effects that an outdoor playhouse could handle. Of course, these changes in lighting control weren't much more than the ability to choose the number of candles and torches lighting the space, but still gave just enough environmental authority to the playmakers to make possible such mood plays as *Cymbeline* and *The Tempest*, both of which were originally performed at Blackfriars.

The presence of these candles also introduced the concept of an intermission, necessitated by the trimming of the wicks. This would have added time onto an already long event and would have been considered in the pacing and plot development of the productions.

Some of Shakespeare's plays were written specifically for these indoor playhouses, some for the outdoor spaces and eventually performed inside. Either way, Shakespeare would have been dealing with the following considerations:

- A higher-class audience
 - Gallants onstage, richest people behind the stage
 - Continuously, traditionally interactive, though perhaps not the extent of the lower class audience of the public playhouses
- A configuration of seats both below foot level and overhead
- Slightly more lighting control
- An added intermission

In the cases of both the indoor and outdoor spaces, the very stage on which the actors stood would have been markedly different from any modern space. Shakespeare wrote

for these stages, and for these people, configured in a way we may consider backwards today. With all of these considerations in mind, we now zoom in on the patrons of the theatre - the eyes and ears for whom William was writing.

II. AN INTERACTIVE AUDIENCE

The question is then raised: who were the people watching Shakespeare's plays? If he was writing for specific spaces, the configuration and behavior of the audiences are paramount to the understanding of his approach.

Let us look first at the outdoor playhouse audiences. To recapitulate, the public nature of these playhouses placed the poorest people in a standing position on three sides of the stage. There are slightly differing schools of thought on the "groundlings," from a historical standpoint.

Despite the continuation of bear-baiting spectacles, there was an increase in the number of theatres built solely for play performances. However, if the Puritan sermons and propaganda were to be believed, the theatre was still unfit for self-respecting (or, more specifically, God-fearing) persons, and was filled with cutpurses, whores, and vagabonds. The anonymous author of *A Third Blast of Retrait from Plaies and Theaters* (1580) referred to the theatre in general as "the chappel of Satan," populated with "no want of yong ruffians, nor lack of harlots."

The official records, however, tell a slightly different, though not altogether contrary story. There doesn't seem to be any evidence of a notable increase in violence or lawlessness in the theatres in comparison to any other largely-attended venues or events, and even among pickpockets and prostitutes, the local taverns most likely offered better opportunities. William Harrison, a 16th-century British clergyman who wrote *Description of England* as part of a chronicling venture, divides the people of the time into four classes according to income and status: nobles and gentlemen, citizens and burgesses, yeomen, and artisans and labourers. Members of the fourth class were often to be seen at

the theatre, which was a point of contention for its opponents: the presence of artisans, apprentices, and house servants meant that they were taking off of work to attend, something that simply wasn't done and was therefore seen as a sign of laziness or idleness. (Along this vein, it is important to note that, in order to account for the natural light necessary to hold a performance in an open-air playhouse, performances were often scheduled around 2:00 pm, at the same time as most church services.) The heavy religious opposition to plays and their perceived encouragement of degenerate behavior manifested itself in an observable pattern in the location of theatres. As mentioned before, most of them were on the south bank of the Thames River, and the ones that weren't were still beyond the City walls, away from the churches and authorities.

Despite this seedy reputation, the truth about the social make-up of the Shakespearean outdoor theatre is much more inclusive of a broad range of social (and moral) castes. London was seeing a growth within the middle class (artisans, citizens, and literate scholars and clergy), as well as a notable increase in the city's population of land-holding estatesmen and heirs. More and more traditional countryside-dwelling estate heirs were selling their inherited land in favor of urban London life. Therefore, these growing classes of individuals with expendable income contributed to the significant rise in play attendance.

These nobles, as well as the royals known to be in attendance at the occasional performance, would have been seated in the boxes above and behind the stage, a convention that is wholly alien to the modern theatregoer. There is popular speculation that this practice was in place to allow the upper class audience members to be seen by the lower patrons; however, a deeper understanding of the manner in which Elizabethan

plays were written and performed offers a more practical perspective. Professor Andrew Gurr, author of *The Shakespearean Stage* and chair of the committees that designed the new Globe in London, describes the difference between a 16th-century playgoer and a 21st-century playgoer as the difference between an auditor and a spectator: today, the point is to see the spectacle, while back then, hearing was the most important goal. By that token, then, those who were seated “behind” the stage got the best value for their money because they were closest to the stage and could therefore hear more clearly. Any issues with sightlines would be compensated for by the advantage of an aerial view as well as intentionally narrative dialogue, which will be explored later.

Of course, regardless of the perceived vs. the actual presence of increased criminal activity within the theatres, the fact does remain that the “rabble” were closest to the stage, in fact surrounding it on three sides, and they would have been much more vocal than the average audience today.

The concept of the fourth wall was practically non-existent in Shakespeare’s time, and for good reason. Applause was much more frequent and present throughout the show, and was almost always accompanied vocally. Refreshments such as beer and oranges would have been served and sold throughout the crowd during the show, as well as nuts (there are many accounts of players being irritated by the sound of cracking hazelnuts in the middle of performances). While there is no way to know for sure, there is evidence to suggest that audiences were brazen enough to launch various missiles at players (nut shells, apples, etc.), and occasionally to demand a completely different show than what had been prepared.

