



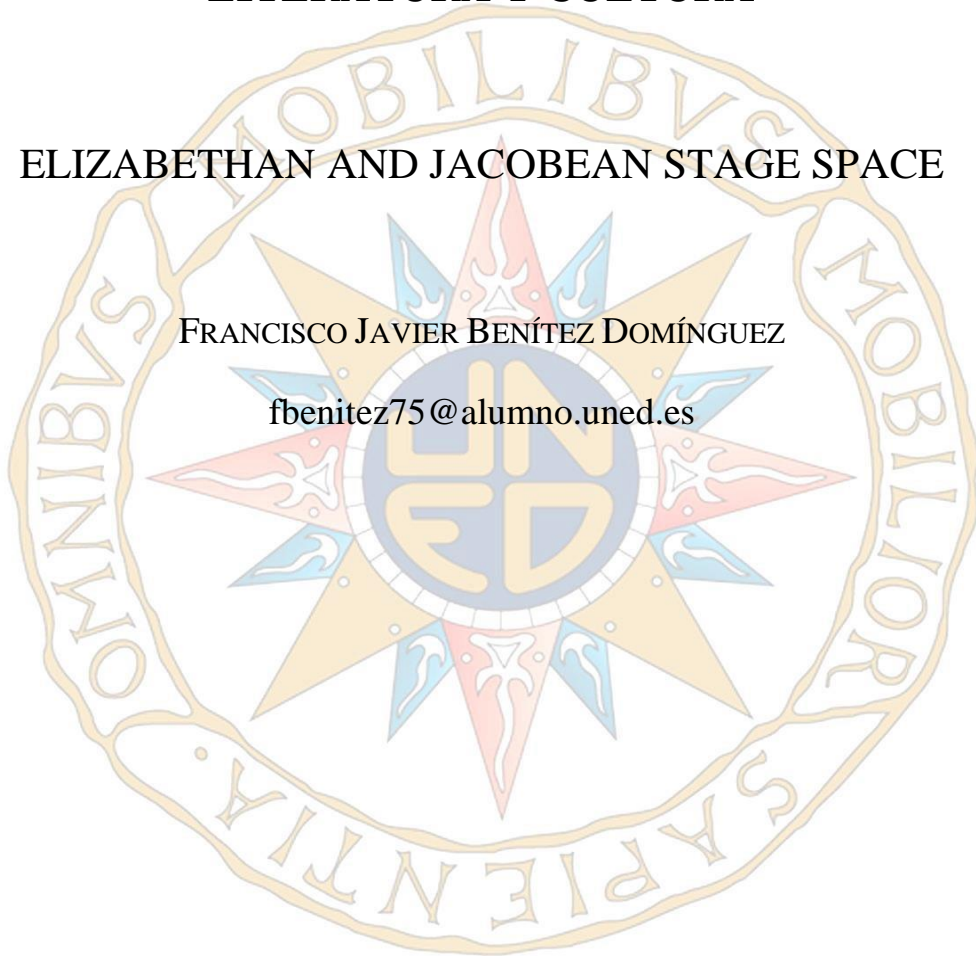
TRABAJO FIN DE GRADO

**GRADO EN ESTUDIOS INGLESES: LENGUA,
LITERATURA Y CULTURA**

ELIZABETHAN AND JACOBEOAN STAGE SPACE

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ABSTRACT

Stage space played an essential role in the success of Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre. Aspects such as the structure of the playhouses, the dynamism of merging onstage and offstage spaces, lighting, and music are combined to actively involve an audience of all social classes into the show. Similarly, the influence of Shakespeare and the way he uses stage space become essential to carry out play-within-the play strategies, controversial themes, and masquerades, making theatre evolve, spread, and popularise. This essay reflects on how the employment of stage space during the Elizabethan and Jacobean period represents a turning point in theatre at that time and is a baseline to understand nowadays' theatre.

Keywords: stage space, Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre, Shakespeare, The Globe, popular theatre.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. JUSTIFICATION

Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre represents the summit of English drama. As many scholars such as Andrew Gurr have pointed out, stage space plays an essential role in that success, since it entails one of the most important reasons for the popularity achieved in theatre. As it will be seen along this “Trabajo de Fin de Grado” (TFG), Elizabethan, and Jacobean theatre both have the most important thing in common: they spread drama to all kinds of people. This fact is presented as enriching, since it approaches theatre to people of all kinds, switching from one mode to another in an attempt to mimicrying the English society during that time. Thus, plays represented abstract chronicles of the time that nowadays offer the opportunity to contemplate the flourishing and the development of English theatre, society, thought, and culture.

Stage space turns out to be particularly revealing about the general attitude, ideas, and ways of Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre. The visual display, use of space elements through different scenarios, and the blending of offstage and onstage spaces played an important role during the representations of the plays, which were in fact treated as other characters in the play. The relevance of those elements constitutes a solid reason to analyse the importance of these different resources, their purpose, use, and their relation to the period, thought, and tendencies at that time. Thus, it is interesting to see how the employment of space go beyond words, verses, and characters, and how it was used to attract the groundling and serve its purpose.

Many authors such as Andrew Gurr, Mariko Ichikawa, or Michael Hattaway among others, have written at great length about facilities, stage space, and material resources during Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre, highlighting their importance into English drama. In addition, the recognised importance of Shakespeare as one of the most important playwrights during this period has a great academic impact on our work, as his plays are largely representative of many of the Elizabethan and Jacobean Theatre features. Shakespeare’s plays showed the care of the scenario and the use of stage space in the most relevant scenes. Furthermore, the use of masques and minimalist sets are particularly representative of this period, especially during Jacobean theatre, and

Shakespeare. It is then undeniable the importance of stage space as way of popularising theatre. Besides, the use of offstage and onstage space played a key role when performing themes such as moral corruption, controversy, symbolism, and satire of English society, which have been the focus of many scholars that shed light on Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre. Therefore, stage space is involved into a machinery that changed English society, thought, and especially, the way we see theatre nowadays.

Regarding the background found in UNED courses, the present topic is related to the courses “Literatura Inglesa I: Ejes de la Literatura Medieval y Renacentista” and “La recepción crítica del teatro de Shakespeare” given in the English Studies Degree. The former sets the grounds to the basic knowledge about the present topic, as it deals with Elizabethan, Shakespearian, and Jacobean theatre amongst its contents. The latter offers a wide overview of Shakespeare as a playwright and its critical reception from XVII century until the present time. During both courses, it can be seen how the different playhouses during the period are depicted, the relevance of Shakespeare, as well as the visual and space display during performances. Consequently, it emphasises the importance of these elements not only during the Elizabethan and Jacobean period, but also its impact on nowadays’ theatre. Even though Shakespeare is shown as the main figure who sets the grounds for a distinguished way of theatre, the courses concerned different authors and playhouses which also played an important role during that time.

Another important aspect discussed in these courses is the socio-political context. The given background is directly related to the thought of English society, and the monarchs Elizabeth and her heir James I and, hence, it turns out to be an essential part of English theatre. Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre cannot be understood without its political issues, the position of England in relation to the world, and the social issues concerning its people. Theatre during that period meant satire, exploration of the psycho, tragedies, and corruption of moral issues represented on stage. That is the reason why stage space cannot be overlooked, as it plays an essential role in conveying the controversies of the period.

On the whole, after considering all the motivations and grounds, the importance of the present topic can be easily recognised not only during that time, but also in contemporary theatre. Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre gave way to

controversies and the opportunity for English society to see themselves in a mirror. By the stage space, facilities and material resources displayed on stage, characters and playwrights as Shakespeare represented their most controversial plays, reflected society, and, perhaps, a desire for a change that still lasts nowadays.

1.2. HYPOTHESIS

Given the great success that Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre arose in the society, it is of paramount importance to analyse the role of stage space in the spread of theatre. Since playhouses played a fundamental role in the popularisation of theatre, this TFG aims to demonstrate that stage space is the key to understand the success of theatre in both periods. Similarly, Shakespeare is presented as the most representative playwright at the time, therefore it is inevitable to analyse his influence not only in terms of stage space, but also as the forefather of theatre seen as a way of popular entertainment that still lives on nowadays.

