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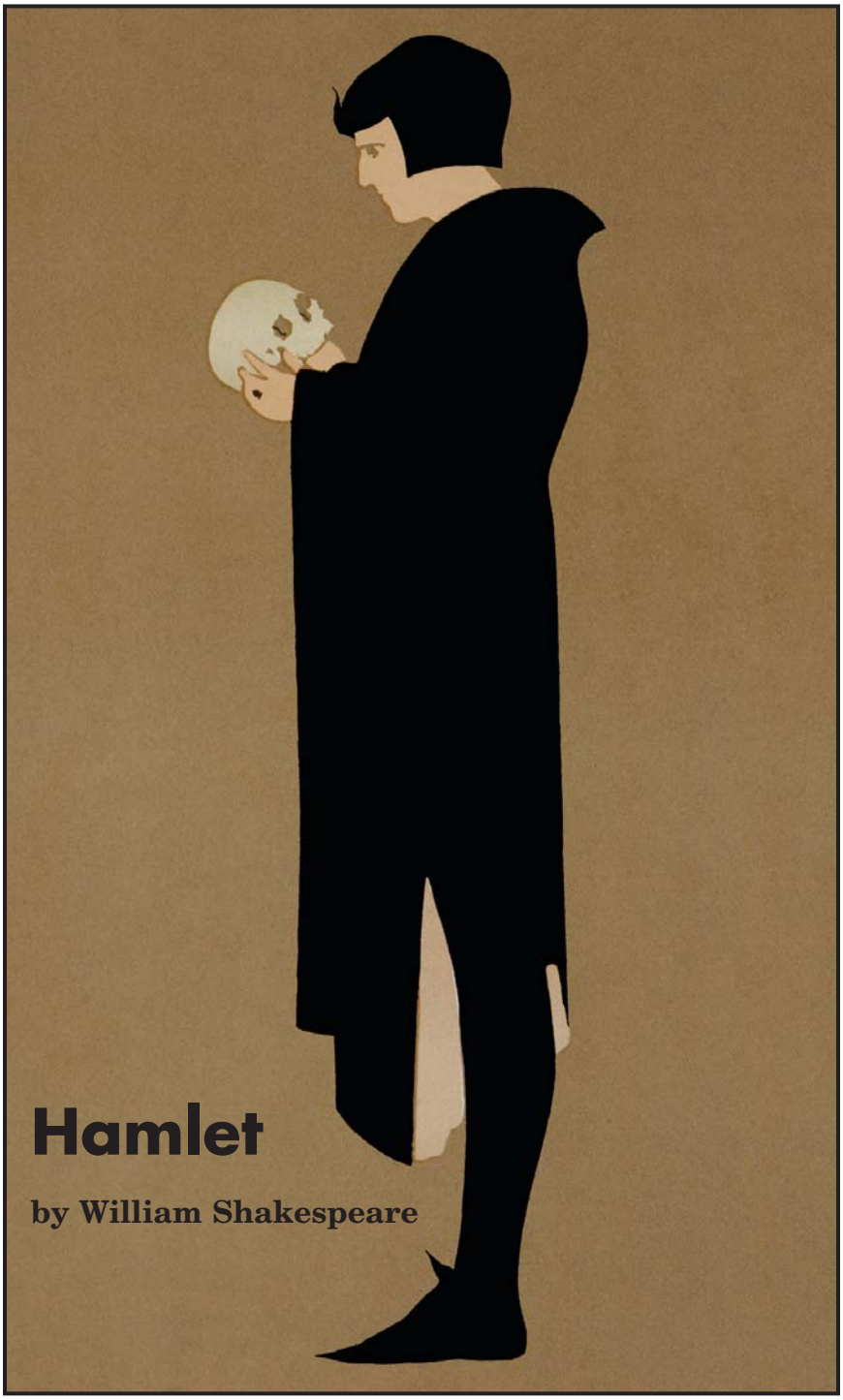

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LATITUDES®

Resources to Integrate Language Arts & Social Studies

Hamlet

by William Shakespeare

Reproducibles

and Teacher Guide

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Book Design: Randy Messer
Kay Ewald
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Series Reviewers: **Melissa Fackler**
Diamond Bar, California

Robert Kaczor
Newark, Ohio

Gretchen Kauffman
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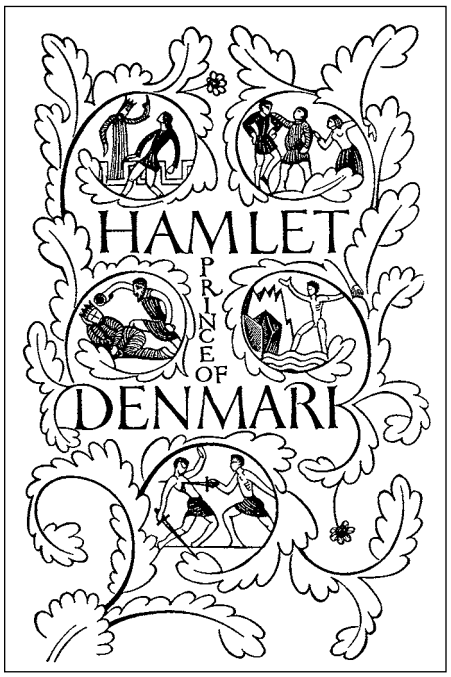

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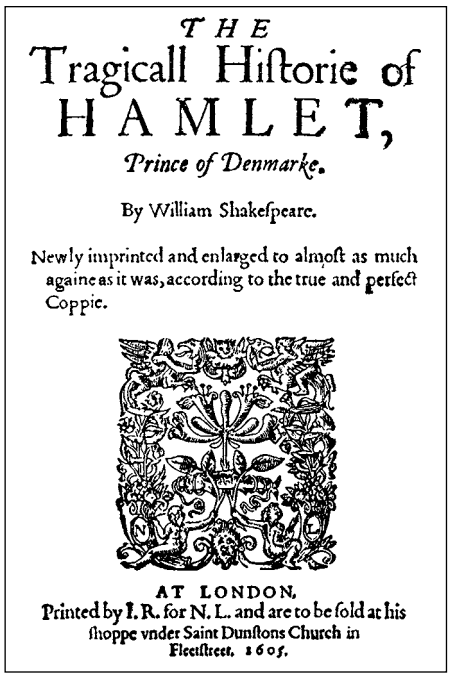

THE
Tragicall Hiſtorie of
HAMLET,
Prince of Denmarke.

By William Shakeſpeare.

Newly imprinted and enlarged to almoſt as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect Coppie.

AT LONDON,
Printed by I. R. for N. L. and are to be ſold at his ſhoppe vnder Saint Dunſtons Church in Fleetſtreet. 1605.

Title page (1605 First Edition)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Play

Beliefs and Symbols

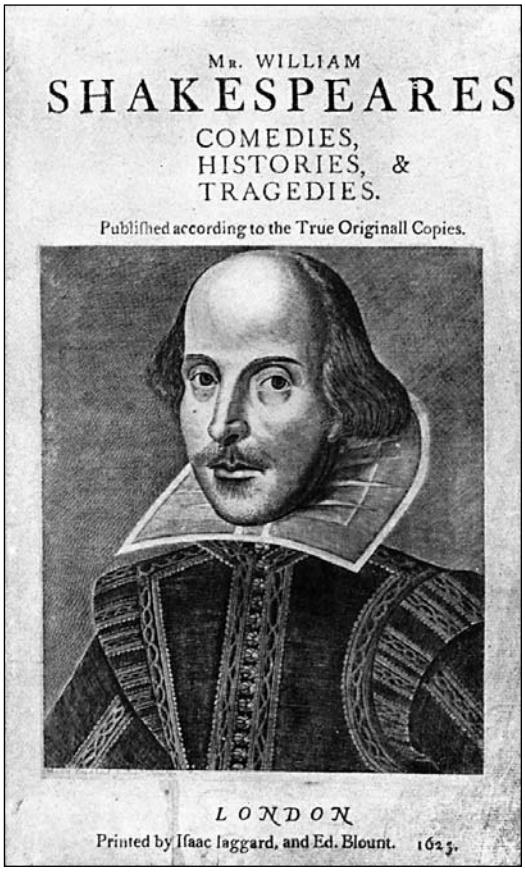
TABLE OF CONTENTS

continued

The Court and the Stage

Comparative Works

Suggested Activities



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"On Repentance and True Reconcilation Unto God," Dr. Ian Lancashire, Editor, Renaissance Electronic Texts, 1994, http://www.library.utoronto.ca/www/utel.ret/elizhom.html. Thanks to Dr. Lancashire for allowing some editing for modernization of the spellings and punctuation.

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INTRODUCTION

TEACHER INFORMATION

Welcome to *Latitudes*

Latitudes is designed for teachers who would like to broaden the scope of their literature and history study. By providing fascinating primary source documents and background information, the ***Latitudes*** collection of reproducibles helps your students link a literary work with its historical framework.

Each packet also offers insights into the work as a piece of literature, including its creation, critical reception, and links to similar literature.

The ***Latitudes*** selections help readers draw on and seek out knowledge from a unique range of sources and perspectives. These sources encourage students to make personal connections to history and literature, integrating information with their own knowledge and background. This learning experience will take students far beyond the boundaries of a single text into the rich latitudes of literature and social studies.

Purposes of This Packet

The material in this ***Latitudes*** packet for *Hamlet* has been carefully chosen for five main purposes.