In addition, the pacing was different. The concept of an intermission wasn't present until the introduction of the private halls, and then only because the candles required to light the indoor space had to be trimmed. Of course, this lack of a break wasn't as tedious as it might seem, because the lines of the plays were spoken much faster than they would be today. Silence on stage was neither expected, nor welcome. Therefore, a play that could easily take three hours on a modern stage would clock in around two.

That said, a trip to the theatre would often take an entire afternoon because, though the plays were only two to three hours long, they were not the extent of the experience. As part of the spectacle, costume processions, if not somehow written into the script, were sometimes presented before the show started, to show off the incredible clothing. In addition, after every performance there would be a clown spectacular known as a jig, which included as much song as it did dance. These addenda, plus the time it took for everyone to exit (upwards of an hour in some cases), meant that a theatre performance was a half-day's commitment.

The combination of these conventions - the natural interactivity, the sale of alcohol and food, the general noise, and the time dedication - lent itself to a much more presently vocal audience in Elizabethan theatres such as the Globe.

Much of this applies to the indoor playing spaces as well, with the distinct addition of the more homogenous audience and the presence of the gallants seated onstage. This didn't necessarily result in a better-behaved crowd. In addition to showing off their status and garb, it's wholly possible that the tradition of gallant banter would have allowed the onstage audience members license to interject the players' dialogue

whenever they wished. Shakespeare even put this idea into two of his own plays, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Love's Labour Lost*. In both scripts, the aristocratic audience characters force changes in the scenes being performed before them.

A. ADDRESSING AN INTERACTIVE AUDIENCE

*"It's not the fourth wall, it's the fourth window. Why wouldn't you let them in?" -
Colin Hurley, June 17 2017, Indoor Playing Workshop*

The physical and technological limitations of Shakespeare's spaces, though pioneering for their time, presented two possible approaches: one would be to strive for realism as much as possible, an inevitably lost battle. The other would be to accept them as part of the experience and invite the audience to join in the storytelling in one way or another. Shakespeare wisely chose the latter.

The perceived illusion of the stage was acknowledged as illusion from the very beginning of the play and often referenced throughout the script (consider the chorus's mention of the "two-hours' traffic of our stage" at the beginning of *Romeo and Juliet*, or Puck's "If we shadows have offended" speech at the end of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*).

Consider the prologue to *Henry V*, written in 1599 for the Globe stage.

CHORUS

O for a Muse of fire, that would ascend

The brightest heaven of invention,

A kingdom for a stage, princes to act

And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!
Then should the warlike Harry, like himself,
Assume the port of Mars; and at his heels,
Leash'd in like hounds, should famine, sword and fire
Crouch for employment. But pardon, and gentles all,
The flat unraised spirits that have dared
On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth
So great an object: can this cockpit hold
The vasty fields of France? or may we cram
Within this wooden O the very casques
That did affright the air at Agincourt?
O, pardon! since a crooked figure may
Attest in little place a million;
And let us, ciphers to this great accompt,
On your imaginary forces work.
Suppose within the girdle of these walls
Are now confined two mighty monarchies,
Whose high upreared and abutting fronts
The perilous narrow ocean parts asunder:
Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts;
Into a thousand parts divide one man
And make imaginary puissance;
Think when we talk of horses, that you see them

Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth;
For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,
Carry them here and there; jumping o'er times,
Turning the accomplishment of many years
Into an hour-glass: for the which supply,
Admit me Chorus to this history,
Who prologue-like your humble patience pray,
Gently to hear, kindly to judge, our play.

Here, we see evidence of Shakespeare's approach and attitude toward his audiences. With few practical effects and no set to speak of, the chorus begins the show with a blatant acknowledgement of the blank stage, a wish for more, and an appeal to the audience to create the settings for them with their imaginations, pretend a few men are a thousand, and give the players the benefit of the doubt as they judged the play (which wasn't simply a figure of speech - with as vocal an audience as we have established were watching the play, the repercussions of dissatisfying one's viewers would have been much more immediate and severe than a poor review in the morning paper). While in modern theatre, the suspension of disbelief is assumed and never addressed, Shakespeare neither expected it nor asked for it, but invited the audience to join in the storytelling, immediately breaking the fourth wall. The Shakespearean actor should therefore become very quickly acquainted with a basic idea: the characters know the audience is there and have an intimate relationship with them.

Of course, concealment and secrecy play a major role in most of Shakespeare's plays, but the audience gets to enjoy the dramatic irony of being "in on the concealment" in most cases. Connection to the other characters onstage is vital to the telling of the story, but the uniqueness of working with Elizabethan-era text is the freedom to break outward to the audience and use three stories and 360 degrees' worth of attentive eyes and ears whenever the actor deems appropriate (based on the text, naturally). Within this bit of advice, we encounter a translational issue: editing.