1.2.1. OBJECTIVES

According to the present thesis statement, four main objectives have been presented to cover all the necessary points for this work:

1. To analyse the transition from pageant wagons to inn yard stage space: contextual grounds for the popularisation of theatre.
2. To explore stage space, facilities, and resources of The Globe, as the most representative playhouse of Elizabethan and Jacobean period, and how the space elements were used to entertain, communicate, and popularise theatre.
3. To analyse Shakespeare's use of stage space and his influence on the spread of theatre during both periods.
4. To examine the use of stage space as a way of popularising theatre.
5. To highlight the impact of Elizabethan and Jacobean stage space on contemporary theatre.

1.3. STATE OF THE ART

Many scholars and academic works have highlighted the relevance of stage space during Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre and, especially, the role of Shakespeare in relation with it. Besides, many authors hint that the set of the layout of playhouses, stage space elements, and the way all these components were used and merged onstage made theatre successful. Therefore, authors, works, and the mentioned premisses justify the relevance of my TFG in the context of theatre.

Andrew Gurr is one of the most prominent authors who has studied at a great extent how Shakespearean, Elizabethan and Jacobean stage space was displayed at the time. His works offer a meticulous description of relevant playhouses and their stage spaces. Besides, Gurr analyses the facilities, layout, and the way they were used onstage and offstage. Thanks to his work, it can be possible to know about the differences and similarities between the different playhouses and how stage space was used and presented to the audience during Elizabethan and Jacobean times. Moreover, it is important to mention that Gurr often includes several lists of items and materials used during Shakespeare's plays, clothing, or "apparels", as well as details on how the stage was set. This is presented as a very relevant resource to be considered, as it shows how the places were displayed to cater for people of all social classes. Besides, his works put into perspective the tendencies and fashion at the time, and how it influenced the choice of costumes, playing music during the interludes, singing songs or jigs. Overall, Gurr provides along its work an enriching contribution to this TFG, as it directly discusses about Shakespearean, Elizabethan, and Jacobean stage space emphasizing its relevance.

Shakespearean scholar Michael Hattaway also plays a relevant role in the matter. In *Elizabethan Popular Theatre: Plays in Performance* (2013), Hattaway defines the idea of "popular" as a theatre for anyone who wanted to frequent plays. Thus, he establishes the Elizabethan period as the time for public playhouse monopoly and for whoever who could afford to pay a penny (minimum price to enter the playhouses). Besides, his works also explore the different stage spaces when performing at the Court and public playhouses and how they were used. Furthermore, Hattaway states that one of the reasons why theatre became

popular is that audiences could be attracted by the idea of being offered the same performances as performed to the Queen and Court. As a result, theatre became more stable and profitable, a fact that contributed to the popularisation of theatre during the Elizabethan and Jacobean period.

When it comes to stage space elements, Hattaway also examines the structure of the different playhouses and stages, its particularities, differences, and similarities, focusing on how the audience was displayed (seated, standing, position of audience, angle of visualisation, etc) according to the prices, social classes, and space. This information sheds light on the importance of stage space and how it contributed to the popularisation of theatre during Elizabethan period.

Another important scholar who has studied the matter is Robert Lublin. In his works, he provides essential information about costuming and visual codes on the Shakespearean stage. Lublin essentially analyses the Shakespearean stage and performance from a sociological point of view in terms of representing sex and gender player roles, costuming, and visual codes displaying the different social status onstage. Besides, his works explore the way stage space and how all these visual elements were used during performances. In addition, Lublin examines the different topics represented in the playhouses, dealing with English politics, particularly in Middleton's *A Game at Chess*. It explores Shakespearean use of stage space, clothing, and costuming as the key to comprehend the staging of Shakespeare's plays and the reasons for their success.

Likewise, Eva Griffith emphasises stage space as the essential basis to understand modern theatre in her works. She examines the political background of Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre and, particularly, the layout of Jacobean playhouses. Thus, her works look at the surroundings where playhouses were built, the Elizabethan context for a Jacobean Theatre, or the layout of stage space and facilities. Her research is relevant for the insight of the popularisation of theatre during the Jacobean and Elizabethan periods and its background. It is a remarkable contribution to the matter, as it examines the social context around Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre as well as the socio-political grounds related to it.

John H. Astington has similarly emphasised and explored the Jacobean Banqueting House Theatre, the stage space, acoustic, lighting, and all the

elements concerning both audience and onstage performances. Likewise, many of his works analyse how the audience was distributed during performances according to the different social classes and the closeness to the scenario. Besides, there are other aspects covered in his works such as materials, masques and other elements involved in the performance of plays. Thus, considering the importance of The Banqueting House as a performance space, he contributes with a great deal of information to understand how Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre was presented, the particularities of stage space, the way it was used, and the distribution of audience.

1.4. METHODOLOGY AND RESOURCES

Considering the present hypothesis and the objectives, different methodologies will be presented mainly based on description and comparison. Thus, in order to achieve the first objective, it is necessary to research on the transition from the pageant wagons to inn-yard playhouses. This context is essential to understand the advantages that indoor buildings brought to English Theatre at the time and, particularly, in terms of stage space. A comparative methodology will be used in the analysis of pageant wagons and Elizabethan indoor theatres regarding stage space. Furthermore, the relevance of playhouses and stage space as an essential role in the popularisation of theatre will be highlighted. Several examples will be illustrated as well as the most relevant facts that allowed the transition. Therefore, reliable sources of information on websites, blogs, and mostly on the UNED digital library will be used to carry out this issue.

Regarding the second objective, I will examine the most representative playhouse during the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods: The Globe. Thus, a descriptive methodology will be carried out to evaluate its structure, and particularly those elements concerning stage space, facilities, and how they were used. Subsequently, illustrations, references, and relevant information will be included to support my arguments and justify the importance of all stage space elements. Therefore, and following the same researching method, websites, articles, blogs, and the UNED library will contribute with a variety of sources. Similarly, it is important to mention that Andrew Gurr's and Michael Hattaway's works will be essential to achieve this objective.

It is well-known that Shakespeare played a key role in both Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre and, hence, his influence on both will be studied. Thus, a descriptive methodology will be carried out to examine Shakespeare's use of stage space during both periods, giving examples of specific scenes and plays. Similarly, it will be relevant to explore how Shakespeare contributed to the popularisation of English drama through stage space, repertoire, and elements displayed when performing. Therefore, again, the UNED library, blogs, articles, and reliable websites may contribute to a great deal for the attainment of the third objective.

In relation to the fourth objective, it will be essential to argue about how stage space in both periods contributed to the popularisation of English theatre. Aspects such as how the audience was distributed, the use of stage elements, and general structure will play an important role in the analysis. Similarly, the audience may also be related to how the scenario was displayed, actors, and how the repertoire was thought to entertain both the court and groundling from poor playgoers to nobles. Therefore, a descriptive method will be employed to argue how all the stage space elements are the key to understand the popularity and success of Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre. Once again, the UNED library, websites, and articles will provide the main sources to attain this objective and, hence, sustain the thesis statement.

At last, the prominence of the influence of Elizabethan, Jacobean, and Shakespeare stage space on modern theatre will constitute a relevant point. Their impact on contemporary drama will be examined by exploring the living traces in modern theatre buildings, the use of space, and the most relevant stage elements that directly draw from Elizabethan, Jacobean, and Shakespeare theatre. Similarly, reasons supporting the evidence of their trails and inspiration in modern stage space will be provided. Thus, a descriptive method will be applied to demonstrate that stage space elements that popularised Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre are still employed in contemporary theatre, becoming a timeless and inspirational way of art. Articles, books, and the digital library will offer the necessary sources to comply with this point.

2. FROM PAGEANT WAGONS TO INN-YARD PLAYHOUSES

The transition from pageant wagons to inn-yard playhouses entailed a great change in the way of thinking, creating, and seeing theatre. The concept of drama as we know it, was born during Roman times, which evolved in Middle Ages through mystery, miracle, and morality plays. Even though the performances were tightly tied to the church, saints' life, and indoctrination, they represented the starting point of the dramatization of human morals and reality. Thus, touring wagons that performed outdoors passing by different places and cities implied the approach of theatre to people of all kinds in the street. Consequently, it was quite common at the time to see people who used to throng around the stage space and enjoyed the performance in the street. The fact that people could suddenly gather in the street to see a pageant wagon performance is seen as the starting point of the popularisation of theatre. Thus, this way of theatre allowed playgoers of all social classes to attend the performance without the need to go to church or to any specific place, where people of low social classes might find limitations to get in.