1. to engage students' interest in the play
2. to familiarize students with Shakespeare's theater
3. to show how *Hamlet* reflects the beliefs and controversies of Shakespeare's time
4. to make criticism of *Hamlet* accessible and interesting to students
5. to encourage students to use strategies from social studies and literature to find meaning in a Shakespearean play

Use of the Material

Latitudes offers you a varied selection of resources to enrich your teaching of *Hamlet.* You might

- reproduce selected pieces to provide historical background or introduce significant issues to the whole class
- support individual research with any relevant selection(s)
- design group projects around stimulating pieces adaptable to panel presentations, performance, or debate
- choose resources to use with a cross-disciplinary team

continued

You'll find support for any pieces you teach to the class in "Using ***Latitudes*** in Your Classroom" on pages 45–52. "Student Projects" on pages 53–56 suggests several open-ended activities. These suggested activities may be used as alternative assessments or portfolio projects.

These resources and suggestions are simply tools to support your teaching of a challenging literary work. These selections will be most effective when you adapt them to your students' needs and your personal teaching style.

This chart identifies ***Latitudes*** selections which are related to specific passages in the play. All citations are from the New Folger Library edition.

Correlations to the Play

Act	*Latitudes Selection*	*Link(s) to Play*
1	King James' Revenge, p. 29	1.5; 3.4.194–196; also 4.4.34–69
	Heavenly Spirit or Fiend from Hell?, p. 18	1.4.43–82; 1.5.14–18;also 2.2.627–32
	Incestuous Sheets, p. 21	1.2.1–14, 133–164, 183–190; also 3.4.40–181
2	Traveling Players, p. 30	2.2.339–570; also 3.2.1–47
	One Day at the Globe, p. 32	
3	Turning from Sin, p. 23	3.3.40–103; 3.4.11–200
	Wisdom Is Free from Fortune, p. 28	3.1.64–68; 3.2.59–79, 380–402; also 2.2.246–260
	Most Wicked Speed, p. 19	3.4 also 1.2.149–163; 5.1.210–229
4	Memento Mori: The Readiness Is All, p. 24	4.3.19–42; also 5.1.67–223; 5.2.233–238
	The Tyrant and the Sponge, p. 42	4.2.11–21
5	An Englishman Visits Elsinore, p. 26	5.2.154–185; 5.2.240–47; also 1.4.10–25
	The Passion of Revenge, p. 22	5.2.240–253; also 4.7.1–185

The ***Latitudes*** sections listed below provide background information and suggested activities for incorporating ***Hamlet Latitudes*** into your curriculum.

Teacher Support

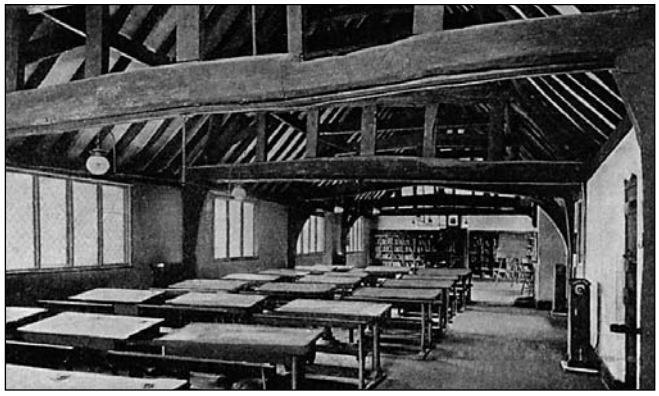
Synopsis	Overview of the play can be used to preview the sections students are about to read.
About the Author	Short biography of Shakespeare provides facts relevant to his life and the writing of *Hamlet.*
Reading *Hamlet*	Overview introduces students to comprehension strategies for reading Shakespeare.
Bibliographies	"Suggested Reading and Viewing" list encourages students to do further reading and identifies video resources. "Resources for Teaching *Hamlet*" lists professional resources for teaching and interpreting *Hamlet.*

About the Author

William Shakespeare is probably the most famous playwright in history. Unfortunately, most of what we know about him comes from secondhand sources. Shakespeare never gave an interview. He never wrote his autobiography. Only a few of his letters survive. And of course, the people who knew him best had no idea how famous he'd become.

William Shakespeare was born in April of 1564. No one knows the exact date, but he was baptized on April 26 in the Stratford-upon-Avon church. His father, John Shakespeare, served as town chamberlain and as mayor.

Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon.



He attended this village grammar school.

Young William probably attended grammar school in Stratford, where he learned Latin grammar and composition. In those days, anyone who wanted a professional career had to learn Latin first. Shakespeare probably read his first plays in Latin, including the popular (and bloody) tragedies of the Roman playwright Seneca. He also had the chance to watch traveling companies, groups of actors who went from town to town. Perhaps these experiences made him want to write plays.

In 1582, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway. He was 18; she was 26. Their wedding date was moved forward because Anne was already expecting a baby. Their first daughter, Susanna, was born in May of 1583. In 1585, the couple had twins, Judith and Hamnet.

Between 1585 and 1592, we lose track of William Shakespeare. At some point during that time, he decided to move to London and become an actor. His family stayed behind in Stratford, where Shakespeare visited them from time to time. Like most young actors, Shakespeare had to face the critics. One complained not only that Shakespeare was a terrible actor, but that he was writing plays as well! Although he continued to act, Shakespeare became more and more interested in writing. At least five of his plays were written before 1595.

No one knows why Shakespeare chose a theater career, but his family probably wasn't very happy about it. In those days, people viewed actors much as we view professional wrestlers—they were considered entertaining but not exactly artistic. In fact, many people were opposed to even allowing theaters and plays. Ministers preached against plays in the strongest terms. Puritan preacher Thomas White thundered, "The cause of plague is sin. The cause of sin is plays. Therefore, the

continued

Shakespeare reads one of his plays to Queen Elizabeth in a painting by Ender.

cause of plague is plays." In a city with at least one outbreak of plague every year, this was a serious accusation.

However, Shakespeare and his friends were lucky. Queen Elizabeth I loved plays. She granted her protection to acting companies and gave them her permission to perform. Shakespeare wrote several plays to be performed for the Queen, including *Twelfth Night.* After Elizabeth's death in 1603, Shakespeare became one of the King's Men, a group of actors who performed for King James I. The King gave the group a license that read:

> *James by the Grace of God...Know ye that we have licensed and authorized...these our servants, Lawrence Fletcher, William Shakespeare...freely to use and exercise the art and faculty of playing Comedies, Tragedies, Histories, Interludes...within... any city, university town or borough whatsoever within our said Realms....*

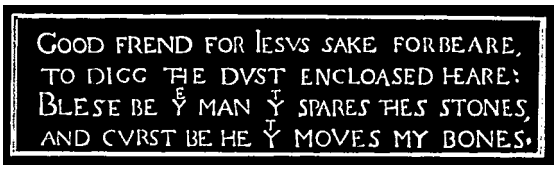
Perhaps to thank King James for his patronage, Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth,* a story of Scottish royalty. In this play, he cleverly linked the noble character Banquo to his royal descendant King James.

Unlike many theater people, Shakespeare actually earned a good living. By 1599, he was part-owner of the Globe, one of the newest theaters in London. Such plays as *Hamlet, Julius Caesar, Othello,* and *King Lear* were probably performed for the first time at the Globe.

In 1610 or 1611, Shakespeare finally moved back to Stratford-upon-Avon. He was almost 50 years old, well past middle age by 17th-century standards. Perhaps he wanted to spend the rest of his life in familiar surroundings. Over the years, he'd invested in several pieces of property around Stratford. He had acquired a comfortable estate, and it was time to enjoy his prosperity.

However, Shakespeare didn't give up writing. In 1611, his new play *The Tempest* was performed at Court. In 1613, his play *Henry VIII* premiered at the Globe. This performance was more dramatic than anyone expected. The stage directions called for an artillery salute to be fired when "King Henry" came onstage. The explosion set the stage on fire, and the entire theater burned to the ground.

Shakespeare died in 1616, at the age of 52. His gravestone carried this inscription, which some scholars believe Shakespeare himself wrote for the occasion.



Shakespeare's bones rest in his tomb to this day.

S Y N O P S I S

Setting

In and around the royal castle in Elsinore, Denmark, during the Middle Ages

Characters

Hamlet—prince of Denmark; son of the late king
Claudius—Hamlet's uncle; the new king of Denmark
Gertrude—Hamlet's mother; queen of Denmark
Horatio—Hamlet's best friend
Polonius—adviser to the king
Ophelia—Polonius's daughter, who is in love with Hamlet
Laertes—Polonius's son; university student
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern—courtiers who spy on Hamlet for the king
Fortinbras—prince of Norway

Situation

Hamlet takes on the task of avenging his murdered father, the late king.

Main Events

1. Before the play begins, Claudius has murdered his predecessor, ascended the throne, and married the queen.
2. Hamlet, who is unhappy about his mother's hasty remarriage, learns of Claudius's crime from his father's ghost, which demands vengeance.
3. Hamlet vows to avenge his father's murder but hesitates to take action. To divert suspicion from himself, he feigns madness, which others attribute to his love for Ophelia.
4. To test the Ghost's story, Hamlet stages a play that reproduces the murder; Claudius's reaction betrays his guilt.
5. As Hamlet upbraids his mother for her incestuous remarriage, he hears an eavesdropper behind the curtain. Thinking it is the king, he runs his sword through the curtain and kills Polonius.
6. The king sends Hamlet to England, where he is to be killed. By chance, pirates capture Hamlet and return him to Denmark. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern fall victim to the plot against Hamlet's life.
7. When Hamlet returns, he learns that Ophelia, crazed with grief, has drowned herself.
8. Laertes returns from France to avenge the death of his father.
9. Claudius arranges a fencing match between Laertes and Hamlet, during which Laertes agrees to use a poisoned sword.
10. During the fencing match, Laertes kills Hamlet, but not before Hamlet mortally wounds Laertes and Claudius with the poisoned sword. Gertrude dies after drinking from a poisoned cup of wine prepared for Hamlet in case he escaped death during the match.

