

PART I

MAPPING SHAKESPEARE'S WORLD

Peter Whitfield, independent scholar, United Kingdom

Surely it was no accident that, when seeking a name for their new theater in Southwark, having moved from Shoreditch, Shakespeare's company chose to call it "The Globe," and no accident that they painted on the ceiling over the stage a large depiction of the heavens. No name could be more apt or evocative, for Shakespeare's theater was the world in microcosm. The project of mapping the world in Shakespeare's time began not with land maps and city maps but with the entire cosmos. Shakespeare lived and wrote when one of the greatest intellectual revolutions in history was taking place, as Nicolaus Copernicus's theory that the sun rather than the earth was the center of the cosmos gradually gained acceptance.

It was during Shakespeare's lifetime that the printed world map emerged as a distinctive art form, and one that deeply reveals the culture of its time in its emphasis on power – political, economic, and scientific. By 1600, the image of the shape of England was firmly established in people's minds, and it clearly formed part of the nation's sense of identity: here in miniature was an England one could see. The same process brought into focus for the first time the southern coast of England, the shapes of specific counties, the layout of country estates, and the prospect of London as a city.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- New challenges to mapping the cosmos
- Astrology
- Europe and the world
- Shakespeare's plays as maps
- Shakespeare's England
- London
- London in Shakespeare's plays

1. SPACE INTO PLACE

Susan Bennett, University of Calgary, Canada

Where do Shakespeare's plays take place? On the one hand, we think of them as having been written for specific stages, public and private. On the other, they are set in a variety of locales chosen by the playwright to address the specifics of his plots and subject matter. This chapter looks at ideas of space and place that might open up how we think about Shakespeare's plays, beyond these customary frameworks, so as to better understand their contributions to and among cultural practices of their own and other historical moments. The question is not so much about where Shakespeare's plays take place but, rather, concerns how they make place – on the stage, for the audience, and in the particular geographies in which they appear.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Defining space and place
- Stage space, memorial place
- Theater spaces of London
- Thinking through site specificity
- Place and task

2. MAPS AND MAP LITERACY

Gavin Hollis, Hunter College, City University of New York, United States

Only a handful of Shakespeare's plays feature maps onstage, but many more allude to maps. Characters employ maps for military, monarchic, and mercantile purposes – all widely recognized practices. In Shakespeare's lifetime, *cosmography*, based on biblical and classical comprehensions of the world, was being superseded by *geography*, based on the logic of the grid, but this transition was slow, and both mapmakers and poets made use of the overlaps. Shakespeare employs maps not only physically but figuratively, associating them not only with conquest, discovery, and possession but also with emotion and inwardness, with loss and death.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Maps, monarchs, military strategy: the display of power
- Maps and warfare
- Shakespeare's military map users
- Merchants and mariners: maritime mapping
- Mercantile mapping
- The circulation of cartography
- Map ownership and cartographic literacy
- The rise of the surveyor
- Shakespeare's surveyors
- Mapping, poetic convention, "the end of all"
- Maps, history, nostalgia
- Maps and death

3. GEOGRAPHICAL MYTHS

Mary Fuller, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, United States

There is no question that geographical myths circulated in Shakespeare's England: an obvious example would be the continuing popularity of Sir John Mandeville's *Travels*, which may have been read more widely than any other single English book about extra-European geography available in the sixteenth century. By the later decades of the century, the reliability of the *Travels* was already suspect, and viewed by scholars of geography as, at the least, suffering from irredeemable textual corruption. Accordingly, we may wonder whether this work circulated geographical myths, or geographical fictions, that readers felt no call to believe. The persistent reading of Mandeville by explorers such as Columbus and Martin Frobisher complicates such an assumption.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Migrating myths: Prester John
- Climate science and the monstrous races
- Renaissance geography and the persistence of marvels
- Classical history, colonial fantasy, indigenous testimony
- The cannibal imagined and observed
- An Indies "reserved for the English"?
- Polar distortions
- Imaginary islands

4. CLIMATE

Mike Hulme, University of East Anglia, United Kingdom

In exploring the climate of Shakespeare's England, we repeatedly encounter a disjuncture between the impressionistic and interpretative accounts of early modern eyewitnesses and our modern fetish with quantified precision. This chapter explores what we *can* deduce of the enumerated climate of late sixteenth-century England, but we do a disservice to the idea of climate – certainly as it would have been understood by Shakespeare – if we move too quickly to this goal. We may

reconstruct the paths and ferocities of the storms of 1588 that frustrated and ransacked the Spanish Armada, but were these violent storms signs of a divine hand protecting a Protestant queen? And we may know, or at least deduce, that the sequence of terrible harvests in the mid-1590s was triggered by poor summer weather, but how did English farmers and townspeople understand the causes and significance of these adverse conditions?