After Shakespeare's death, members of his acting company made a compilation of his works known as the "First Folio." These original or as-close-to-original-as-possible scripts were written in classic 16th century spelling, punctuation, and the mishandling of both, as is to be expected with any primary historical resource. For that reason, most scripts handed to a Shakespearean actor have been edited for spelling and such, and often have stage directions, including asides, written into them. The truth is, only entrances and exits were written into the original script. In fact, Patrick Tucker, director of London's Original Shakespeare Company, warns against these often misleading directions. "Asides are never printed in First Folio text," he writes, "so it is up to you to identify which lines might be asides and to make the appropriate acting choices. Many of the asides added by Editors to their texts are wrong!" (Tucker 260)

The point of this warning is not a restriction, but a release. An actor caught in the trap that only specifically assigned lines may be asides loses a number of choices provided by the physical context of Shakespeare's spaces and the interactivity of the audience.

The ability to exploit this freedom first requires spatial awareness from the actor. Most thespians are trained in a proscenium space, in which the focus is invariably toward the front, with cheats to the diagonal for a total audience interaction potential just shy of 180 degrees left to right. In addition, most theatres employ auditorium seating, which brings the top of the audience perhaps 110 degrees above floor level. This is even true of thrust, in-the-round, and modular black-box theatres, which may force the actor to adjust the *width* of his “acting horizon,” as it were, but rarely encourage any significant adjustment to the vertical area to which he is playing. Many Broadway theatres and music halls have galleries that rise as high as those of the Elizabethan and Jacobean spaces, but, as those are the “nosebleeds” or “cheap seats,” the priority tends to be to create the best show possible for those closer to the stage and near or below eye level. This is the exact opposite of the required focus of Shakespeare’s spaces, as the “best seats” were up and to the sides and back of the stage.

Here we find our first opportunity to apply the physical context of the Bard’s theatres to the delivery of Shakespeare’s text and the actor’s choices - that is, embracing a 360 degree XY plane and a nearly 180 degree Z axis that allows the actor to make choices in all three dimensions and, indeed, connect with the audience in all directions.

Applied Exercise: Hello to You and Hello to You

Credit: Colin Hurley, Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, 2017

This technique allows for the exploration of 180 degree lines from audience member to audience member, helping the actor to gain spatial awareness in all directions.

The concept is simple. The actor chooses a place on the stage, facing in any direction.¹⁰ The actor then chooses a seat in the audience and says to it, "Hello to you..." He then turns 180 degrees and completes the sentence to the "exact opposite" seat, "...and hello to you." He repeats the sentence over and over again to different seats, effectively tracing the whole of the Elizabethan theatre space with imaginary straight lines.

This exercise is most effective when the actor attempts to find opposites in the Z axis as well as the X and Y. The possibility of exploitable lines is limited only by the stage floor, the ceiling, and the tiringhouse, which, remember, had seats above it and therefore does not eliminate an entire wall.

B. PHYSICAL PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

The multi-angled spaces of which the player is now aware, and for which Shakespeare wrote, come with issues that have to be addressed over the course of storytelling. Perhaps the most immediate of these is that of sightlines.

As mentioned before, the Globe stage is protected from the elements by a roof, jutting out from the tiringhouse and supported by two massive columns onstage. While physically impressive, these columns wreak havoc with sightlines, especially when action gets caught directly between the two. Because this position conceals movement from

¹⁰ By nature of traditional training, one will often find themselves defaulting in a direction toward what would be the front in a proscenium space. It's not "wrong," per se, but a definite indication of the static neutral this exercise is trying to break, and will hopefully become a weaker impulse as the exercise progresses.

nearly a third of the audience, this area is known colloquially as “The Valley of Death,” or more dramatically as “The Valley of the Shadow of Death.”

In another twist of historical convention, this area corresponds almost perfectly to the area in a proscenium space which is generally one of the *most* visible - just downstage of center - which makes it easy for a modern actor to gravitate unconsciously towards it.

Another issue is the danger of stagnation. Inactivity is not well-rewarded in a space where any given position is guaranteed to keep at least a few people from having a clear view of the action, due to column position, turned backs, or other bodies onstage. An audience member blocked from the story for too long becomes a disengaged, uninterested audience member, and an idle playgoer is a thespian’s worst enemy.

The solutions to both of these problems are actually found within Shakespeare’s text. Devoid of what we now recognize as conventional stage directions, Shakespeare’s scripts instead created the opportunities for guided yet spontaneous blocking through his choice of words. Attention to these consistent cues creates a large number of dynamic movement choices for the actor, contrary to the classic “stand and deliver” method by which most first-timers approach Shakespearean acting.

The first and most simple of these cues is called “cross blocking.” This means, at the most basic level, crossing toward whomever the character is addressing. It also includes character self-indication, in which an actor makes some sort of movement whenever her character is thus engaged - this movement may be a step forward, a nod, or bow, depending on her station and relationship to the speaking character.

Not only does this sort of indicative physicalization create organic stage movement, it also helps the audience keep track of character identities, and aids those who from their position cannot see with whom the speaker is making eye contact.

As an example, consider the following selection from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, along with cross blocking options presented by the text.