Resolution

Hamlet's revenge is achieved at the cost of much soul-searching and several lives. Order is restored to Denmark by Fortinbras, the prince of Norway.

Critics' Comments

These statements have been made by critics of ***Hamlet.***

It is this quality of being isolated and confused that marks the revenge hero as an archetype for the Elizabethans.... The hero is enjoined to act, yet everything he turns to for guidance in action proves insubstantial. His only recourse is to construct a meaning to life from the order he finds within himself.

—Charles A. Hallett (1980)

The fundamental problem that Shakespeare undertook to answer in *Hamlet*...is the problem of the way men accept sorrow when it comes to them. And it is evident throughout the play that the grief of Fortinbras is being presented as a grief dominated by reason, while it is equally evident that the grief of Hamlet and Laertes is excessive grief leading to destruction.

—Lily B. Campbell (1952)

What is intolerable in Hamlet's situation is that it cannot be reduced to the familiar antitheses of right and wrong: conscience both demands and opposes action.

—Catherine Belsey (1982)

There is a justice to the Ghost's demand for the king's death, and certainly this deed of Hamlet's will have beneficial results for the state, which Claudius is polluting. In fact, Shakespeare sets up the situation in such a way that Hamlet cannot refuse to comply, for Claudius *must* be punished and, the plot tells us, *only* Hamlet can do it. Yet though the end is good, the means to that justice involve irrational actions that will in their turn need to be punished. To do what the Ghost asks is to risk damnation, to avoid it seems like cowardice, and to escape the whole problem through suicide is to arrive back at square one—daring damnation.

—Charles A. Hallett and Elaine S. Hallett (1980)

For about a hundred and fifty years after the first production, nobody saw anything particularly difficult or obscure in the character of Hamlet.... Gradually, however, critics began a separate analysis of the man himself, growing more obscure and more entangled as he [took on] a life of his own.

—Margaret Webster (1942)

Hamlet is a dramatic essay in mystery; that is to say it is so constructed that the more it is examined the more there is to discover. The character of the Prince is, of course, the central mystery.

—J. Dover Wilson (1935)

If Hamlet is sure the Ghost is truthful, and if he is sure his uncle has indeed murdered his father, and if he has promised revenge swift as thought—Why doesn't he do it?

...If he were to stab Claudius under conditions that would lead to his own immediate seizure and execution at the hands of horrified soldiers and courtiers, that would not suit him at all. Even if he managed to kill Claudius and get away whole, how could he then persuade the Danish nobility to make him King?

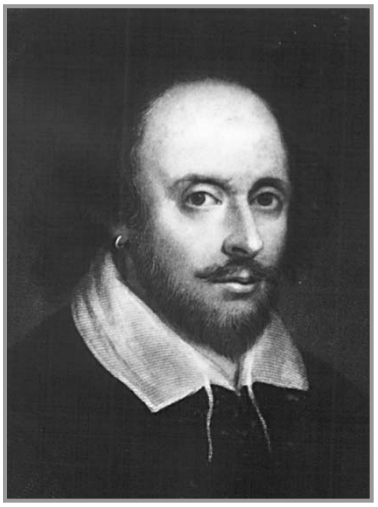
—Isaac Asimov (1970)

Even the perennial questions, Why does Hamlet delay his revenge? ...Why is Hamlet so cruel to Ophelia?, seem to invite something more than a psychological explanation. Hamlet himself seems always to be asking questions much bigger and more searching than we ask of him. When we expect him to be discussing whether and why and how he should revenge, he is liable to be ruminating on the mysteries of our being.

—Harold Jerkins (1982)

Voices from the Play

The following quotations are from ***Hamlet.***[1]



This is the only known portrait of Shakespeare painted while he was alive.

Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,
And let thine eye look like a friend on
Denmark. (1.2.70–71)

O, that this too, too sullied flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew,
Or that the Everlasting had not fixed
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter!
(1.2.133–36)

One may smile and smile and be a villain.
(1.5.115)

The time is out of joint. O cursèd spite
That ever I was born to set it right!
(1.5.210–11)

Though this be madness, yet there is
method in't. (2.2.223)

There is nothing either good or bad but
thinking makes it so. (2.2.268–70)

What a piece of work is a man. (2.2.327)

The play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the
King. (2.2.633–34)

To be or not to be–that is the question.
(3.1.64)

O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
(3.1.163)

My words fly
up, my thoughts
remain below.
Words without
thoughts never
to heaven go.
(3.3.102–03)

I must be cruel only
to be kind. (3.4.199)

Diseases desperate grown
By desperate appliance are relieved
Or not at all. (4.3.9–11)

How all occasions do inform against me
And spur my dull revenge. (4.4.34–35)

There's a divinity that shapes our ends.
(5.2.11)

If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to
come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it
will come. The readiness is all. (5.2.234–37)

So shall you hear
Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,
Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters,
Of deaths put on by cunning and forced
cause,
And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
Fall'n on th' inventors' heads. (5.2.422–27)

[1] In citations from the play, the first number refers to the act, the second to the scene, and the last number(s) to the line(s). All citations are from the New Folger Library edition.

GLOSSARY

Understanding who the following people are or what the following terms mean may be helpful as you read ***Hamlet.***

These words had a different meaning in Shakespeare's time.

contagion: poison; harmful influence (3.2.423; 4.7.168)

doubt: fear or suspect, as in "I doubt some foul play" (1.2.278)

humorous man: person controlled by one of the four humors that were believed to form human personalities: choler (*choleric* people are prone to anger), blood (*sanguine* types are cheerful), phlegm (*phlegmatic* people are slow-moving and cold), and black bile (*melancholics* tend to be reflective and sad).

lets: prevents, as in "I'll make a ghost of him that lets me." (1.4.95)

madness: 1) state in which emotions temporarily make a person lose control. In 1651, Thomas Hobbes wrote that "all passions that produce strange and unusual behaviour are called by the general name of madness"; 2) insanity

mere: absolute, unqualified

nice: trivial, insignificant

office: job or service

owe: possess or have

nunnery: 1) convent in which nuns live in a community which follows religious rules; 2) brothel or house of ill fame

philosophy: (1.5.187–88) science

present: immediate

should: may mean "will inevitably"

still: always

straight: straight away, immediately

straw: things that have no lasting importance. A popular saying held that "Worldly possessions are *al hoy"* or like hay: they quickly wither away.

would be: demands to be

What's in a Name?

Hamlet—The original Old Norse form of the name suggested someone who was slow-witted (or pretending to be stupid).

Claudius—During the Renaissance, the Roman emperor Claudius was used as an example of a bad ruler. The emperor was an uncle-stepfather who married his niece Agrippina. He was murdered by his wife.

Laertes—The father of Odysseus was named Laertes.

Ophelia—The maiden's name may be related to *Apheleia*—innocence and simplicity.

Horatio—In *The Spanish Tragedy,* a popular revenge tragedy, Horatio is a faithful friend and the victim who must be avenged.

Fortinbras—The name means *strong-in-arms.*

Reading *Hamlet*

Look Ahead

Hamlet is a play about what happens after a murder. However, after act 1 there's no mystery about who did it. You'll find reading the play much easier if you have a general idea of the plot. If your copy of the play has a summary of the plot, read it. Also look over the list of characters at the beginning of the play.

Get the Beat

Did people really talk the way Shakespeare wrote? In some ways, yes. The people of Shakespeare's time spoke more dramatically than we do. For example, a wife asked that her husband be forgiven for "age, want of memory, and multiplicity of business." The Elizabethans also had a talent for insults and ill-wishing. A person on trial defied the court, saying "A plague of God on you all."

However, ordinary speech was often long and rambling, without any logical order. Shakespeare typically used a rhythmic pattern called *iambic pentameter. Iambic* means that the first syllable is unstressed and the second is stressed. *Pentameter* refers to a series of five. You can feel the beat by tapping your hands according to the accents of the syllables in the lines below.

> If **it** ass**ume** my **no**ble **fa**ther's **per**son,
> I'll **speak** to **it,** though **hell** it**self** should **gape**
> And **bid** me **hold** my **peace. . . .** (1.2.265–67)

Move It

Shakespeare often changed the order of the words to fit the pattern of his rhythm or rhyme. If a passage isn't clear, try changing some of the words around.

> I your commission will forthwith dispatch,
> And he to England shall along with you. (3.3.3–4)
> (I will forthwith dispatch your commission and he shall [go] along with you to England.)

In addition, Shakespeare often used apostrophes to represent omitted letters. Adding a letter or two will often help you infer his meaning.

> You, laying these slight sullies on my son,
> As 'twere a thing a little soil'd i' th' working… (2.1.45–6)
> (Polonius compares Laertes' reputation to something which is soiled by handling as it is made. *'Twere* combines the words *it* and *were.* Shakespeare often omits letters like the *e* in *-ed,* the *n* in *in*, and the *e* in *the.)*

continued

Say It

Plays are written to be acted, not read. Reading out loud—whether it's with a group or alone—helps you "hear" the meaning. You might say a line several ways until you find the voice a character would use. For example, would Laertes respond to Hamlet's request for forgiveness with sincerity or with malice?

> But till that time
> I do receive your offer'd love like love
> And will not wrong it. (5.2.265–67)

Some cues for how a line should sound are built into the play.

. ! ?	,	: ;	?	!
stop completely	pause briefly	change your energy level	raise your vocal pitch	strengthen your voice

Other cues are given in stage directions. These are often found in brackets after the character's name. For example, [*aside*] tells the actor to give the audience information that the other characters can't hear.

Sometimes a character's actions are suggested by the lines themselves. As the Ghost exits in act 3 scene 4, Hamlet exclaims, "Look where he goes even now out at the portal!" This indicates that the Ghost leaves through the bedroom door instead of going down a trapdoor as he probably does earlier in the play.