However, pageant wagons presented some weaknesses that made theatre difficult to live on or even thrive. Theatre was seen on many occasions as unstable, weather dependant, and religious oriented. These facts made that theatre as such did not reach the popularity and stability as expected. However, considering that actors were not professionals, they were taken from the working class instead of the Church. Consequently, many of them inevitably started to perform against the established religious norm, and even modifying some of the texts, so that the Church was progressively losing control over these performances, especially Mystery Plays. This fact is seen as the starting point of the need for a more anthropocentric theatre. Those players were often called "strolling players" who played roles and themes far from religion or even playing banned roles. An example can be seen in the *Online Companion of the Middle English Literature* document, in which it is stated that the Condemnation of the Mystery Plays by the New Protestant Church in the 16th century was laid down because some actors played the role of God, being this fact considered a blasphemy.

On the other hand, the moveable stage space was displayed in a precise manner, since there was no room enough for any excess of accessories, furniture, or even for actors waiting for their turn to go onstage. Therefore, the physical display on the scenario, clothing, and other accessories were seen as simple and practical, but precise and complex regarding the planning of performances. At the arrival of Queen Elizabeth in the 16th century, pageant wagons progressively disappeared, and their features paved the way to a revolutionary way of theatre at the beginning of English Renaissance: the playhouse.

Playhouses are seen as a revolution at the time since theatre was represented neither on a moveable wagon in the street nor in church. Instead, they had their own place inn-yard. The purpose of those buildings was to perform creative, innovative, and even controversial plays where stage space played an important role to communicate with society. The days when the Church and its ethos dominated the pageant wagons were left behind, and the desire to thrive as a society and culture was the ground for the creation of the playhouses. Consequently, playhouses solved some of the disadvantages that wagons presented. There was no need for touring and the weather was not a problem anymore, since the plays were performed inn-yard, making theatre a more profitable and stable business to live on. This fact made companies, actors, and playwrights flourish and getting funding, which made drama not only a professional event, but also a fashionable custom in English culture.

Another important aspect worth mentioning is the stage space in a playhouse. Whereas with the wagons space was seen as simple and limited due to their small dimensions, playhouses offered a more sophisticated one. It was not only bigger, wider, and higher, but it was also meticulously placed, so that the audience sitting at the different galleries and yard could see the scenario perfectly, according to the angle of view, lighting, and height. As it can be seen, playhouses provided the necessary space to make drama evolve as well as a great variety of rooms and facilities that made the exercise of theatre a professionalised way of art.

Likewise, the audience in the playhouses was varied going from the lowest social classes to the highest ones. Everybody was welcome to the performance as long as they could afford the minimum fee, which was known to be affordable

at that time. Thus, during the Elizabethan period, the “public” and “popular” were basically two melted terms that well defined the spread of drama. The popularity of playhouses is presented as a function of their appeal to the whole spectrum of society. Therefore, “drama for the people” is a quote that playhouses represented best. Unlike pageant wagons, the audience was not made out of random people seeing a performance by chance in the street, but they were spectators who really wanted to go to theatre, and especially, a more stable audience.

In conclusion, the transition from pageant wagons to inn-yard playhouses represented not only a new way of representing the reality, but also a necessary step to evolve as a society and culture. Thus, this new space paved the way to a more complex stage, materials, and facilities that made theatre reach its splendour as a way of art and English identity. It also helped the fact that public playhouses popularised drama at a great extent, holding spectators of the whole spectrum of society.

3. THE ELIZABETHAN PLAYHOUSE

3.1. INTRODUCTION: ELIZABETHAN THEATRE

During the Elizabethan period, theatre experienced the most flourishing and thriving time ever, thanks in part to the funding, stabilisation, and the creation of public playhouses that made drama a professional way of art. Therefore, it is essential to analyse the general particularities and features of Elizabethan theatre that made this change possible, and concretely those related to stage space and the popularisation of drama in its own theatre: The Globe.

As Hattaway states, “Drama for the people” is the proper definition of Elizabethan popular drama, not only in terms of audience, but also when it comes to themes displayed onstage. Nevertheless, it is important to note that performances in the playhouses were not the only ones. They were also played at Court, outside the city, in rooms frequented by the nobility, and private houses. At the beginning, the quality of performances, materials, and clothing were superior when they were played in front of the monarch or nobility. According to Hattaway in *Plays in performance* (2013), this tendency was soon softened as playhouses realised that the audience could be attracted by the same quality of performance seen by nobility and monarch. This is proved by Henslowe’s

inventory of the Admiral's Men's properties used at the Rose playhouse. This inventory list does include the same number of elaborate and complex items used to play at Court, so they were in the playhouse. Thus, it presumably shows the equal conditions in which the plays were displayed, and hence the popularisation of the Elizabethan theatre. Similarly, as Gurr states, theatres could hold a very mixed audience reaching the number of three-thousand spectators on some occasions. Besides, they could also attract people of all social classes, from the nobility to the poorest, who could enter for a penny (minimum fee) and stand in the courtyard in front of the stage, called "Apron stage". Therefore, there was no regulation in terms of price or banning of particular social classes.

Since the plays became more popular, playhouses were built to hold the performances inside, so that different theatres such as The Globe, The Swan, and the Rose among others, came up in London in the period from 1587 to 1598. Even though playhouses were "property" of different theatre companies which were in constant competition, they all presented similar characteristics in terms of stage space, rooms, and audience distribution. Thus, all the buildings could be round, square, or even octagonal, being covered by a thatched roof, and leaving an open courtyard around the scenario. The audience, depending on their social and economic status, could be standing in the courtyard in the case of low-class playgoers, or sitting on benches in the circular galleries which were distributed into several floors in the case of high classes. There were only a few private places reserved exclusively to monarchs or nobility, which were often called "private boxes". The scene could be seen from different points of the galleries, courtyard, and even from the highest galleries. This type of general structure reminds us in many ways of the Roman amphitheatre, which had this round shape, benches for the audience distributed on different floors, and several entrance doors. In any case, the stage was placed on the ground, on an inner upper stage level, so that it allowed actors to move freely in all directions towards the audience.

The themes presented onstage were varied and often controversial. Thus, Elizabethan themes could generally be divided into four categories: romances, histories, comedies, and tragedies. All genres displayed social issues, ways of exploring the psyche, a mimicry of society, and some degree of cruelty or violence that delighted both the Tudors and the groundling. In addition, plays often used

what Hattaway calls *metadrama*, “an examination of the relationship between individual character and the social role they represented, which were frequently combined with literary parody, linguistic absurdity, improvisation, mime, and sexual travesty among others” (2013:4). The latter is due to the fact that women were not allowed to take part onstage, so their parts were represented by young boys. This was not the result of any law, but of the society’s way of thinking. Only on a few special occasions women were allowed to play their part, however the tendency to include women in their roles were fortunately in *crescendo* throughout the following decades.

Due to the large popularity that playwrights, actors, and plays achieved in society, Elizabethan entrepreneurs and players became wealthy and trendy. This fact allowed them to invest in playhouses, materials, costumes, and resources, showing a certain sense of lavishness and a visual display that delighted the most representative figures at the time.

Regarding the typical Elizabethan stage space, the main platform was raised at about 3 or 5 feet high supported with pillars. Its dimensions were slightly different from one playhouse to another, but the average size varied from 18 to 45 feet in width, and from 13 to 32 feet in depth. Thus, it can be easy to realise how large the stage platform was, especially if it is compared to the pageant wagons a few decades ago. Furthermore, the scenario was covered by a roof called “heavens”, which was also supported by columns. As a curiosity, above *heavens*, there was a balcony often called *Juliet’s Balcony*, which was often used by the aristocracy as a Lord’s room, providing the best seats in the galleries only reserved for the most representative figures who could afford the fee (5 pence).

On the other hand, Elizabethan theatre presents a paradox in terms of clothing and materials used onstage. Whereas costumes were carefully selected and most of them were elaborated by the best tailors around the city, props were quite minimalist. Hence, the visual effects of costumes and clothing were way superior to props and items mounted onstage. Therefore, it hints that performances were practical and flexible, thought to ease the actors leaving and going onstage, as well as the multiple changes and shifts needed in each act.