Figure 2.1 Selection from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act I, Scene 2, Cross

Blocking Notated

<p><i>Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING</i></p> <p>QUINCE</p> <p>Is all our company here?</p> <p>BOTTOM</p> <p>You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the scrip.</p> <p>QUINCE</p> <p>Here is the scroll of every man's name, which is thought fit, through all Athens, to play in our interlude before the duke and the duchess, on his wedding-day at night.</p> <p>BOTTOM</p> <p>First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on, then read the names of the</p>	<p>This first line, spoken upon entrance, allows Quince to address everyone, and to take a highly visible place as he leads them onstage.</p> <p>Steps forward toward QUINCE's position of power.</p> <p>Stage business: take out the scroll, address and indicate "every man."</p> <p>Strong cross to QUINCE's position.</p>
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actors, and so grow to a point.

QUINCE

Marry, our play is, The most
lamentable comedy, and most cruel death of
Pyramus and Thisby.

BOTTOM

A very good piece of work, I assure
you, and a merry. Now, good Peter Quince,
call forth your actors by the scroll. Masters,
spread yourselves.

QUINCE

Answer as I call you. Nick Bottom, the
weaver.

BOTTOM

Ready. Name what part I am for, and
proceed.

QUINCE

You, Nick Bottom, are set down for

“Marry,” to BOTTOM, who has invaded
his space; the rest of the line stepping
forward to everyone else to regain
control.

Matching QUINCE’s movement to
address all; back to QUINCE with his
command; strong cross toward the other
men to spread them out.

Claims a new high visibility space from
which to call.

Steps away from his business of moving
the men and toward QUINCE, drawing
attention.

Cross to BOTTOM, to hand him a
scroll.

Pyramus.

BOTTOM

What is Pyramus? a lover, or a tyrant?

QUINCE

A lover, that kills himself most gallant
for love.

BOTTOM

That will ask some tears in the true
performing of it: if I do it, let the audience
look to their eyes; I will move storms, I will
condole in some measure. To the rest: yet my
chief humour is for a tyrant: I could play
Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make
all split.

The raging rocks
And shivering shocks
Shall break the locks
Of prison gates;
And Phibbus' car
Shall shine from far

Multiple cross choices available,
including members of company and
sections of audience, taking **BOTTOM**
all over the stage as he "performs."

<p>And make and mar The foolish Fates. This was lofty! Now name the rest of the players. This is Eracles' vein, a tyrant's vein; a lover is more condoling.</p> <p>QUINCE Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.</p> <p>FLUTE Here, Peter Quince.</p> <p>QUINCE Flute, you must take Thisby on you.</p> <p>FLUTE What is Thisby? a wandering knight?</p> <p>QUINCE It is the lady that Pyramus must love.</p>	<p>Retreats to relinquish the stage to QUINCE. Apparently he's not finished yet - this line is a good opportunity for an aside to the audience or whichever company member he's closest to.</p> <p>Self-indication.</p> <p>Cross to FLUTE with scroll.</p>
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FLUTE

Nay, faith, let me not play a woman; I
have a beard coming.

QUINCE

That's all one: you shall play it in a
mask, and you may speak as small as you
will.

BOTTOM

An I may hide my face, let me play
Thisby too, I'll speak in a monstrous little
voice. 'Thisne, Thisne;' 'Ah, Pyramus, lover
dear! thy Thisby dear, and lady dear!'

QUINCE

No, no; you must play Pyramus: and,
Flute, you Thisby.

BOTTOM

Well, proceed.

Cross to QUINCE and FLUTE, perform

Thisbe and Pyramus out to the crowd.

Cross to wherever BOTTOM has landed

in his performance.

Retreat.

<p>QUINCE</p> <p>Robin Starveling, the tailor.</p>	<p>Turn to rest of company.</p>
<p>STARVELING</p> <p>Here, Peter Quince.</p>	<p>Self-indication.</p>
<p>QUINCE</p> <p>Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby's mother.</p> <p>Tom Snout, the tinker.</p>	<p>Cross to STARVELING.</p> <p>Call out to rest of company.</p>
<p>SNOUT</p> <p>Here, Peter Quince.</p>	<p>Self-indication.</p>
<p>QUINCE</p> <p>You, Pyramus' father: myself, Thisby's father:</p> <p>Snug, the joiner; you, the lion's part: and, I hope, here is a play fitted.</p>	<p>Cross to SNOUT.</p> <p>SNUG: Self-indication. QUINCE: Cross to SNUG.</p>
<p>SNUG</p> <p>Have you the lion's part written? pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of</p>	

study.

QUINCE

You may do it extempore, for it is
nothing but roaring.

BOTTOM

Let me play the lion too: I will roar,
that I will do any man's heart good to hear me;
I will roar, that I will make the duke say 'Let
him roar again, let him roar again.'

QUINCE

An you should do it too terribly, you
would fright the duchess and the ladies, that
they would shriek; and that were enough to
hang us all.

ALL

That would hang us, every mother's son.

Cross to join QUINCE and SNUG.

Great opportunity here to play to the
"rich seats" above stage, as if to
acknowledge where the duke would sit.

Cross with BOTTOM away from "rich
seats" to keep him from frightening the
ladies.

Excellent opportunity for an aside by all
characters to different people in the
audience.

Suddenly, simply by encouraging characters to cross to each other (and including the surrounding audience as possible scene partners), the company manages to create a dynamic flow to the scene that keeps things interesting, constantly adjusts sightlines, and physicalizes the written comedy by effectively having Bottom and Quince chase each other in a battle for control of the space.