Note It

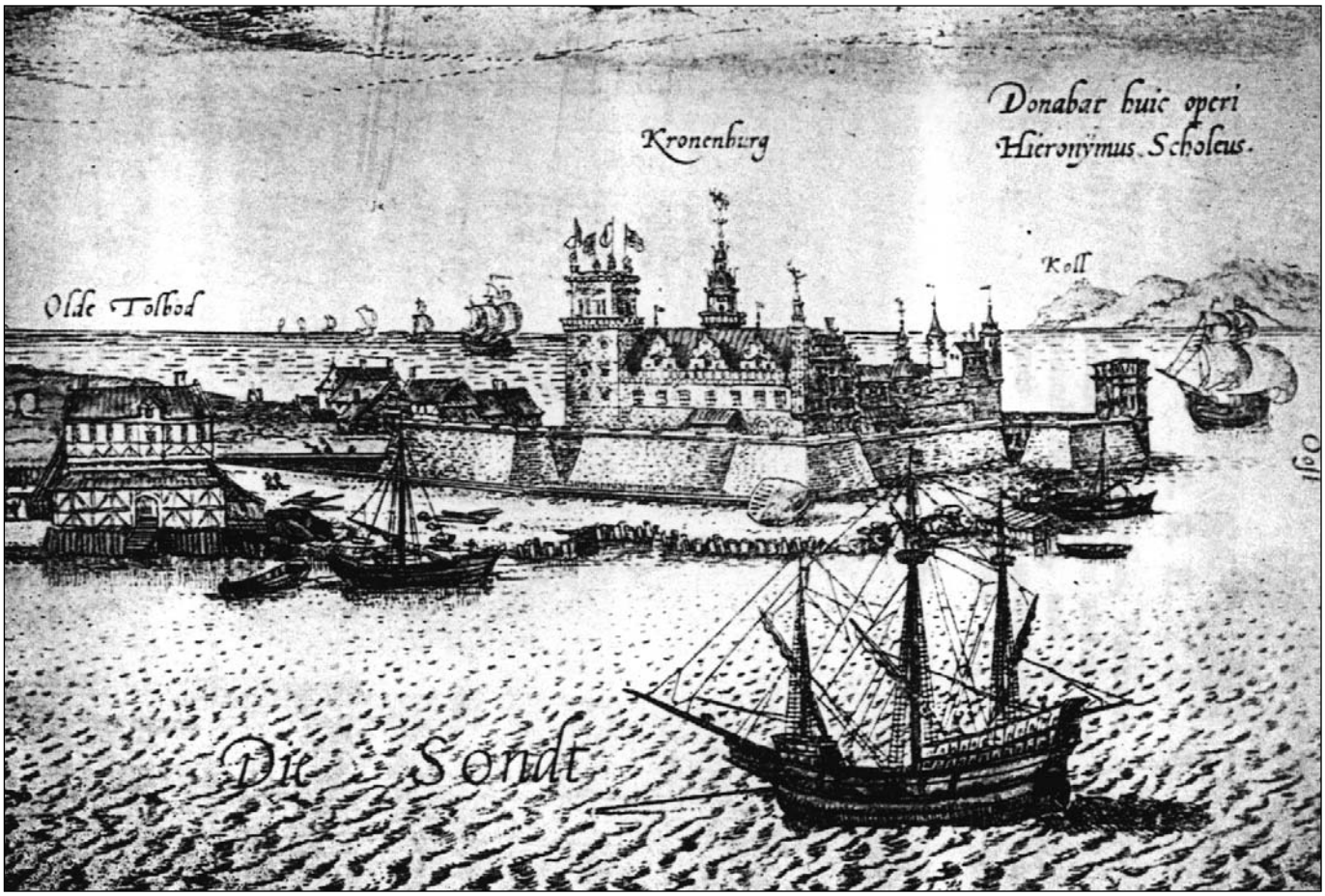
Shakespeare wouldn't have known words like *space shuttle.* And he probably would expect a *computer* to be a person who does math. We, on the other hand, expect *straight* to mean "not crooked" rather than "immediately." If you know the words, but a line still seems confusing, check the footnotes or the glossary. You may find you're reading *not nice* as "rude" when it meant "not trivial" to the people of Shakespeare's time.

Stick to the Point

If you can't figure out every word, don't get discouraged. The people in Shakespeare's audience couldn't either. For one thing, Shakespeare loved to play with words. He made up new combinations, like *fat-guts* and *mumble-news.* He often changed one part of speech to another, as in "cursing cries and deep *exclaims.*" To make matters worse, the actors probably spoke at a rate of 140 words per minute. But the audience didn't strain to catch every word. They went to a Shakespeare play for the same reasons we see a movie—for the story and the acting, for a great laugh or a good cry.

The Geographical Picture

Elsinore was well-known to Elizabethan Englishmen as the site of a Danish fortress that collected payment from all ships traveling through the Sound to Baltic ports. Shakespeare's comment that a "high eastern hill" can be seen from Elsinore may be based on the map below. Viewers looking across the Sound from Kronborg Castle actually see the low hills of Sweden three miles away.



From *Civitates Orbis Terrarum*

A Time in HISTORY

1517 Protestant Reformation begins when Martin Luther publishes Ninety-Five Theses in Wittenberg, where Hamlet studies

1558 November 17. Elizabeth I becomes Queen of England

1564 April 26. William Shakespeare baptized in Stratford-upon-Avon (probably two or three days after his birth)

Queen Elizabeth I, born in 1533, was crowned in 1558 and died in 1603. She was the daughter of King Henry VIII and Queen Anne Boleyn. Known as the "Virgin Queen," she named James VI of Scotland as her successor.

Woburn Abbey Collection

1580 English sailor Sir Francis Drake is first man to sail around the world

1580s Another author's version of *Hamlet,* known as the *Ur-Hamlet,* is performed; the author was probably Thomas Kyd

1582 November 28. William Shakespeare marries Anne Hathaway

1583 May 26. Shakespeare's daughter Susanna baptized in Stratford church

1585 February 2. Shakespeare's twin children, Judith and Hamnet, baptized

1585–1592 Shakespeare disappears from the public records; scholars refer to these as "the lost years"

1588 Spanish Armada is defeated in its attempt to invade England

1592 First recorded mention of Shakespeare as a London actor and playwright

1592–94 Plague closes all of London's theaters; Shakespeare writes his two long poems, *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*

1594 *Titus Andronicus*, probably written in 1589, becomes first Shakespeare play to be printed

1594 Shakespeare joins the Lord Chamberlain's Men, a group of actors hired to present plays at Court

1599 The Lord Chamberlain's Men build the Globe Theatre; Shakespeare is part-owner of the building

1600 Probable date when *Hamlet* is written

1601 February 25. Earl of Essex executed after failed attempt to seize the throne

1603 March 24. Queen Elizabeth dies childless; King James VI of Scotland becomes King James I of England

First unauthorized edition of *Hamlet* printed

1609 King James entertains Denmark's Christian IV; even ladies and actors get drunk

Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, written in 1598, published for the first time

1610 Shakespeare retires to Stratford

1613 June 29. The Globe Theatre burns to the ground during *Henry VIII*

1616 April 23. William Shakespeare dies at the age of 52

1623 August 6. Shakespeare's wife Anne dies

1623 November. The First Folio of Shakespeare's plays is published

1642 Puritans close the rebuilt Globe Theatre

Highlights of Danish History

When Hamlet *was written, Denmark was an imperial nation ruling what is now Norway, Iceland, and Greenland.*

800 Vikings from Denmark and Norway raid the British Isles

950 Christian missionaries begin making converts in Denmark

991 England begins paying annual tribute, called *Danegeld,* to Denmark

1016 Danish King Canute invades England and becomes its king

1031 Canute conquers Poland's eastern territory

1035 England breaks away from Danish empire when King Canute dies; Magnus, son of Olaf II of Norway, tries to retake conquered territory

1070 Copenhagen becomes the capital of Denmark

1200 Saxo Grammaticus records Danish legends, including that of Amleth

1523 Sweden gains independence from Denmark

A Ghost Appearing (1581)

Heavenly Spirit OR Fiend from Hell?

Exactly what Shakespeare's audience believed about ghosts is hard to determine. Some would have seen the Ghost as nothing more than a stage tradition. Others believed that spirits could return from the dead. All would have sympathized with Hamlet's dilemma: Is the Ghost a good spirit or a tempter from Hell?

The criteria for distinguishing good from evil spirits are summarized in Johann Weyer's ***De prestigiis daemonum*** *(1583). Weyer was personal physician to Duke William V of Cleve, Jülich, and Berg. He wrote his book to prove that witches' imaginations are "inflamed by the demons in a way not understandable to us—and the torture of melancholy makes them only fancy that they have caused all sorts of evil."*

Iamblichus [in his book *On Mysteries]* clearly distinguishes good demons from evil demons.… "Good demons never deceive, nor do they contribute to wickedness. Furthermore, the nature of evil demons is inconsistent, unstable, and at odds with itself, urging now one course of action, now another.…"

The rule for distinguishing spirits is put thus by Peter (in Clement, bk. 3, *Recognitions*):

> Signs produced by the spirit that proceeds from evil avail no one, but those which a good spirit produces are helpful to men. For tell me, pray, of what use is it to make a display of statues walking about? What use that dogs of brass or stone bark, that mountains leap and fly through the air, and other things like to these…? Things which proceed from good are granted for the salvation of men. Such are the things which our Lord has done, Who made the blind to see, and the deaf to hear, Who raised up the weak and the halt, Who banished disease and evil spirits.… Those signs, then, which work for the salvation of men and bestow something of good upon men, a wicked spirit cannot do.