Overall, Elizabethan theatre presents particular features when it comes to the distribution of space in the different playhouses, stage space, props, and clothing. All these physical elements made theatre a cultural and social place

where people of all social classes mingled together sharing the same interest: passion for drama. Thus, the popularity achieved during that time allowed the sector to flourish and thrive complying with the humanist thought of the English Renaissance. During this period, theatre made use of the archaic as a way of exploring the psyche through modes such as comedies, romances, histories, and tragedies. Similarly, playwrights such as Marlowe or Shakespeare used stage space to depict politics, vanity of power, and corruption, mimicking the society they lived in. Furthermore, Elizabethan stages provided performances that switched from one mode to another, from the mimicry to the display of performance skills, from representation to presentation, which made theatre a mirror where society could reflect about themselves. All these features related to stage space and plays display will be analysed in the next section regarding the most representative playhouse during Elizabethan period: The Globe.

3.2. THE GLOBE: STAGE SPACE, FACILITIES, RESOURCES ANALYSIS

During the Elizabethan period, London became a very trendy and cultural city, especially when it comes to theatre. Due to this cultural rise, several playhouses were built around the city, run by private companies, people who invested on the business, or even wealthy playwrights who wanted to arise their popularity. Among the different playhouses, The Globe turned to be the most representative one, owing to the fact that Shakespeare was a part-owner, and often supported by the Queen Elizabeth I. The building was founded by Shakespeare's playing company called "The Lord Chamberlain's Men" and it was built in 1599 at Southwark, close to bank of the river Thames, in the south part of London. Its location can be seen in Figure 1.

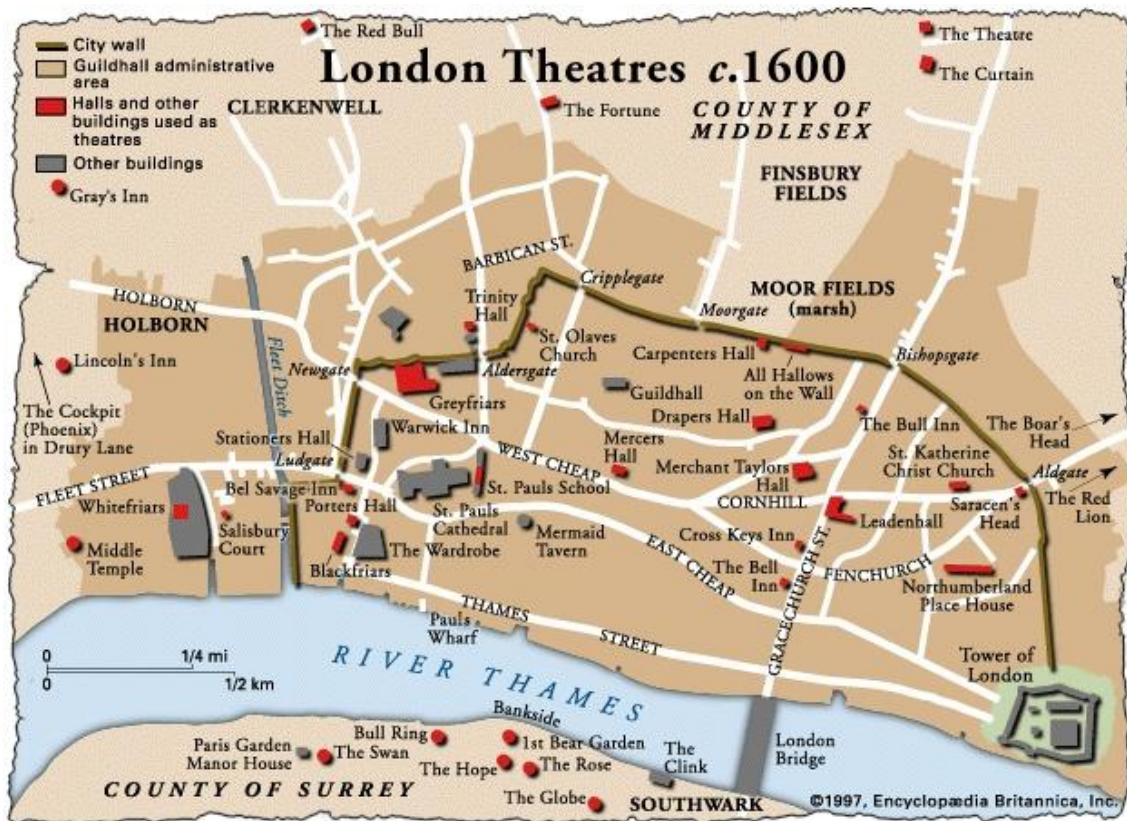


Figure 1. Distribution of the most relevant playhouses around London at that time (<http://tadshakespeare.weebly.com/the-globe-theatre.html>)

However, The Globe burnt down to the ground in 1613 during a production of Henry VIII, but it was rebuilt in the same place in 1614 and it remained open until 1642, when the closure of theatres came up due to the outbreak of the First Civil War. Works by John Fletcher, Thomas Dekker, and Ben Jonson were performed at The Globe. Apart from these authors, the most representative and influential playwright was Shakespeare, who really made a difference not only at The Globe, but to the English theatre. Besides, this theatre was provided with peculiar features in terms of stage space, facilities and props that made it a reference among its competitors.

The Globe building was built in a twenty-sided polygon shape, presenting an almost round shape. This design provided the best views to both the scenario and performance. Furthermore, the shape of the theatre offered playgoers the possibility to face each other in the galleries, making the audience participant not only in the multidirectional performance, but also in the social life inside the building. Thus, the audience, scenario, and theatre space were carefully

combined and intended to interact with one another, providing a fully interactive and dynamic experience. It can be seen an illustration of The Globe in Figure 2.

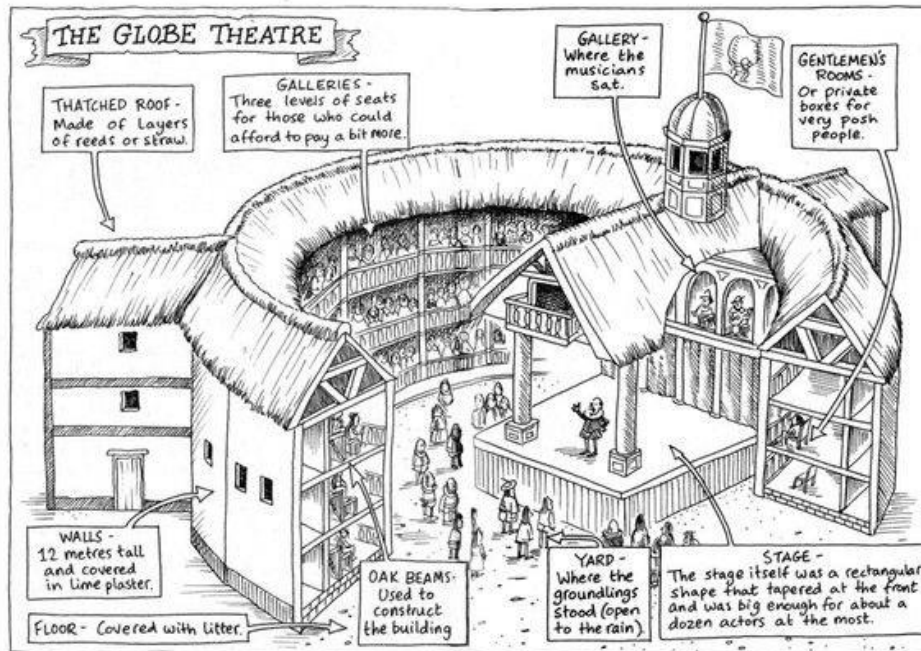


Figure 2. The Globe indoor structure. (Source: <http://tadshakespeare.weebly.com/the-globe-theatre.html>)

As it may be seen, the picture shows the main parts inside The Globe. The main frame was built in timber, presumably oak, with laths and plaster infills throughout the different floors and galleries. These oak beams were built on bricks and pile foundations, providing a solid and long-lasting structure capable of holding up to 3000 playgoers along its three ranges of galleries and grounds. The stage size was a rectangular roofed platform, measuring about 12 meters in length and it extended to the middle of the yard, where the groundling used to stand. The scenario was considered big enough to hold up to twelve actors at the same time. At the back of the stage, there was the tiring room, where actors changed their costumes and got ready for the next act. For barely a penny, a playgoer could stand in the "pit" or yard without a roof and exposed to the weather conditions. Even so, the pit provided the closest view to the stage set at eye level, since it was about 1.5 meters off the ground. In the case the playgoer preferred to sit in galleries then, it cost 2 pennies, 3 in the case of the gentlemen's room, and sixpence in the case of lord's room. The latter was a balcony or terrace,

separated from the galleries on the first floor that provided the closest viewing position to the stage. This area was reached through the tiring room, so that it was a privilege only for a few people to sit in there. However, it was occasionally used to play certain scenes such as in *Every Man out of his Humour*, or many other plays in which actors shared one of the rooms reserved for gentlemen when an area aloft was needed during the performance. In any case, it was mainly used for special effects, so that it may serve as a *locus*, or relevant entrances onstage.