This exercise has, in a cursory manner, touched upon another method of solving the sightline and interest problems, and that is the embrace and exploitation of shifting Others.¹¹

This is another important tool for the Shakespearean actor because the Elizabethan theatres do not only lend themselves so well to this approach, but necessitate it. Few things create stagnation like a fixed focus point. The Shakespearean actor may find difficulty finding physical variety in long blocks of text, even though the emotional arcs may be easier to find. This issue often stems from a proscenium understanding of Shakespearean delivery: speak to the person you're having an effect on, and make sure you're cheating out to the audience. This approach can only work for so long before becoming monotonous and disinteresting, because, even with flawless work in facial expressions and vocal choices, she inevitably remains cut off from a large portion of the audience. Luckily, with an Elizabethan approach, it's easier to see that Shakespeare's works, even his longest soliloquies, have written-in focus shifts that solve this problem, some definite, some opportune.

The list of Others with which the actor may experiment is as follows:

¹¹ Other: the entity upon which the speaking character is attempting to have an effect, or from which he is trying to solicit an answer. I.e., the person he's talking to.

1. Scene partner - the person upon whom the sum total of the speech is intended to have an effect.
 - a. Projected Other - the person to whom the character wishes to express his thoughts may not be present, giving the actor the option to project them elsewhere.
2. Other actors present onstage - by directing some of her lines to others in the room, a character may be able to gain support, winning people on her side.
3. God/the gods/Heaven/the higher elements - appeals to a higher power are usually written into soliloquies especially, and not only provide possible aid for the character, but the opportunity for the actor to play in a way that the upper seats can see and engage with.
4. Hades/the devil/Hell/the evil elements - similar in physical execution to the former, this approach also offers the opportunity to play with a lower focus: from the ground, or in the direction of the groundlings.
5. Audience - perhaps the most opportune alternative Other choice, because the audience can represent more than one person or more than one idea. If the actor mentally ascribes differing ideas with corresponding areas of the crowd (for example, in Hamlet's famous "To be or not to be" soliloquy), a plethora of dynamic movement choices are suddenly available as he moves around the stage, physicalizing the inner struggle between the given options.
 - a. Projected self - note the qualifier "projected." The modern, camera-friendly portrayal of brooding introspection simply would not have translated in the spaces for which Shakespeare wrote, at least not for

more than a line or two, and is often responsible for the stagnation that actors encounter in delivering soliloquies. Therefore, *if* the actor wishes to speak to herself, she should do so by mentally projecting another version of herself elsewhere. It is my opinion that this option should be treated as a last resort, and that it should, if utilized, be seen as an extension of audience-as-the-other, as the best way to avoid cutting the audience out of the character's struggle is to choose to project oneself out into the crowd.

With such a corporate approach, it therefore behooves the actor to put it into practice with the help of a company, hence the following exercise.

Shifting Others Exercise

Credit: Gabrielle Montega, Movement seminar instructor, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, June 2017

This exercise works best with a group of six or more. Each actor should have a soliloquy or monologue¹² memorized and ready for exploration.

Members of the company stand in a circle with a single actor in the center who will be reciting his text. Before beginning, the actor should give his fellows a little bit of context to work with: what other characters would be in the room at this time, who

¹² Soliloquy: a block of text delivered by a character alone onstage, with no other characters present. Soliloquies generally constitute a scene unto themselves.
Monologue: a block of text delivered by a character to at least one another, present character, usually in the context of a larger scene.

speaks directly before the monologue, any vitally important non-present characters (Hamlet's deceased father, for example), etc. The idea is to fill in the blanks of this "possible Others" list for the company.

Once ready to begin, the actor has first choice of who his initial Other shall be, whether someone in the circle, Heaven, or Hell. This is the only time he will make the choice for himself.

Over the course of the monologue, any company member in the circle may at any time call out a new Other for the actor to shift his focus to. They may choose from this list:

- [Character's Name] - Any specific character provided by the actor's context
- Heaven
- Hell
- Audience

Should a member of the circle call out a specific character's name, the performing actor should treat the caller as if they are that character and speak to them. If a caller says, "Audience," the actor should do his best to connect with all members in the circle, treating it as a public address. Heaven is upward, Hell is down.

The goal of this exercise is not to confuse or trip up the actor, but to explore shifting deliveries. As with any acting exercise, the actor will quickly discover that certain line-Other combinations most certainly do not work. This is just as valuable as discovering which ones do, and the ones that do are often surprising; therefore the actor should feel free to give over to the experiment and be open to an Other he may never have considered otherwise.

As one can see, the presence of a multi-directional, interactive audience is a vital piece of context when exploring Shakespeare's writing choices, and indeed reveals many of them in a unique way. In this section, we've explored the configuration of the audiences by class, the necessity of active movement, and the opportunities for the same by presenting such "Globe-space approaches" as cross-blocking and shifting Others. We will now turn our focus to the text itself, and the intimate, in-the-moment cues Shakespeare wrote in to mold dynamic characters within this compelling movement.

DISCOVERY IN THE DARK

In contemporary theatre, we take many aspects of our scripts for granted. They include not only lines, but stage directions and, often, technical cues which tell us when important discoveries are made by characters. Now, most actors are trained to recognize *emotional* and *informational* discoveries in the text they are given (When does Character A realize she's in love with Character B? Is the news of Character X's arrival in town new information for Character Y?). The part that is usually handed to them is the element of *physical* discoveries.