According to a statement attributed to St. Athanasius, St. Anthony distinguished spirits in the following way: Spirits that are holy appear with a peaceful and composed countenance. They do not struggle or shout, nor is their voice heard, when by a hidden impulse they fill sinners with joy and confidence—because the Lord, the fountain and source of happiness, is with them. …The grace of these spirits is so great that they soon banish all fear. Thus … the angels, when they announced to the shepherds the divine birth of the virgin's child … revealed themselves to the untroubled minds of the beholders and commanded them not to be afraid. But the countenances of evil spirits are fierce, their sounds terrifying, their thoughts base, and their noisiness and gestures those of dissolute youths or brigands; the soul is struck with fear and the senses numbed.… If, then, after fear and a feeling of horror, there succeeds joy, and confidence in God, and a love beyond all describing, you will know that help is at hand.… But if the sudden fear lasts on, it is the enemy that appears.…

I would also add this distinction: that the angels love us and watch over us, but the Devil hates both us and God; the angels rejoice in our welfare, at which the demons feel great sorrow; the former take care lest we stumble, the latter cause us to stumble.

This illustration of the funeral cortege of Henry, Prince of Wales, shows mourners in black mourning cloaks and a lifelike image of the Prince lying on the coffin.
George Wither's *Prince Henry's Obsequies* (1613)

MOST WICKED SPEED

By custom, Gertrude should have mourned her royal husband for at least one year before remarrying. Other English funeral customs are described by Percy Macquoid in ***Shakespeare's England.***

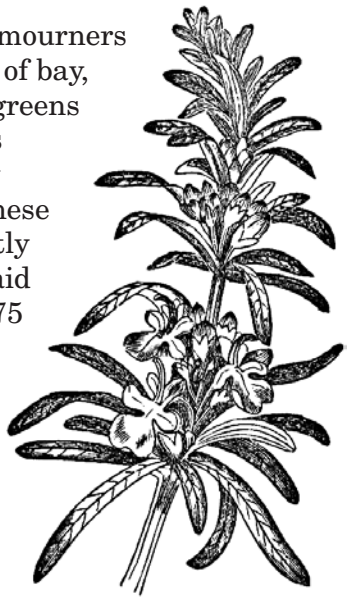
IMMEDIATELY AFTER A death had taken place in a well-to-do house, the chief rooms and staircase were draped in black cloth and a black mourning bed was introduced for the surviving head of the family, who occupied it for a stated time and there received the visits of condolence. These beds were common property in a family and lent round as occasion required, with the black velvet window-curtains and carpets thereto belonging. Guilds and colleges and institutions possess highly ornamental palls,[1] which they lent for the funerals of their members. …The hearse or canopy was carried over the coffin, or, when a horse litter was employed, was fixed to this. When the Lady Anne meets the funeral procession of Henry VI she says:

> *set down your honourable load,*
> *If honour may be shrouded in a hearse.*

(Richard III, *1.2.1–2)*

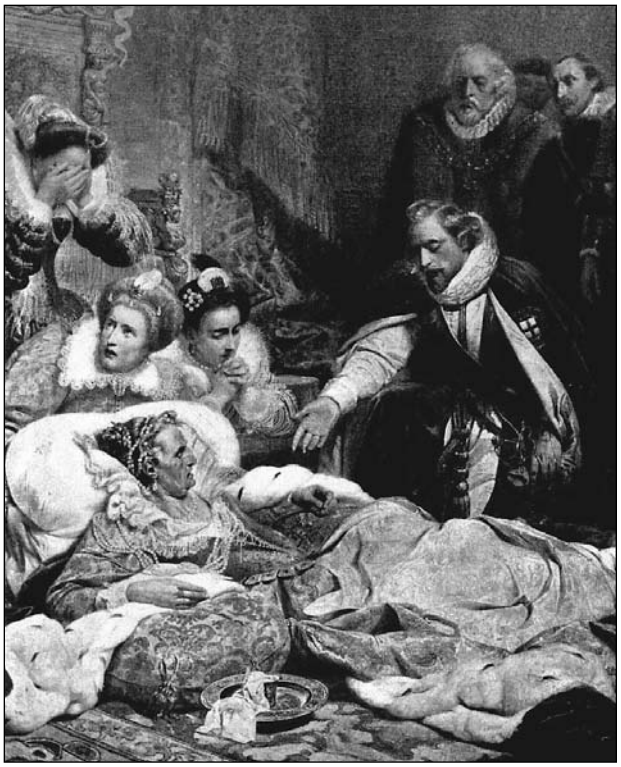
It was customary for mourners to carry small branches of bay, rosemary, or other evergreens as emblems of the soul's immortality, which they threw into the grave. These mourners were frequently poor people and were paid for their services. In 1575 Sir Thomas Gresham directed in his will that black gowns, of

continued



Rosemary

[1] *Palls* are heavy cloths draped over coffins.



Queen Elizabeth I lies on her deathbed.

cloth at 6*s.* 8*d.* the yard, were to be given to a hundred poor men and a hundred poor women to bring him to his grave; and at Sir Christopher Hatton's funeral in 1592 the bier[2] was preceded by one hundred poor people whose gowns and caps were given them, and was followed by more than 300 gentlemen and yeoman in "gownes, cloakes, and coates," etc. Richard says in *3 Henry VI* (2.1.160–1):

Shall we go throw away our coats of steel,
And wrap our bodies in black mourning gowns?

The funerals of noblemen were often very costly, Sir Thomas Gresham's costing £800.[3] They were also sometimes conducted at night and, on occasion, by river. …It was not uncommon for English people of importance who died abroad to leave directions for their hearts to be sent back to England for interment.…Coffins, except for royalty, when sometimes they were purple, were covered in black with bunches of yew and rosemary tied to the sides. …The manner in which music was employed at burials in 1598 is best shown by the following extract from a book of that date:

It is a custome still in use with Christians, to attend the funerall of their deceased friendes, with whole chantries of choyce quire-men singing solemnly before them.

…Garlands and flowers were placed on the graves of both rich and poor, and especially on those of young unmarried women. The priest speaking at Ophelia's burial says:

Yet here she is allow'd her virgin crants [or garlands],
Her maiden strewments. (*Hamlet* 5.1.240-241)

…Funerals invariably ended with an elaborate feast of cold food of all kinds, with wines and ale; sometimes a sum for that purpose was set apart in the will, and in such bequests it was even customary to prescribe the particular food that was to be eaten. These feasts lasted for many days, with excessive drinking and dancing. Shakespeare alludes to them as follows:

Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral bak'd meats
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables. (*Hamlet*

Mourning cloaks were worn at funerals. English widows often dressed in black for three or four years after the death of their hus-

[2] A *bier* is a stand on which a corpse or coffin is placed.

[3] In today's dollars, the funeral would have cost about $1,400. A servant's funeral typically cost about 7 pence, or about 12 cents.

INCESTUOUS SHEETS

Critics today often think that Hamlet reacts too strongly to his mother's remarriage. In ***The Renaissance Hamlet,*** *Roland Mushat Frye explains how Elizabethans would have judged the marriage.*

C 1.2.1801)

King Henry II does public penance at the shrine of Archbishop Thomas Becket to atone for his part in Becket's death.

THE PASSION OF REVENGE

The revenge tragedies popular during the Renaissance emphasized three passions: grief, hatred, and anger. These strong feelings took control of the hero's imagination and drove him to extreme behavior. Episodes of raging anger were considered a "short madness." However, the hero's passions usually led beyond a temporary loss of control to permanent insanity and gruesome violence. Pierre de la Primaudaye describes this progression in ***The French Academie*** *(1594).*

laudius's first speech begins with the graceful and dignified assertion that "though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death/ The memory be green," and continues with fitting references to grief and woe. Then comes the quiet but explosive introduction of his consort as "our sometime sister, now our queen"—a callously imperturbable admission of royal incest. The marriage of brothers- and sisters-in-law had been branded shameful over hundreds of years of moral teaching since Old Testament times, and was prohibited both in England and on the Continent. It was only in 1907, some three hundred years after the appearance of Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* that the last of such laws was repealed by the British parliament.

The incest taboo is one of the strongest to which people are subject, and in 1600 it would have condemned any union such as that of Claudius and Gertrude. The basis is found in the Mosaic Law. Leviticus 18:16 and 20:21 emphatically prohibited marriage or other sexual relationship between a brother and a deceased sibling's widow…. The sole exception to this taboo in the Old Testament could not have applied in *Hamlet,* for it took effect only if the previous marriage had been without issue, leaving that deceased brother with no heir to carry on his name

The Folger Shakespeare Library

Revenge was a popular theme in Elizabethan tragedy. Several popular beliefs about revenge are illustrated in this 1620 engraving. Thomas Cooper's *The Cry and Revenge of Blood* is based on two actual murders at Halfworth. As the murders are committed (top left), the devil is shown tempting the attacker to violence. The bodies are then hidden in a pond, where the victims' blood cries out for vengeance. A farmer who cleans the pond discovers the bodies and so becomes an agent of God's justice. The murderer is convicted, which confirms the Elizabethan belief that God avenges the death of innocent people.