Besides, near the front of the stage there was a trapdoor that served for several purposes, such as dramatic entrances onstage during plays or the way to get the corpses onstage off the scenario in a subtle way during interludes in between acts. Above the stage and the balcony, there was a cover called “shadow” or “heavens” from which a windlass machinery was operated to produce thunders and lightning effects that greatly contributed to the staging. In the underside of the “heavens”, there were paintings of the moon, the sun, and the stars, offering the feeling of being under the sky. Moreover, over “the heavens”, there was a roof in which a flag to inform the play going on: red for history plays, white for comedies, and black for tragedies.

The scenario at The Globe was said to be flat faced forming a rectangular shape, so that actors could move more freely around it. Furthermore, the stage was protected from direct sunlight, as it faced north, so that it prevented the actors from being dazzled or disturbed. Since the galleries faced the sun, only playgoers on the third floor sitting in the galleries might suffer the direct sun rays. Besides, two pillars on each side of the stage were placed to support the heavens which were decorated with golden fire motifs to make honour to the name of the playhouse. At the back of the scenario, there were two stage doors, often referred as “one door” and “the other” in some plays such as in *Pericles*. The two doors were behind a set of hangings, leaving a central space which was known as discovery-place, as it can be seen in Figure 3.

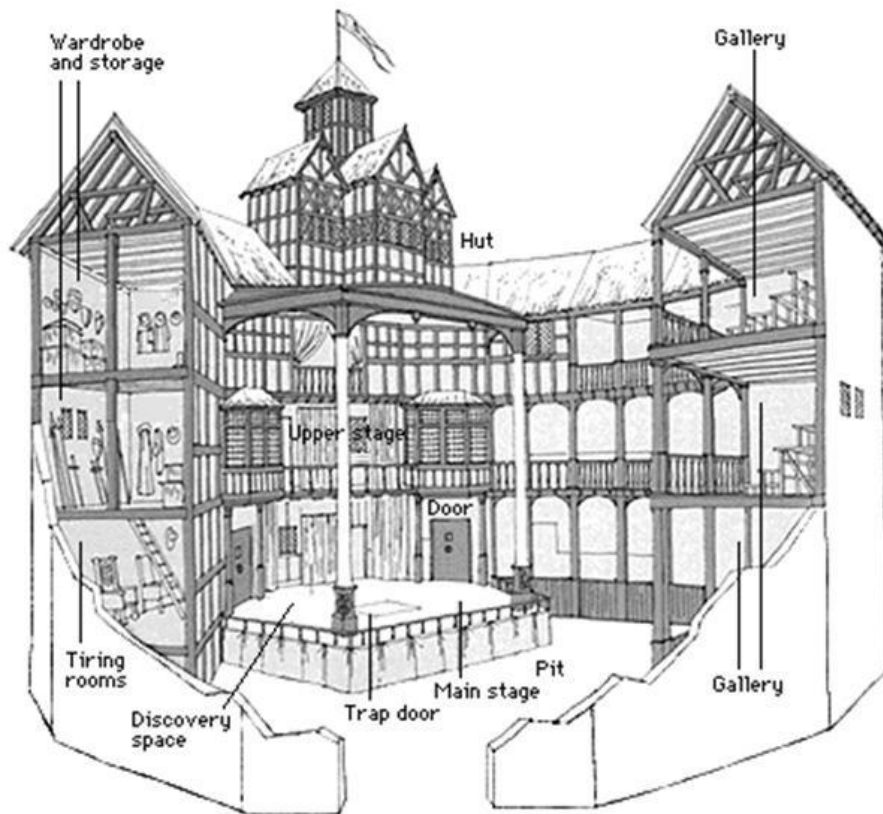


Figure 3. The stage at The Globe. Different parts of the stage can be identified, such as the discovery space, trap door, upper stage or balcony, and the doors giving path onstage. Source: <https://shakeprearesworldjb.weebly.com/the-globe-theatre.html>

The discovery place was needed to set down large items required in some plays like in *Romeo and Juliet*, or *Othello*. The items could be diverse, for example a throne, required for court scenes, or a bed for some scenes in *Romeo and Juliet*. The set of hangings also played an important role in plays like *Hamlet* through which Hamlet kills Polonius by stabbing him with a knife, or striking entries by actors playing nobles or monarchs. They were used in any case as a covering element through which one could never know what or who may come through onstage, a sort of “state of surprise” among the audience. Apart from being an entry or exit point for important characters, it also served as a tomb, closet, shop, or any other kind of setting that could perfectly fit in the hangings, which as it may be seen, was a multipurpose element. The actors that were sort of “discovered” in The Globe in the discovery place used to play single roles in a “static display”, so that they could be studying, sleeping or even dead, unless they were to step onto stage.

Near the centre of the stage, it was often placed a raised platform or a curtained stall which could be of multiple shapes depending on the needs. Thus, it could be a throne for royal scenes like in *Volpone*, or a small-sized building for plays like *Antony and Cleopatra*, in which the three boys playing the role of women, carried Antony's living body on the top of the building. It is not surprising to think that the mentioned building must have been big enough to hold four people on it, so being made of wood and very heavy to carry onstage and offstage, it seems more evident that the building was placed in the balcony for that single scene. Other puzzles are at stake when it comes to the exact place for those platforms onstage, especially considering that those building were not easily portable. Thus, for example the role of the "discovery place" may have changed since buildings like the executioner's scaffold in *The Fair Maid of Bristow* probably occupied the place meant for that. Consequently, those raised platforms or constructions may have served as discovery place as well, providing a curtained space in their base. The trap door could also have played an important role when these constructions were at stake, providing a surprising entry-point either onstage or inside the construction. Besides, these platforms or "buildings" often interacted with the balcony in the scenes, giving a full use of stage space in all directions towards the audience.

Even though some props were used for specific purposes, Elizabethan theatre did not stand out using complex items onstage. In fact, according to glossaries and scripts written for The Globe, playwrights like Shakespeare rarely used props, sticking to a minimalist list of furnishings. Thus, speech, staging, and the use of space were given more importance than any prop could ever have had. The general view was that if the characters described the items properly onstage, it turns out to be unnecessary to have them physically. It was then essential to carefully pay attention when writing a play, giving all the necessary details to create a visual image into the spectator's head. Despite the absence of props, clothes and visual codes for costuming were an important part in the plays. Thus, costly and extravagant clothing was commonly used at The Globe, contributing to convey meaning according to the figure who wore them and their role in the play. Since Shakespeare was one of the most important forerunners for code-clothing at The Globe, this topic will be further analysed in the next section, fully devoted to Shakespeare's influence on Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre.

The central area on the scenario could also function as the *locus*, a central place for any authority to give a speech, or the *platea* on the edges of the stage, close to the groundlings. This could also be seen as a metaphorical use of space onstage according to the central position taken by the power, and the marginal edge, close to the groundlings in the yard. Contrary to what it may be seen, it is likewise noticeable the fact that the “discovery place” could never be seen by the wealthiest playgoers in the lord’s room over the stage, giving the privilege of surprise to the groundlings and galleries. Odd and paradoxical as it may be seen, it could subtly hint a way of popularising the theatre by diminishing the privilege of powerful aristocrats.