The modern theatre is a magic box. The masterful execution of conceal-and-reveal is aided immensely by strategic set design, light, and darkness; and rehearsals allow the director to tell the actor exactly when she is supposed to notice a person or object on the stage. The deliberate, fine-tuned control and manipulation of the stage's atmosphere makes it very easy to suggest a setting or time of day necessary for

concealment and subsequent discoveries, but we, as purveyors of the Elizabethan context, know that Shakespeare operated with no set and no more lighting control (at least in the outdoor theatre) than the position of the sun between the hours of 2:00 and 7:00 pm.

How, then, did he stage darkness in the day?

The answer lies within the lines he gave his actors to recite. Quite simply, the stage directions are implied by the characters' words, and while the actors can very clearly see in the daylight, it's the choice of their words that allows them to suggest the illusion of darkness in midday. Take, for instance, the opening scene of *Hamlet*, reprinted below.

Figure 2.2 *A Selection from Act I, Scene 1 of Hamlet*

<p><i>FRANCISCO at his post. Enter to him BERNARDO</i></p> <p>BERNARDO</p> <p>Who's there?</p> <p>FRANCISCO</p> <p>Nay, answer me: stand, and unfold yourself.</p> <p>BERNARDO</p> <p>Long live the king!</p>	<p>Shakespeare wastes no time letting his actors know they cannot see each other.</p> <p>BERNARDO proves his identity not by how he looks, but by what he says.</p> <p>FRANCISCO must trust his ears in place of his eyes.</p>
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FRANCISCO

Bernardo?

BERNARDO

He.

FRANCISCO

You come most carefully upon your hour.

Since he can't see him, this must not be a comment on his manner, but his approach - BERNARDO has snuck up on him.

BERNARDO

'Tis now struck twelve; get thee to bed,

Francisco.

FRANCISCO

For this relief much thanks: 'tis bitter cold,

And I am sick at heart.

BERNARDO

Have you had quiet guard?

FRANCISCO

Not a mouse stirring.

BERNARDO

Well, good night.

If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,

The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste.

FRANCISCO

I think I hear them. Stand, ho! Who's there?

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS

HORATIO

Friends to this ground.

MARCELLUS

And liegemen to the Dane.

Again, emphasis on hearing over sight, especially as this line cues HORATIO's and MARCELLUS' entrance as opposed to following the sight of them.

FRANCISCO

Give you good night.

MARCELLUS

O, farewell, honest soldier:

Who hath relieved you?

FRANCISCO

Bernardo has my place.

Give you good night.

Exit

MARCELLUS

Holla! Bernardo!

BERNARDO

Say,

What, is Horatio there?

HORATIO

A piece of him.

MARCELLUS cannot see
BERNARDO though he must
be near FRANCISCO at this
point.

MARCELLUS must now locate
BERNARDO in the dark.

This is a cue for the HORATIO
actor to allow BERNARDO to
encounter a hand, or, perhaps

	more comically, a foot. The physical discovery is made here.
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Besides the concept of conceal-and-reveal for the sake of setting creation, physical discoveries play another, perhaps more important role, in the emotional arc of a play. The most poignant moments of any story are the ones in which characters are suddenly, brutally faced with sights they cannot unsee and forced to cope with that in the moment. The most comical moments occur in the same vein: when a character encounters a physical scenario that he must scramble to adjust to, such as an illicit affair or a person he's been trying desperately to avoid. Rarely are such important discoveries glossed over, because they are so intricately vital to the story.

Take, for instance, the many discoveries of Romeo and Juliet in the tomb. While we, the audience, know that Juliet lives, the despair of the moment of Romeo's discovery is heart-wrenching. More tragic than this is the moment Juliet wakes up to discover her lover truly dead. Her subsequent suicide, however, doesn't end the show! Why? The lovers' bodies must be discovered by the watchmen and by their parents. This is arguably the most tragic set of discoveries, as parents encounter their children's bodies, a sight so horrific that it shakes the foundations of their worlds - so thoroughly, in fact, that it surmounts a generations-long, bloody rivalry between the two families.

The timing of these discoveries, then, is paramount. However, other than entrances and exits, Shakespeare doesn't give us stage directions by which to identify these series of moments.

In *Secrets of Acting Shakespeare*, Patrick Tucker makes a close reading of this very scene to explore what the text (the whole text, and nothing but the text) reveals to the actors about their intended stage business as the author both creates darkness in the day and has his characters navigate it to create a veritable barrage of high-tension discoveries. The following is directly from his work, and in the original 16th-century spelling, as he prefers to work with the First Folio text.