Turning from Sin

Despite their religious differences, Elizabethans agreed that four things were required for true repentance: feeling sorrow, admitting guilt, having faith, and acting rightly. ***The Homily on Repentance and True Reconcilation unto God,*** *excerpted below, was read once a year in English churches by order of the English government.*

Lady and stand-mirror, from de la Perrière's *Le Théâtre des Bon Engins* (1539)

The "glass" Hamlet sets up for his mother in act 3 scene 4 is the mirror of self-knowledge. Awareness of sin is the first step in repentance. As Thomas Becon moralized, "Ye know that a man's face shall be long defiled, spotted, and deforemed, before he shall perceive it, except it be either told him of other, or else that he himself see it evidently in some mirror or glass. [Likewise], the soul of a Christian man shall be spotted with sin a great space, before he perceiveth it, and be truly contrite and sorry for it, except it be either told him of other by declaring the law of God to him, or else he himself looketh in the glass of truth, which is the law of God, and by that means perceiveth his own deformity, misery, and wretchedness."

and line.…

The criminal punishment of incest between brother-in-law and sister-in-law was the same as for blood brother and sister and a marriage ceremony was considered a mere subterfuge.…Incest, as a flagrant sin, carried with it a conspicuous punishment and penance, designed both to impress the public and to humiliate the offenders. The injuctions of Archbishop Edmund Grindal required exposure on an elevated place or platform in front of a church or in the market, but it is apparent that such exposure could also take place in the front part of a church during service, within full view of the whole congregation. A distinctive robe of penitence was imposed so that the offender appeared "bare-legged and bare-headed, in a white sheet," and also had to "make an open confession of his crime." …In 1575 a brother- and sister-in-law who married each other in Essex were convicted of incest, and it was adjudged that "hereafter they do not cohabit and keep company together under pain of the law" and that they perform the standard penance by exposure in the local parish church on Sunday.…

…In London the public exposure was also geared to public humiliation… [those guilty of incest] were ridden about the streets in a cart, open to the jeers and missiles of the populace.…For the same offense of marriage between brother- and sister-in-law, the familiar humiliation of public exposure in a sheet was still being imposed in Essex as late as 1717.…

Frans Hals' *Young Man with a Skull* (c. 1641) was originally thought to be a painting of Hamlet.

Memento Mori:

The Readiness Is All

A young man holding a skull was a popular theme in Renaissance paintings. The skull served as a memento mori, *or reminder of death.*

Contemplating death was a tradition dating from Roman times. The playwright Seneca wrote that the human mind "is never more divine than when it reflects upon its mortality."

Luis de Granada wrote a meditation on the hour of death that was translated into English in 1602. He often warns, "Because ye knowe not the howre (sayeth our Saviour) watche ye, and be alwaies in a readines."

WHEN THE HEART IS wounded with griefe by any one, it desireth to returne the like to him that hath hurt it, and to rebite him of whome it is bitten. This affection is a desire of revenge, which being put in execution, is revenge accomplished: namely, when wee cause him that hath offended us to suffer that punishment, which in our judgement he hath deserved. This punishment is to damnifie him eyther in soule, or in body, or in his goodes, yea, sometimes by all the meanes that may bee….Every offence therefore that ingendereth hatred, anger, envy, or indignation bringeth with it a desire of revenge, which is to render evill for evil, and to requite griefe received with the like againe.

…Nowe, when the heart is hardened with Revenge, it is turned into Crueltie, which is a [lack] of pitie and compassion. For when Offence [i.e., grief] and Anger are set on fire, they exclude all good thoughtes out of the minde, and perswade to all kinde of Crueltie, of which there are three degrees…Heerof followeth inhumanities, which is as if wee shoulde lay aside all humane affection and bee transformed into brute beasts. Therefore wee may well conclude, that all private Revenge proceeding of envy, or of hatred, or of anger, is vicious and forbidden by God.

continued

There is nothing that the holy Ghost doth so much labour in all the Scriptures to beat into mens heads, as repentance, amendment of life, and speedy returning unto the Lord GOD of hostes. And no marvell why. For wee doe dayly and hourely by our wickednesse and stubborne disobedience, horribly fall away from GOD, thereby purchasing unto ourselves (if hee should deale with us according to his justice) eternall damnation.…

…These are the wordes of Ioel the Prophet. Therefore also now the Lord sayth, Returne unto mee with all your heart, with fasting, weeping, and mourning, rent your hearts and not your clothes, and returne unto the Lord your GOD, for hee is gracious and mercifull, slow to anger, and of great compassion, and ready to pardon wickednesse.…

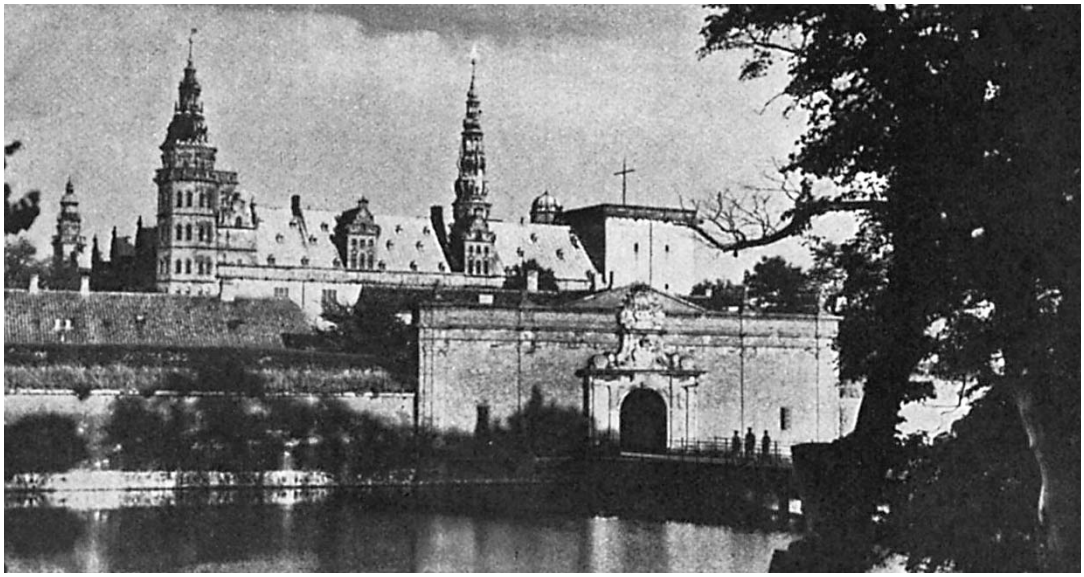
…The manner of our turning. First [the prophet Joel] will have us to returne unto GOD with our whole heart, whereby he doeth remoove and put away all hypocrisie.…

Secondly, hee requireth a sincere and pure love of godlinesse, …that forsaking all maner of things that are repugnant and contrary unto GODS will, wee doe give our heartes unto him, and the whole strength of our bodies and soules.… And because that wee are letted by the naturall corruption of our owne flesh, and the wicked affections of the same, hee doeth bidde us also to returne with fasting: …a true discipline or taming of the flesh, whereby the nourishments of filthie lustes, and of stubborne contumacie and

As sexton of Peterborough Cathedral, Robert Scarlett (1498–1594) buried Mary, Queen of Scots. The skull behind him is a *memento mori,* or reminder of death. By 1450, skulls often appeared in paintings and on tombs. Mary Queen of Scots even carried a skull-shaped watch.
J. Caulfield, 1813

An Englishman Visits Elsinore

After Fynes Moryson became a Fellow of Cambridge College in 1587, he received a grant to travel. Moryson spent seven years writing a description of the geography, government, and trade of 12 European countries. His description of Denmark was published in 1617, the year after Shakespeare's death.



From the outside, the royal palace at Elsinore looks much as it did when Fynes Moryson disguised himself as a merchant and bribed his way inside. However, Kronborg's interior was rebuilt after a fire in 1629.

KONSIDER, IN WHAT case the bodie is, after the soule is departed out of it. What thinge is more esteemed than the bodie of a prince whiles he is a live? And what thinge is more contemptible, and more vyle, than the verie same bodie when it is dead? Where is then that former pryncely maiestie become? Where is that royall behaviour, and glorious magnificence? Where is that highe authoritie, and soveraintie? Where is that terrour, and feare, at the beholdinge of his presence?…How quicklie is all this gaye pompe utterly overthrownn, and come to nothinge, as if it had bene but a mere dreame, or a plaie on a stage, that is dispatched in an howre?

Then out of hande the wyndinge sheete is provided, and brought forth, which is the richest jewell he maie take with him out of this lyfe….

Then doe they make a hole in the earthe of seven or eight foote longe, (and no longer though it be for Alexander the great, whom the whole world coulde not holde) and with that finalle rowme onelie must his bodie be contente. There they appoint him his howse for ever. There he taketh up his perpetuall lodginge untill the laste daye of generall Judgment, in compaine with other dead bodies: There the wormes crawle out to geve him his interteinement: To be short, there they let him downe in a poor white sheete, his face beinge covered with a napkin, and his handes and feete fast bownde….There the earthe receyveth him into her lappe: There the bones of dead men kisse, and welcome him: There the dust of his auncestors embraceth him, and invite him to that table, and howse, which is appointed for all men livinge.…Why shoulde a man desire and gape after so manie thinges for this present lyfe, being so shorte as it is, seinge so litle will content him at the howre of his death?