On the other hand, as Gurr states, and considering the importance of stage space, it is not surprising that many plays were written to be performed at specific playhouses, and so many plays were meant to be performed only at The Globe. Therefore, the stage space there was an essential element to be considered when playwrights like Shakespeare wrote a play. Colours, lighting, hangings, space dimensions, balconies, and other props made plays create the necessary suspense, surprise, to the greatest extent possible at The Globe. It is not the only playhouse, though, to perform specific plays written specifically for that stage space. There is enough evidence, as Gurr states by looking at several plays’ manuscripts, that in playhouses like The Globe or The Rose many plays were written for the specific stage space both theatres offered. Thus, the use of space and to figure out the best way to bring the play on constituted decisive steps to be considered as well as part of the well-deserved success at that time.

Regarding the music during the plays, even though it seems that all playhouses had a specific room for musicians which were usually located above the stage, there is no clear evidence that there was such a room at The Globe before 1608. After that, Gurr states that the playhouse started to divide their plays into acts and, hence, there might have been inter-acts music played from an inner room. That inner room was often referred in the plays scripts as “*above*”, which was located next to the balcony, where musicians sit and played music from inside. Thus, music became an actor itself, as it contributed actors to create a suitable atmosphere for the main action scenes, widening the acting experience and the setting itself. However, music was not commonly played during scenes. Instead, it was typically played to mark pauses in the story, between acts, or

breaks which were typically occupied with music, chorus, and dancing, preventing the audience from breaking their concentration on the show. In fact, silences during the scenes were only a few, since actors' speeches were rarely to stop, allowing only strict pauses during single sword battles or heavy breathing in the acts. Far from being silence plays, singing was a common feature during the plays, especially minor characters like clowns, fools, servants, and many others. High personalities rarely sang except in special circumstances, due to the Elizabethan belief by which singing was considered as a low prestigious activity. In any case, jigs, and singing were common during acts performed by low characters, and instrumental music was usually played during interludes. Furthermore, popular music was commonly played at The Globe, especially during Shakespeare's plays. The use of songs commonly known from the groundlings to the wealthiest personalities turns to be a very important feature regarding the popularisation of theatre. Consequently, popular music was also used as a way to draw the audience's attention and contribution to the songs, so that it is not surprising to guess that the audience must have sung along the popular songs, becoming an active part in the performance. Besides, special and visual effects were also made with instruments, for example the use of drums to simulate storms or thunders, and even the use of powder in the case of lightning. Thus, music was carefully selected for specific purposes, according to the needs, and hence, contributing to the whole staging.

On the other hand, lighting the stage was both a challenge and a necessity at the same time. Since The Globe was an opened-air theatre, daylight could enter the roof and was used as a lighting resource during the plays. Consequently, performances were usually constricted to be played in the afternoon, with schedules ranging from two to four o'clock as the latest. Even with the daylight, plays were often seasonal and weather dependant, as the stage aimed for getting as much light as possible. In autumn or winter, even performances starting at two might have ended in twilight, so that many plays may have been performed in complete darkness for the last acts at least. In fact, as Graves states, when we have a look at the modern Globe, one can easily realise that even in the afternoon with utter daylight, the stage remains gloomy and shadowy, whereas other parts of the house like the galleries, are perfectly illuminated. Even though the structure of the modern Globe contrasts the old

Globe, it represents a very close image of what it was like, so it allows us to realise the role of daylight and how it might have been used at that time. Thus, it is not surprising to see the challenge of getting enough lighting on the stage, especially during rainy days or even during the winter when days were significantly shorter. Far from being a problem, it turns out to be difficult to see how the audience experienced the lack of light in many of the scenes, especially if it gave a negative or positive reception. In any case, many scenes surely required the audience's imagination since the lack of light made it difficult to enjoy the performance at the fullest. For that reason, torches, candles, candlesticks, and other types of artificial light were commonly used during shows, even though they were not sufficient to illuminate the stage. Candles and torches were used at The Globe according to the needs of the scene, so the most relevant and decisive parts of a play used a larger amount of light, and even actors carrying torches or candlesticks moving around the stage. This fact can be seen in the play *Othello* where Othello himself enters Desdemona's bedchamber carrying a candle. Before Othello kills Desdemona, he extinguishes the candle as he calls out the light twice: "Put out the light, and then put out the light..." (5.2.7) referring to both the candle and Desdemona's life. In any case, and from a general sense, it is known that over a hundred candles were frequently displayed around the scenario to recreate daylight. This was costly to maintain and scarce in terms of lighting quality, so that words and light effects played an important role when describing the time of the day, the scene, or the mood of the characters. Words describe the time of the day, for example, in *Romeo and Juliet*: "Now the sun is at the highmost hill. Of this journey, and from nine till twelve is three long hours..." (2.5.9-11). Consequently, the audience's imagination played an important role at The Globe during the plays, in which words, light effects, and wittily selected lighting items were employed as an actor itself, providing meaning and purpose to both the theatre and plays.

4. SHAKESPEARE AND THE ELIZABETHAN AND JACOBEAN THEATRE.

4.1. FROM THE COURT TO THE SUBURBS.

Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre cannot be understood without the figure of Shakespeare and vice versa. Shakespeare represented not only an important playwright at that time, but also a new way of doing theatre. Consequently, scripts, characters, and his way of using words and stage space contribute to his success which still lives on nowadays. Even though he used to have the favour of the Queen Elizabeth I, and suited most of the wealthiest tastes, Shakespeare was true to be controversial both onstage and in his personal life.

In order to understand Shakespeare's works, it is necessary to know where he came from and the places, and people he frequented. Thus, due to the cultural and political flourishing, Shakespeare had an interest in building a playhouse on the south bank of the Thames, an area called "The Liberties". In there, there could be seen theatres, whorehouses, brothels, taverns, and other sort of marginal business which Shakespeare used to frequent. In fact, it is assumed that he was more often with tavern keepers and prostitutes than with nobility or wealthy people. Shakespeare could cross both the high and low society and merge them together onstage. Far from being a problem, this fact made him have a cultural background to inspire from, a new way of seeing society from all angles, positions, and status. Consequently, most of his works, style, and characters are often inspired from places he frequented and people he met, which made his theatre controversial, but popular at the same time.

Onstage, ordinary actors pretended to be kings, ladies, lords, as well as figures from a low society. Contrary to what it may seem, Shakespeare did not show wealthy or royal figures at their best, but mainly their vices and weaknesses, making them more human and down-to-earth. In *Henry IV*, Part 1 the Prince can be seen in Boar's Head Tavern with Falstaff, other criminals, and prostitutes. Prince Hal frequents the tavern because he thinks that a good king ought to know all the levels of his kingdom. Thus, the tavern is presented as a mock palace where matters of state are satirized by Falstaff and Hal pretending to play the role of King Henry, a very controversial matter. As Prince Hal, Shakespeare was able to sneak in low and high society where he might find inspiration for his plays. All the layers of society are represented in his works during Elizabethan and

Jacobean theatre, from ordinary workers like “Bottom” and his companions in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, to Kings, Queens, and even God such as in *Henry IV*.

Shakespeare’s cultural background sheds light on the reasons why tragedies and comedies were the speciality of the well-known playwright. Playgoers laughed and enjoyed the shows, seeing kings fall or workers pretending to be nobles, providing the foundations to popularise the theatre. This fact is seen as one of the main reasons for Shakespeare’s success and a turning point when it comes to popularising theatre during Elizabethan and Jacobean time.