Figure 2.3 Selection from *Romeo and Juliet*, discoveries notated by Patrick Tucker

<p><i>EXIT FRIER AND BALTHAZAR</i></p> <p>JULIET:</p> <p>Go get thee hence, for I will not away, What's here? A cup clos'd in my true loves hand? Poyson I see hath bin his timelesse end O churle, drinke all? and left no friendly drop, To helpe me after, I will kisse thy lips, Happlie some poison yet doth hang on them, To make me die with a restorative. Thy lips are warme.</p> <p><i>ENTER PAGE AND WATCH.</i></p>	<p><i>Juliet</i> has just woken up in the tomb, to find her husband <i>Romeo</i> dead, with <i>Paris</i> dead nearby, and the <i>Frier</i> leaving. The others have already started to leave the stage, so the first line is shouted after them.</p> <p>All her business is in her lines, of kissing, finding the poison, and then the dagger.</p>
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<p>CHIEF WATCH: Lead Boy, which way?</p> <p>JULIET: Yea noise? Then ile be briefe. O happy Dagger. 'Tis in they sheath, there rust and let me die</p> <p><i>KILS HERSELFE</i></p> <p>PAGE: This is the place, There where the Torch doth burne</p>	<p>And why do they not see <i>Juliet</i> in the tomb? Because she is inside the tomb, they are outside, and there must be an entrance (a portable entrance such as they would have for a cave, so maybe the actors have to stoop to get through it¹³). There are definitely two acting areas that the audience can see for this scene -- inside and outside the tomb.</p> <p><i>Tis in they sheath, there rust and let me die</i> is changed by Editors to <i>This is thy sheath, there rest and let me die</i>; I find no need for this.</p> <p>Saying <i>there where the Torch doth burne</i> and not <i>here where...</i> shows that any lighting is at a distance, and therefore they</p>
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¹³ Author's note: ...or the discovery space beyond the center stage doors.

CHIEF WATCH:

The ground is bloody,

Search about the Churchyard.

Go some of you, who ere you find attach.

Pitiful sight, here lies the Countie slaine,

And *Juliett* bleeding, warme and newly
dead

Who here hath laine these two days

are all in the dark (and so cannot see *Juliet*
until the author tells them to).

I have done this scene with students,
professionals, actors from the RSC -- and
they always deliver this line as if you can
tell just by looking at night that the patch
on the floor is blood on the ground. The
acting instruction? In order to know the
ground is bloody, the *Chief Watch* has to
check it out, smell it, taste it even? By his
having to stoop to get through the tomb
entrance, his face is interestingly brought
close to the "blood" and the swords left
behind.

How does the *Chief Watch* know that *Paris*
is slain? Obviously, again he has to check it
out (he might after all only be wounded
and unconscious).

Warme? Again, there are absolute
instructions to the *Chief Watch* as to how to
behave, to check the body of *Juliet*.

buried.

Go tell the Prince, runne to the *Capulets*,
Raise up the *Mountagues*, some others
search,

We see the ground whereon these woes do
lye,
But the true ground of all these
piteous woes,
We cannot without circumstance descry.

ENTER SECOND WATCH WITH ROMEO'S MAN

SECOND WATCH:

Here's *Romeo's* man,
We found him in the Churchyard.

He speaks to others, yet there is no one else onstage; there instructions need therefore to be shouted out to the other members of the *Watch* who are elsewhere.

And here he goes in for wordplay (a pun on the word *ground*.) When do people get witty and clever? Often when they are nervous and ill at ease.

The verbal puns help to show the inner feelings, and since he is onstage with dead bodies, he needs to address this to the audience.

<p>CHIEF WATCH:</p> <p>Hold him in safety, till the Prince come hither.</p> <p><i>ENTER FRIER, AND ANOTHER WATCHMAN CARRYING A MATTOCK AND SPADE.</i></p> <p>THIRD WATCH:</p> <p>Here is a Frier that trembles, sighes, and weeps We tooke this Mattocke and this Spade from him, As he was coming from this Church-yard side.</p> <p>CHIEF WATCH:</p> <p>A great suspition, stay the Frier too.</p> <p><i>ENTER THE PRINCE.</i></p> <p>PRINCE:</p> <p>What misadventure is so eatly up, That calls our person from our mornings</p>	<p>This simple instruction is essential if the center of the stage is not to get cluttered up.</p> <p>Here--and later--the <i>Chief Watch</i> tells the others to take the smaller roles to one side.</p> <p>The <i>Third Watch</i> can help by wiping a tear from the <i>Frier's</i> face (since he knows what is in his own lines).</p> <p>So the <i>Frier</i> is also cleared from stage center.</p> <p>The <i>Prince</i> need not worry about delivering these lines in the presence of the dead bodies.</p>
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<p>rest?</p> <p><i>ENTER CAPULET AND HIS WIFE.</i></p> <p>CAPULET:</p> <p>What should it be that they so shriek abroad?</p> <p>LADY CAPULET:</p> <p>O the people in the streete crie <i>Romeo</i>. Some <i>Juliet</i> and some <i>Paris</i>, and all runne With open outcry toward our Monument.</p> <p>PRINCE:</p> <p>What feare is this which startles in your ears?</p> <p>CHIEF WATCH:</p> <p>Soveraigne, here lies the Countie <i>Paris</i> slaine,</p> <p>And <i>Romeo</i> dead, and <i>Juliet</i> dead before, Warne and new kil'd.</p>	<p>These pompous lines cover his entrance onstage to his entrance into the tomb.</p> <p>It can be seen that both the <i>Capulets</i> have no instructions in their lines to “see” the corpse of <i>Juliet</i>--not yet. They too have to get from their entrance onstage to the tomb.</p> <p>The use of the word <i>here</i> rather than <i>there</i> tells the <i>Chief Watch</i> to go up to <i>Paris</i>.</p> <p>A crucial point. This is the very first time that the <i>Chief Watch</i> has mentioned <i>Romeo</i></p>
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PRINCE:

Search,
Seeke, and know how, this foule murder
comes.