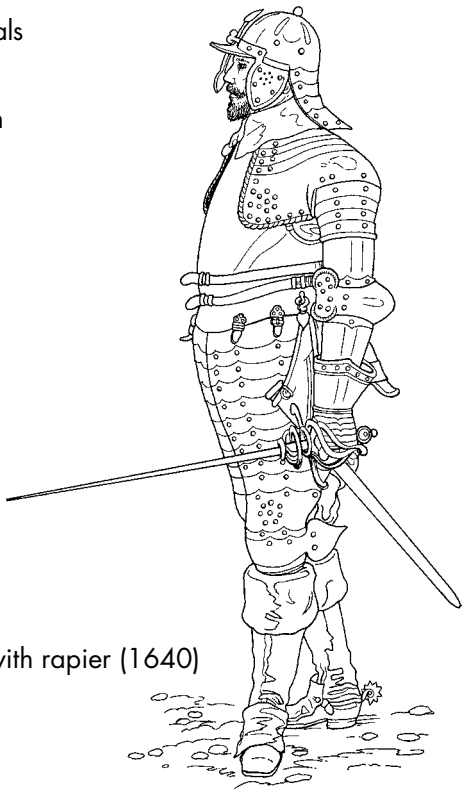
continued

Then the grave maker taketh the spade, and pykeaxe into his hande, and beginneth to tumble downe bones upon bones, and to tread downe the earth verie harde upon him. Insomuch that the fairest face in all the worlde, the best trimmed, and most charily kepte from wynde, and sonne, shall lye there, and be stamped upon by the rude grave maker, who will not sticke to laie him on the face, and rappe him on the sculle, yea and to batter downe his eies and nose flatte to his face, that they maie lye well and even with the earth.…

Is this that Jezabell? Is this that amiable face, which I knewe so faire, and livelie? Are these those eies, that were so cleare, and brighte to beholde? Is this that pleasaunt rowlinge tongue, that talked so eloquently, and made such goodlie discourses? Is this that fyne and neate bodie, that was so trimlie pollished, and adorned? Is this the ende of the maiestie of Princes scepters, and roiall crownes? Is this the ende of the glorie of the world?

And such is the great change and alteration in worldlie affaires that it maie so come to passe [that earth may be dug from your grave] to make morter for a walle, and so shall thy seelie bodie (being now changed into earth) become afterwardes an earthen walle.… And how manie bodies of Kinges and Emperors trowest thou have come already to this promotion.

These illustrations from Elizabethan fencing manuals show fighting with a single rapier (the technique used by the best fighters). Those who used more than one weapon, like Laertes, were looked down on as amateur swordsmen or habitual fighters.



English soldier with rapier (1640)

Wisdom Is Free from Fortune

The Fall of Princes (1494)

Hamlet *contains 16 references to the idea of Fortune. At the beginning of the play, the hero faces a "sea of troubles." But the wisdom of his friend Horatio shows how to deal with Fortune's storms.*

When Hamlet calls Rosencrantz a "sponge," he implies that Claudius is a tyrant rather than a true king. During the Renaissance, a tyrant was recognized by several signs: hired guards, selfish decisions, and stupid advisers. When such a tyrant permits his advisers "like sponges to gather some moisture, it is but to squeeze them out afterwards to his own use." [1]

Hamlet's suggestion that Claudius will squeeze his yes-men dry (4.2.12–20) is echoed in "Sycophants and Sponge" from Jeffrey Whitney's ***Emblems*** *(1586).*

"Dancing to Fortune's Tune," by Mitelli, *Proverbi Figurati,* 1678

"Wheel of Fortune," from Hans Burgkmair's illustrations for Petrarch's *Book of Fortune*

King James' Revenge

Most moralists during the Renaissance believed that revenge should be left to God. However, princes could act against usurpers to restore order to their country. The duty faced by the fictional Prince of Denmark also burdened an English king, as Roland Mushat Frye explains in ***The Renaissance Hamlet: Issues and Responses in 1600.***

The King

I speake of Christiene the fourth king of Denmarke, whome I did see at Roschild, to which towne or Citty he came, attended with tenn Coaches, and a Courtier satt by the kings syde in his owne Coache, which was drawne with three horses, and these Coaches were like those used in Germany, covered with black coarse Cloth lined with Canves or Course Cloth, and borne upp with litle rounde hoopes of wood fastened with hookes of iron, so as the Couer falls backward if they will ride in open ayre, or may be pulled over their heads at both ends and buckled in the midst, if the weather be rayny or cold. He was of a fayre Complexion and bigg sett, and about some fifteene yeares of age, and they said he could speake the Dutch, French, and Italian tongues, and was delighted with shooting in a muskett, with musick and with reading of historyes, and spent two howers in the morning and as many after dinner at his booke, and passed the rest of the day in diverse exercises, attended by his Hoffmeister (that is master of his Court)....

Mary, Queen of Scots was beheaded by her cousin Elizabeth in 1587 for plotting to seize the throne.

The Court

The king had 70 Trabantoes for guarde of his person, and each of them had for his [allowance] monethly five Dollers, and for wages yearely 24 dollers, and twice in the yeare they were apparrelled [or clothed]. And he hadd tenn horsemen called Hascheri, whereof each man had 20 dollers monethly for keeping of two horses, and yearely wages 20 dollers, and apparrell twice in the year. Some thirty gentlemen following the Court at that tyme had each man Fifty dollers monethly to keepe five horses. The Cuppbearer had as much to keepe so many horses, and morouer 300 dollers yearely for wages or pention. The like intertainment had the cheefe Cooke and the gentlemen Servers who carryed upp the meat, and one of them supplyed the place of Caruer, but no man tasted the meat, which Ceremonye I heard was not in use with them....The king did eat alone, with the dores open for any man to enter. When they have a Queene she dwells in a [separate] syde of the Pallace, and hath her owne officers, and her table apart from the king.

The Revenues and Tributes

Touching the Revenues and Tributes; Denmarke hath no Mynes of gold or silver.... The fishing of Herrings Codd and like fishes to be dryed, and the exportation of masts for shipps, and of great quantity of deale boardes out of Norway, and of Brimstone from the Mountayne Hecla in Iseland and some like Commodityes yeilde a good revenue to the Crowne....An incredible tribute is raysed of the

Mary's son, James VI of Scotland, also ruled England as James I.

Traveling Players

Traveling actors gave trial performances before they were hired. In towns, they were welcomed by the mayor. If they received permission to perform, they were paid by the town council.

Fynes Moryson's ***Itinerary,*** *published in 1617, describes the customs of 12 European nations. Here he describes an English traveling company much like the one that Hamlet engaged to perform "The Mousetrap."*

Shipps passing the Narrow Sea called the Sounde, dividing Denmarke and Norway, and so leading into the Baltick Sea, which shipps paid tribute as well at the entrance as the retourne out of the Sounde. For the Danes had two strong Forts built in the narrowest mouthe of the Sounde (at the entrance into the Hauen of Elsenure, where the passage lyes open into the Baltick Sea) and one of the Forts is called Chronoburg seated in the village of Elsenure and the Cheefe Iland of Denmarke called Sealand and the other Fort is called Elzburg seated in the kingdome of Norway, and these Forts are so neere one to the other, as no shipp can safely passe them without leave.

awes and Judgments

…In Capitall Judgments they doe not as the Germans extort confessions by torment, but the accused are tryed and pronounced guilty or not guilty by a Quest of sixteene men, as in England they are tryed by twelve men.…The goods of all (excepting Gentlemen) condemned to death, are confiscated to the king. For gentlemen are not condemned to death… for mutuall wrongs and manslaughters among themselves, commonly they pursue them by private reveng, in which quarrells notwithstanding they (as the Germans) are of a placable nature.

…The king never pardons any murther or Capitall Crime.

Daniel Maclise, *The Play Scene in Hamlet* (1842)

[1] *want:* extreme poverty; lack of the necessities of life such as food and clothing

Hamlet and the Lord Chamberlain's Men

Shakespeare's plays were regarded as popular entertainment when they were first presented. Martin Holmes describes how the author adapted his plays to the requirements of his acting company in ***The Guns of Elsinore*** *(1964).*

Fortune was one of the most popular goddesses in Roman times. Her name probably comes from *fors* (chance or luck) and *fero* (I bring). However, even those who worshipped her knew that Fortune was changeable.

Later Christian writers tried to reconcile the idea of luck with belief in divine providence. They often described how Biblical and classical heroes were brought low by their own sins or undeserved bad luck.

Works describing the rise and fall of famous people were called *de causibus* tragedies. One famous example, *The Mirror for Magistrates,* was popular in Shakespeare's time. Such works were often illustrated with Fortune's wheel.

Fortune "is painted with a wheel, to signify to you… that she is turning, and inconstant," according to Shakespeare's *Henry V.* Poor unlucky people were at the bottom of the wheel, while the rich and powerful were at the top. Kings at the top of the wheel were often shown with their crowns falling off because the wheel was constantly turning; good luck was never permanent.

No one could escape Fortune's "slings and arrows." But those who were wise did not have to dance to Fortune's tune. For this reason, Hamlet admires Horatio for his good judgment. Horatio is able to see all sides of

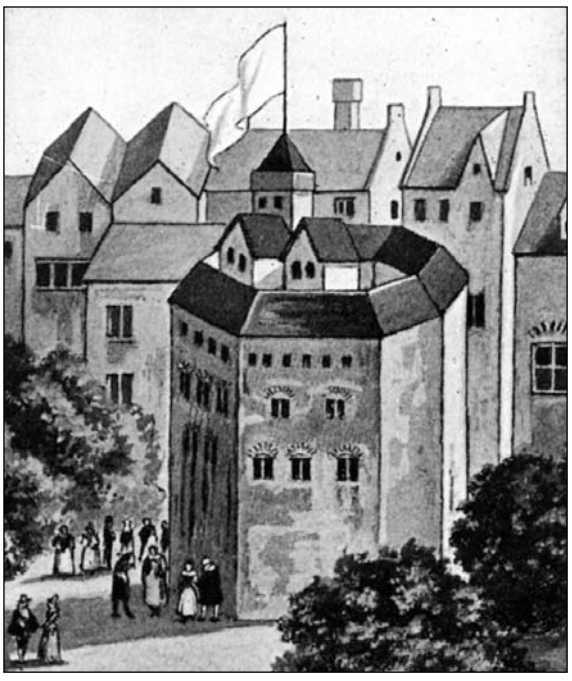
The part of Hamlet was first played by the leading actor of Shakespeare's company, Richard Burbage (1568–1619), who was famous for his subtle interpretations. Burbage was also an artist who painted a likeness of Shakespeare and the self-portrait at left.