4.2. SHAKESPEARE’S INFLUENCE ON ELIZABETHAN AND JACOBEAN STAGE SPACE.

Shakespeare, as it has already been said, is the most influential playwright of all time. He was able to create characters with emotional issues, introducing realism into drama. As Cumberland Clark states, “Shakespeare does not set out deliberately to point a moral, but moral is there for those who have eyes to see” (1977:13). Thus, Shakespeare influenced Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre to a great extent, as he explored the psychology of human nature to elicit emotions in the audience, a fact that made his plays unique. Besides, Elizabethan theatre was also a challenging time for playwrights, since “fear” was a common feeling during that time. It was not simple for society to convey feelings, love freely, or thinking differently without rejection or punishment. For that reason, playwrights needed to be witty enough to convey what they wanted to represent in their plays, especially when the themes or certain characters were controversial and subjected to be banned. By the use of strategies such as the play-with-in-the-play and the employment of a satirical tone among others, playwrights like Shakespeare managed to approach controversial matters without being banned. That fear of what people might feel for thinking differently or inappropriate were issues that Shakespeare conveyed in his works. Dark feelings such as revenge, envy or suffering were matters that were not suitable at that time, especially when those emotions were attached to monarchs and aristocracy. However, such themes were frequently displayed onstage, creating a fictional world in which

those feelings were possible and socially accepted. That fact made the audience step into plays where their own fears could be fulfilled without reprisal of being punished. As Shakespeare could not escape from ban or punishment, he needed to think carefully how to convey ideas, arouse emotions or even approach certain characters, measuring his words wittily, and often walking on a knife's edge in between the entertaining and the illegal. For example, this fact can be illustrated in *Henry IV*, in which Shakespeare managed to create high characters in controversial contexts and unsuitable behaviours using strategies such as a play-within-a-play and satire. Thus, Prince Hal frequents brothels where they deal with state matters, meets criminals and prostitutes. Besides, Prince Hal and Falstaff often mock while playing the role of the King Henry in the brothel. Despite of the fact that this subject was undoubtedly contentious at that time, Shakespeare used to find a way to induce such feelings, themes, and characters in a taunting tone and the use of a play-within-a-play as it has previously been exemplified, creating a well-protected world in which controversial matters were displayed without ban. For that reason, Shakespeare influenced not only the way Elizabethan and Jacobean people saw theatre, but also the way the stage space was used for the mentioned purposes.

Shakespeare did not use a complex scenery in his works, giving the words the power to convey meaning. As Louis Wright claims, "Elizabethan plays were written primarily for the ear rather than the eye" (2018: 35), so many Shakesperean sets were rather explained or described by characters, leaving the audience the opportunity to create their own visual image. The use of minimalist scenery could also be due to the fact that plays needed to be versatile, since they might be represented in different locations, so it was necessary to travel light.

Jacobean theatre comprises the plays written during the reign of King James I (1603-1625). As we have already seen in the last chapters, Shakespeare was very active during this period, writing and performing his most popular tragedies and comedies during that time. Jacobean plays were even more controversial than the Elizabethan's, since they were significantly darker in their tone, focusing on satire, and exploring the human nature with themes of revenge, violence, corruption, and sex. Shakespeare contributed to create a dark tone, thanks to tragedies such as *Othello*, *Macbeth*, or *Henry VIII* among others. With these tragedies, Shakespeare continued to convey darker emotions through high

and low characters who employed wittily selected words, elaborated description of sceneries, and questioned social order and the concept of morality.

On the other hand, many of Shakespeare's plays introduced masques in the action, in which characters dance and sing wearing masques. This event was originally from Italy, a form of courtly party containing music, singing, dancing while characters performed. Although masques were not Shakespeare's original idea, it is true that he influenced their use in his plays, creating a trend and an entertaining resource in the theatre. Thus, plays such as *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Tempest*, or *Henry VIII* used masque-like interludes in some parts of the action, making a great contribution to Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre's features. As Shakespeare used to do, he did not use masques to exalt the magnificent features of a King or nobility, but he subtly tried to distort the image of the masques by representing the dark side of human nature. Consequently, on some occasions, masques could hide a corrupted character or characters who pretended to be righteous. This fact can be illustrated in the play *The Tragedy of King Lear*, in which Shakespeare explores the most basic state of humans like animals who need to wear masques to achieve social status and protect themselves from their vulnerability. Thus, the characters Edgar and Kent use lavish masques to deceive their father and cover their true intentions. Similarly, in the play *Twelfth Night*, the character Feste wears multiple masques along the play covering his various personalities. As he is known to be a jester, he tries to cloak the wisdom he presumes by wearing a masque, so that he goes unnoticed until he becomes an evil man and reveals his true plans. In any case, masques were used to enhance or conceal the inner part of the characters. Thus, in *The Tempest*, the masque represents a vulnerability of authority whereas the traditional use of a masque symbolises quite the opposite. In that moment, the stage space represented a distortion of reality, a mimicry of society in which the audience could look at themselves and besides, amuse themselves.

Shakespeare's use of stage space in both periods was also influential when it comes to the use of stage directions, facilities, and props. Thus, he did not make a clear difference between offstage and onstage, since characters moved freely onstage while interacting with other characters from the balcony, tiring room, stage trap or the discovery place. The *frons scenae* could give way

to the stage and tiring room not only by passages and doors provided for that, but also by placing characters acting offstage with those who were onstage and towards the audience, providing a unique visual and aural channel in a multidirectional performance. Similarly, the balcony and the stage trap were linked through words, sounds effects, and actions, so that plays could be heard, seen, and performed from different angles, perspectives, heights, and positions. Most of Shakespeare's plays adopted this way of performing, since it allowed actors to make the most of stage space and give a sense of reality seen as a play within the play which Shakespeare aimed at. For example, in *Romeo and Juliet*, during the first balcony scene (2.2), the Nurse, who is in the tiring-room, calls "Madam!" (149) under the stage direction *within*, as if it was heard from inside of Juliet's chamber. He was always willing to extend the stage space as much as he could, so even though Shakespearean scenery was usually bare, the use of stage space and words were complex and meticulously meditated. The spaces above, behind, and below the stage were given a great importance and were usually used for meaningful purposes in the plays. As Ichikawa states, it has been recognised that bare stages as Shakespeare used to have, did not limit him nor actors to perform satisfactorily (2013: 154). Instead, the lack of scenery and curtains between the stage and the audience made scenes possible to change fluently. Words and visual codes represented and conveyed the imaginary scenery, describing the locality in detail. Thus, a character entering the scene could tell the setting visually by using a distinctive manner of entering or using certain words about the fictitious setting. That distinctive feature can be seen in the play *Julius Caesar*, in which under the stage direction "*Enter Brutus in his Orchard*", Brutus may have opened the stage door as if he were entering from his house, and walked on an imaginary path, so both Shakespeare and the character create the illusion of Brutus walking in a garden on the bare stage of the theatre. Obviously, this was also an active part to take by the audience, since they also needed to use their own imagination to create an image of the scenery in their mind, giving the possibility to create a unique scenery for every playgoer at the same time. Besides, the tiring room façade was often employed to represent indoor or outdoor settings such as gardens or prisons, thereby it gave visual support to delimit the settings. Furthermore, spaces such as the stage columns, the trap, the discovery place, upper gallery, and the doors behind the stage often

served as specific fictional places like trees, windows, streets, or any kind of setting needed for the performance, avoiding in any case, the use of extra scenery.

Far from being only a popular playwright at his time, Shakespeare played a key role during Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre. The singular use of visual elements, sound effects, witty words, and the stage space changed the perception of theatre, innovating and incorporating new ways of conveying, showing, and using the stage. Audience, onstage and offstage spaces continuously merge and separate, making the impression of seeing a play within a play. Even if Shakespearean theatre was crude and bare regarding the setting, he incorporated a complex way of using the space, words, and singular and entertaining plays that revolutionised English theatre forever.

5. THE USE OF STAGE SPACE AS A WAY OF POPULARISING THEATRE

In Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre, we have seen how stage space played an essential role in performance. The use of onstage and offstage spaces, Shakespeare's influence, props, and facilities among others were not only innovative trends at that time, but also a new way of doing theatre with a clear purpose: a performing experience which everyone could be part of.

As it has been exposed in the last sections, the concept of playhouse can be seen as a way of popularising theatre. Its polygonal shape, the layout of the galleries, and the stage provided a multidirectional space in which the audience, actors, facilities, words, and sounds were in communion. On the one hand, playhouses allowed all kinds of people to attend the performance if they could pay the minimum fee, which was known to be quite affordable for most members of society. The closest place near the stage was reserved for people who paid the minimum fee, standing around the stage. The galleries and the lord rooms above the stage were more expensive to get and hence, more comfortable. From this layout, it is not surprising to note that playwrights and actors liked having groundlings close to the stage, whereas the view from the galleries was more difficult to follow. Paradoxically, the more expensive and exclusive the place was, the more limited it was to see the performance. This fact can be seen in the lords' room above the stage at The Globe. Even though the lords' room was one of the

most expensive places to see a play, it turned out to be impossible to see the discovery place behind the scenario. Consequently, the wealthy people sitting comfortably in that room were subtly prevented from making the most of the experience, contrary to the groundlings standing in the yard or those sitting in the galleries. This can be considered as a way to embrace common people into the play and hence, a strategy to popularise theatre. Similarly, Shakespeare was clearly a huge supporter of masses as suggested by the places he frequented. In addition, his plays were full of controversies, such as workers pretending to act as kings, and kings behaving as masses, paying special attention on the dark side of human nature. By looking at the different themes performed during Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, Shakespeare and other playwrights longed for emulating society, representing Kings, Gods, and Queens as vulnerable, fragile, and sinful. In this way, the authority of aristocrats could be diminished in a fictional world, showing them figuratively naked and their weaknesses behind the appearances. Thus, theatre managed to create an analogous fictional world in which all social classes could be part of, and besides, entertain themselves. This is certainly considered as one of the most important factors that popularised Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre.