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- The imaginary of climate
- The physicality of climate
- Weather endures, climates change

5. CITY

Ian Munro, University of California Irvine, United States

The city represents a stabilizing social force, linking individuals and groups in a legible, rational network of reciprocal ties. Especially in the history plays, Shakespeare captures that stability by invoking the city as a walled-in space. In these plays, the back wall of the stage (the facade of the tiring house) represents a city wall, with its central doorway standing as the city gates and the gallery above it presenting the turrets or battlements. In all of these cases, the physical structure of the wall reinforces a set of urban meanings that also relate to the symbolic geography of the stage. A theater is a little like a walled city itself, especially in the collective experience of watching a play. Imagined from the outside, cities appear integral and coherent. Experienced from within, they become far more complex entities, as the Roman plays *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Measure for Measure* demonstrate.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Theater and urban space
- Rome
- London

6. COUNTRY

Gabriel Egan, University of Loughborough, United Kingdom

In Shakespeare's plays, the experience of landscape is subjective, and on a stage that does not show the environment characters may disagree about it. Of the forty or so plays by Shakespeare, only *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *As You Like It* are set predominantly in the countryside. There are a number of outdoor scenes in his other plays too, of course, but they do not treat the countryside as a distinct environment. The recurrent contrast in Shakespeare is between the harsh countryside and the comforts of urban life. If Shakespeare were a regular commuter between Stratford-upon-Avon and London, this would provide his most common communion with the countryside: not to be enjoyed at leisure – other than in recollections of his youth – but dashed through on a horse or in a carriage.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Maps and panoramas
- From Stratford-upon-Avon to London and beyond
- Back to Stratford-upon-Avon?

7. COURT

Thomas Betteridge, Oxford Brookes University, United Kingdom

The early modern English court was a political, cultural, and architectural space. Its boundaries were literal and symbolic. The court was wherever the monarch happened to be *and* a collection of royal residences and palaces. It was also a cultural form. Courtliness was a quality that nobility, male and female, could aspire to. Court space was carefully policed and was crisscrossed with symbolic boundaries and barriers. Jonson's images of the court as it appears in his poetry and

court masques are fantasies of a place in which wit can cut across social hierarchies and classes. This was not the case. Playwrights, artists, actors, and musicians were not part of the court. They were servants.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Courtly constancy
- Shakespeare's relationship with the court
- A celebratory noise
- Arden's painted pomp
- Changing courts in Shakespeare's work
- Courts as performance spaces

8. CROSSINGS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Laura Williamson Ambrose, St. Mary's College, United States

Early modern England was a networked nation. England's inhabitants crisscrossed the nation's waterways and roadways with increasing regularity as time went on. Together, the increases in migratory and commercial movement, developments in transport technologies, and the widening circulation of cartographic knowledge in inexpensive travel guides and almanacs contributed significantly to the flow of people and products. Although Shakespearean tragedies, comedies, histories, and romances might not directly or extensively examine new patterns of mobility, these plays offer references to local journeying that contribute to our understanding of the ways in which domestic crossings and communication were both imagined and experienced in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- England in Shakespeare's works
- On the road
- Shakespeare's travelers
- Guides to travel: carriers and communication
- Printed travel guides
- Theatergoing: London's playhouses
- Traveling players
- Transport technologies: travel by boat
- Travel by coach

9. GLOBE/THEATRUM MUNDI

John Gillies, University of Essex, United Kingdom

The *Theatrum Mundi* is an early modern commonplace wherein the world is likened to a stage. Its most usual sense – that human life is as vain and empty as a comedy – is invariably the one that Shakespeare invokes, as in Jaques's "All the world's a stage" speech in *As You Like It*. In tragedies such as *Macbeth*, the pessimism darkens appreciably. Yet the commonplace could be uplifting too. If, as some scholars speculate, the Globe Theatre was adorned with a sign showing Hercules carrying a globe with the motto "*Totus mundus agit histrionem*," or "All the world's a stage," then theaters were meaningful places in which one could learn useful lessons about the world.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Positive spins of the globe *topos*
- Atlases as examples of the *theatrum mundi*
- The *theatrum mundi* at court
- Humanist attempts at escape
- Slipping the loop in the Reformation
- Roles and passions
- An existential dilemma