CHIEF WATCH:

Here is a Frier, and Slaughter'd *Romeos*
man,
With Instruments upon them fit to open
These dead mens Tombes.

CAPULET:

O heaven!
O wife looke how our Daughter bleedes!
This Dagger hath mistaine, for loe his
house
Is empty on the backe of *Mountague*,
And is misheathed in my Daughters
bosome.

-- so this is the first time he actually sees
him, and reacts to his death.

It is also crucial that the *Capulets*, hearing
that their daughter is warm, newly dead,
say and do nothing.

Again, the *Chief Watch* is directed by his
lines to move around the stage.

The simple lines given to the *Capulets*
correspond to the simple things we say
when suddenly hearing horrific news.

To justify the line, he has to make sure he
can see the back of *Romeo* and the empty
sheath, turning him over if necessary.

LADY CAPULET:

O me, this sight of death, is as a Bell
That warned my old age to a Sepulcher.

ENTER MOUNTAGUE.

PRINCE:

Come *Mountague*, for thou art early up
To see thy Sonne and Heire, now early
downe.

MOUNTAGUE:

Alas my liege, my wife is dead to night,
Griefe of my Sonnes exile hath stopt her
breath:
What further woe conspires against my
age?

PRINCE:

Looke: and thou shalt see.

MOUNTAGUE:

O thou untaught, what manners in is this,

A play on words *early up/early down*
shows the *Prince* to be nervous, or trying to
lighten the dreadful situation.

And now the *Prince* has no more wordplay,
and gives the news simply.

This simple line brings *Mountague* down
the corpses, sharing space and attitude with

To presse before they Father to a grave?

the *Capulets*.

PRINCE:

Seale up the mouth of outrage for a while,

Till we can cleare these ambiguities,

And know their spring, their head, their

true descent,

And then will I be general of your woes,

And lead you even to death? meane time

forbearne,

And let mischance be slave to patience,

Bring forth the parties of suspition.

FRIER LAWRENCE:

I am the greatest, able to doe least,

Yet most suspected as the time and place

Doth make against me of the direfull

murther:

And here I stand both to impeach and

purge

My selfe condemned, and my selfe

excus'd.

PRINCE:

Then say at once, what thou dost know in
this?

FRIER LAWRENCE:

I will be briefe, for my short date of breath
Is not so long as is a tedious tale.

Romeo there dead, was husband to that
Juliet,

And she *there dead*, that's *Romeos* faithfull
wife:

I married them.

ENDS.

And here the use of the word *there dead*
tells the *Frier* that he is to illustrate at a
distance.

With nary an italic save entrances and exits, with nary a set piece save perhaps a single portal, and in the context of an all-surrounding audience, Shakespeare, simply by the nature of his choices of words, gave his actors precise, in-the-moment instructions on the shaping and timing of these discoveries. Note the use of cross blocking as an aide to these discoveries. Specific adverbs - *here* and *there* - play a large part in these cues, indicating the characters' physical relationships to the objects of their observations. Not only do they provide blocking, as evidenced by Section I, but they inform the emotional

arc of a scene in a very physical way. How poignant it is that the Capulets do not immediately speak upon the initial encounter of their daughter's body! How frantic a scene is created when the actor playing the Chief Watch must move and inspect the bodies, realizing and reporting in the same moment that they are strewn about, newly dead, and still warm! How horrid that Capulet must do the same to Romeo to discover his dagger missing from its sheath, and thereafter buried in his daughter's chest!

III. CONCLUSION

APPLICATION FOR THE MODERN THESPIAN

Though there are a couple of examples of Elizabethan and Jacobean theatres in existence today - The New Globe and the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse in London, UK; the Allen Elizabethan Theatre in Ashland, OR - most actors, directors, and technicians who find themselves involved in a production of one of Shakespeare's works will be doing so in a decidedly more modern space, or in the context of film. How, then, does one translate the Bard's intentions to new media?

The answer lies on the exploration laid out above. An actor who first "tries on" his character in the Elizabethan context - utilizing cross blocking, setting creation, distance language, etc. - will discover the sort of intimate character moments, organic energy, and overreaching arcs that Shakespeare wrote in order to flesh out deep characters. A director who allows this exploration within a company will discover these moments as well, and one who utilizes these techniques even before casting will have a much deeper understanding of the mood of a moment without being bogged down in blocks and blocks of what looks like static text. A designer or technician who reads the script she is given with these tools in mind will discover mood, setting creation, and vital revelatory moments that can (and indeed, should!) be aided with the lighting, sound, and scenic tools at her disposal.

The works of William Shakespeare are timeless for a reason. The Bard was a true craftsman of the delivered word, a master of the tools at his disposal. Understanding that

one of those tools was the spaces he wrote for is can give any member of the theatrical world an edge, and the ability to more deeply appreciate and execute his timeless genius.