Stage space also played an important role in popularising theatre. The bare stages and the lack of complex scenery made performances take simplicity as an approach to the true human nature, getting away from lavishness and appearances. Props and resources were limited, and costumes, despite being extravagant, they were frequently donated or second hand, so that playwrights gave words and acting all the weight to convey meaning. Similarly, the lack of curtains in between the stage and the audience made playgoers be part of the staging, taking an active part into the play. Thus, the audience was not meant to have a passive stance during the play, but instead, they were to interact with the actors, singing in the interludes, and creating visual images in their minds as words described the scenery. In fact, actors usually came to the *frons scenae* to interact with the audience, give speeches, or even react to the action, making the audience get interested. The merging of onstage and offstage spaces also contributed to approach theatre to the crowd, adding more excitement and staging direction to the drama. Lines coming from the tiring-room to actors onstage, and then to the audience, voices behind the discovery place, or action

and words linking the balcony with the stage trap were only a few examples of how diverse the staging could be. Those multiple-directional strategy drew the audience's attention by making the impression of seeing a play-within-a-play, becoming one of the most relevant reasons for the popularisation of theatre.

On the other hand, playhouses were not only places to keep people entertained. They also became social places in which people from all social classes could interact with each other and make new acquaintances. Even though social classes were distributed by the fee they paid, the stage was the reason to gather all playgoers by taking an active part in the performance. Plays and characters made no distinction of social status when approaching the crowds, showing raw emotions, or separating what it was stage and what it was not. That lack of limitations in the fictional world interacting with the real one made theatre Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre desired, exciting, innovative, and therefore, popular.

6. ELIZABETHAN AND JACOBEAN STAGE SPACE AND CONTEMPORARY THEATRE.

Contemporary theatre has greatly evolved since Elizabethan and Jacobean time, especially in terms of stage space. Even though Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre differ to a large extent from contemporary theatre, modern theatre cannot be understood without these eras, and probably it would have never moved forward in the way it did. Thus, the influence of Elizabethan and Jacobean stage space techniques is still present nowadays and is often set as a point of reference when writing and performing modern plays.

As Elizabethan and Jacobean playhouses, contemporary theatre usually maintains the same concept of performing indoor by using buildings exclusively for that purpose. Even though there are clear differences regarding the structure of the buildings, it is explicit that Elizabethan and Jacobean playhouses established the grounds for modern theatre. In general terms, nowadays theatre is known to be a more formal activity with respect to what it was in the past. Consequently, audience has turned out to be more passive during the performances sitting in a separated space from the actors and stage, so that interaction within the play or with actors is not possible like in the past. The use

of onstage and offstage space seen during Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre has been limited to the space employed onstage exclusively.

Despite the stage space differences there are still references to Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre in modern performances. Thus, modern plays do not usually use complex sets during performances, keeping a simple and minimalist scenery, just as Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre did in the past. This fact is still seen as revolutionary and meaningful, as bare stages give actors, words, and staging all the meaning, moving away from the complex scenery seen in the movies. "Naked" staging still gives purpose, exclusiveness, and meaning in a materialist world. As in Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, authoritative power, appearances, materialism, and social inequalities are still present nowadays, and hence a minimalist scenery is seen as an innovative and revolutionary way of theatre.

Far from being forgotten, Shakespeare is still one of the most important references in nowadays theatre. His themes continue to be relevant, since they represent the universality of human nature throughout time: ambition, tragedy, power, death, or fate, among other themes, make Shakespeare's works be seen as universal and timeless. Consequently, the way the playwright used stage space helped modern theatre understand the importance of having an interactive performance through visual codes, words, and of making the audience as participant as possible. Still, modern theatre tries to mimic society and satirise political and social ideas, a path already opened by Shakespeare at that time.

On the other hand, contemporary theatre is influenced by Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre when we observe modern theatre buildings. The layout of a thrust stage raised off the ground, and the way the audience is distributed in the hall at different levels, leave traces that resemble the structure of a playhouse. Similarly, the use of stage space on the scenario is still relevant nowadays. Actors usually jump onstage from "discovery places", giving that sense of surprise frequently employed in the past. Dancing, singing, and describing sceneries by words also have left traces in modern theatre, which seeks to make theatre a place to entertain, imagine, and create a fictional world in which people of all social classes can interact, amuse themselves, and socialise.

Overall, Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre set the foundations of theatre as we know it nowadays. The creation of a building perfectly thought to hold

playgoers of all social classes and the use of stage space merging onstage and offstage spaces towards the audience took theatre to another level. In addition, the multidirectional performance in which actors, stage space, and audience communicate, contributed to the popularisation of theatre at that time. All those ingredients transcended time, evolved, and turned into the modern theatre we know nowadays. Despite the huge differences between the two periods, Elizabethan, Jacobean, and Shakespeare's use of space stage have left traces in most of modern plays, becoming a reference and the starting point of theatre as a way of art.

7. CONCLUSION

Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre marked the most flourishing and thriving periods of English drama, especially in terms of stage space. The concept of movable pageant wagons touring around the cities during the Middle Ages progressively gave way to indoor playhouses in the Renaissance. Buildings like The Globe made theatre a more stable and profitable activity, so that spectators from the lowest to the highest social classes could be held in the new playhouses by offering affordable prices, increasing the audience's interest, and making the business thrive. In addition, the polygonal shape of the playhouses, and the layout of both the galleries and the stage allowed playgoers to see the performances from multiple angles and levels. That multidirectional layout made the audience feel integrated into the plays, as the communication between the staging and playgoers was close and constant. As a result, all these ingredients involving stage space and themes popularised theatre in such a way that its influence still lives on in nowadays drama.

Part of that success was mainly due to the use of stage space in the playhouses during both periods. The interaction between offstage, onstage, and audience spaces provided a unique, active, and dynamic experience, making the audience feel that they were in a play-within-a-play. Besides, the lack of complex scenery onstage entailed a singular way of theatre, which represented a rebellious concept opposed to the materialism and the appearances of the aristocracy at that time. In an attempt to get closer to people and the pure essence of human nature, most plays focused on witty lines and words, the use of stage

space, and the audience's imagination to show human weaknesses and fears out of appearances. Thus, the elements onstage such as the balcony, discovery place, the stage trap, columns, the heavens, and tiring-room played a crucial role in the most important plays written during both periods. Relevant playwrights like Shakespeare wrote plays to be performed at particular playhouses, making the best of the space. Thus, the stage space was meticulously calculated in most scenes of *Hamlet*, *A Midsummer's Night Dream*, or *Romeo and Juliet* among others, enhancing the crucial role of the stage elements in the most relevant plays at that time.

The influence of Shakespeare entailed a revolutionary way of using the stage space on the Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre. Shakespeare, as the figure who used to converge with low and high society, brought all his creativity and background onstage. Visual codes, masquerades, and the unique use of the balcony, discovery place, and other stage elements made his plays different, close to common people, and hence, popular. Therefore, bare scenarios were filled with witty words describing the scenery and the dynamism of merging onstage and offstage spaces, making Shakespeare's plays a singular experience.

The concept of playhouses and the use of all stage elements during the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods provided the foundations for the modern theatre. Thus, relevant plays and the playwright's success was greatly due to the use of stage space, becoming a meaningful communicative resource. Despite the differences between Elizabethan, Jacobean, and modern stage space, the influence of the former still lives on today, representing the model role and the cornerstone of theatre as a way of art.

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