One Day at the Globe

Plays seemed immoral to many people in Shakespeare's time. The Bard's other problems included a shortage of actors and rowdy audiences.

an issue and choose the right way to act. Because of his balanced judgment, he is "not a pipe for Fortune's finger/ To sound what stop she please" (3.2.75–76).

continued

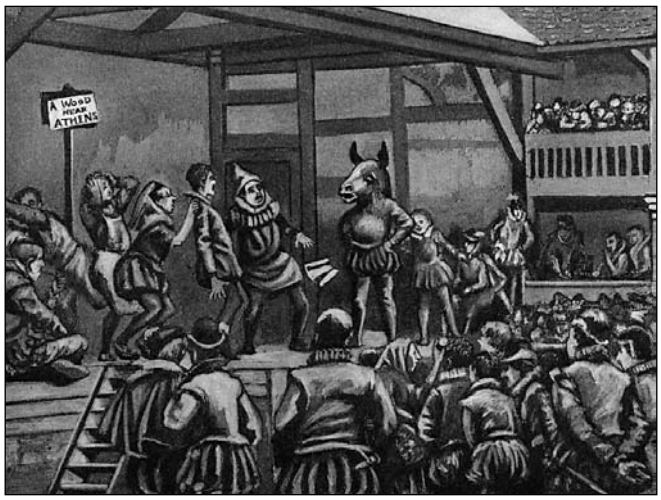


A white flag was flown to announce a performance at London theaters.

ome thirty years before Shakespeare dramatized the responsibility laid upon Prince Hamlet to avenge his father's "foul and most unnatural murder" (1.5.25), a similar responsibility of revenge was laid upon an actual prince who was also told in effect that he was born to set it right. That prince was James VI of Scotland, destined within some three years after the appearance of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* to succeed Elizabeth on the English throne. The historical events in Scotland involved James' mother, Mary, Queen of Scots, and the assassination in 1567 of his father, Lord Henry Darnley, who after his marriage to Queen Mary was known as King Henry. King Henry's dead body was discovered lying in the orchard. The assassin was certainly the Earl of Bothwell, who shortly after committing the crime of regicide married the widowed queen and moved toward the crown.…

James' paternal grandparents the Earl and Countess of Lennox laid the challenge of revenge squarely upon their infant grandson King James, and did so in one of the most remarkable testaments to come down to us from that time. They arranged for a memorial painting to be executed by Livinus de Vogelaare between October, 1567, and January, 1568, within a year of the assassination. Known as *The Darnley Memorial,* this oil was carefully planned and prepared as a complete visual record of the whole scandalous history.… As the wall plaque in the right background states, the work was commissioned by the Earl and Countess of Lennox so that "if they, who are already old, should be deprived of this life before the majority of their descendent, the King of Scots, he may have a memorial from them in order that he shut not out of his memory the recent atrocious murder of the King his father, until God should avenge it through him."

…Every effort was made during the reign of James to secure the return to Scotland and execution of the regicide Bothwell, but to no avail. Bothwell died in April, 1578, apparently insane, in a dungeon in Denmark, where he was imprisoned for crimes committed in Scandinavia. Bothwell's confession (apparently in anticipation of death) declared that Mary was innocent and that she had no connection with the murder plot or its execution.… James accepted the statement as clearing his mother, to the great relief of his own mind. In June, 1581, the Earl of Morton was convicted and executed for complicity in the regicide, thereby officially implying Mary's innocence of that crime. King James was only twelve years old when Bothwell died, and fifteen when Morton was put to death. Thereafter there was no more vengeance to enact, and for the rest of his life James remained convinced that his mother had not been involved in the initial murder.

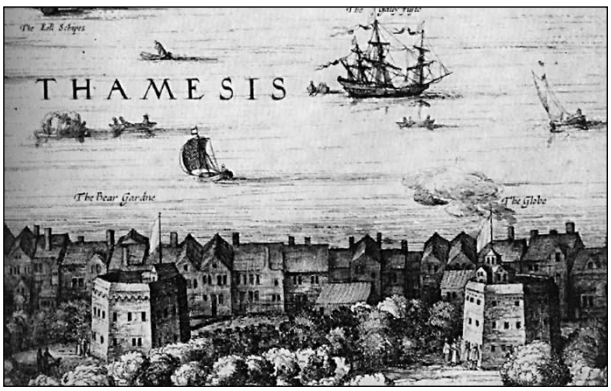


Groundlings stand in front of the stage to watch a performance at the Globe.

The Globe Today

Richard Covington describes "The Rebirth of Shakespeare's Globe" in this article from Smithsonian Magazine *(November 1997).*

IT IS A SINGULARITY in the nature of the English, that they are strangly adicted to all kyndes of pleasure above all other nations.…Out of this naturall adiction to pleasure (or idlenes if you will so call it) and out of naturall boldenes lesse to feare death than want,[1] more persons are executed in England for stealing and Roberyes by the high way, then in many vast kingdomes abroade, yet doe not these offences so much abounde as in those [pre-Reformation] tymes, and for manuall trades, wee are now almost altogether served by natives, who for necessity to eate theire owne breade, are in good measure growne industrious Artizens. But for the poynt of pleasures, the English from the lordes to very husbandmen, have generally more fayre and more large Gardens and Orchardes, then any other nation. All Cittyes, Townes and villages swarme with Companyes of Musicians and Fidlers, which are rare in other Kingdomes. The Citty of London alone hath foure or five Companyes of players with their peculiar Theaters Capable of [holding] many thousands, wherein they all play every day in the weeke but Sunday, with most strang concourse of people… as there be, in my opinion, more Playes in London then in all the partes of the worlde I have seene, so doe these players or Comedians excell all other in the worlde. Whereof I haue seene some stragling broken Companyes that passed into Netherland and Germany, followed by the people from one towne to another, though they understoode not their wordes, only to see theire action, yea marchants at Fayres bragged more to have seene them, then of the good [profits] they made. Not to speake of frequent spectacles in London exhibited to the people by Fencers, by walkers on Ropes, and like men of activity, nor of frequent Companyes of Archers shooting in all the fieldes, nor of Saynts dayes, which the people not keeping (at least most of them, or with any devotion) for Church service, yet keepe for recreation of walking and gaming.



Visscher's *Map of London* (1620)

Elizabethan theaters were located south of the Thames near the bear garden.

continued

REVIEWING THE other plays that Shakespeare had written for his fellows over the past few years, we can see a selection of particular types that occur in each, and may well have been written with specific members of the company in mind. There is a brilliant, rather florid player, who specializes in elaborate speech full of verbal flourishes [in such roles as Gratiano, Hotspur, or Ancient Pistol]. There is another whose line is quiet or passionate malignity, who must have played King John [and] Shylock.… And there was a "heavy man" to carry the gravity of Antonio, Hubert, Henry IV and the Banished Duke. All of these will find themselves provided with suitable parts in the new play, and their patrons will see the actors they like, with full opportunity of exercising the particular qualities for which they like them.

…On the Shakespearean stage there was no such person as the Leading Lady. The boys who took the women's parts were undoubtedly talented, popular, and efficient, or dramatists would not have written for them as they did; but when all was said and done they *were* boys, and not responsible adults with shares in the company and voices in its counsels. Moreover, they were comparatively short-lived in their profession. Sooner or later the heroine's voice would break and her whiskers grow, and she would have to start again as a small-part player in doublet and hose. In consequence, a Shakespearean heroine would not carry the weight in the author's day that she does in our own. The Queen and Ophelia might be well played indeed, but they would not command attention in the way that interpreters of those parts are now able to do, nor—and this is the important point—would it be expected of them. They have their influence on Hamlet, they contribute to his destruction and are themselves destroyed through him, but they are no more than incidentals, and to all intents and purposes, for the Elizabethan spectator, Hamlet stands and suffers alone.

Reconstructed Globe Theatre, London Adrian Arbib/Corbis

❶ **Corridor** A passageway serving the middle gallery.

❷ **Entrance** Point leading to the staircase and upper galleries.

❸ **Middle Gallery** The seats here were higher priced.

❹ **The Heavens** So identified by being painted with the zodiac signs.

❺ **Hut** A storage area that also held a winch system for lowering characters to the stage.

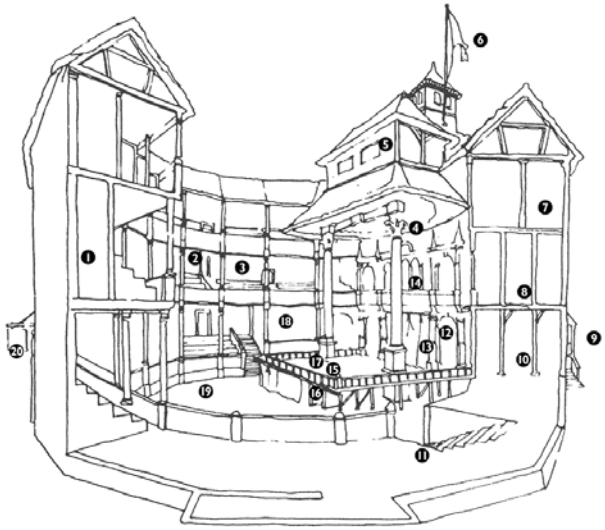
❻ **Flag** A white flag above the theater meant a show that day.

❼ **Wardrobe** A storage area for costumes and props.

❽ **Dressing Rooms** Rooms where actors were "attired" and awaited their cues.

❾ **Tiring-House Door** The rear entrance or "stage door" for actors or privileged spectators.

❿ **Tiring-House** Backstage area providing space for storage and business.



⓫ **Stairs** Theater goers reached the galleries by staircases enclosed by stairwells.

⓬ **Stage Doors** Doors opening into the Tiring-House.

⓭ **Inner Stage** A recessed playing area often curtained off except as needed.

⓮ **Gallery** Located above the stage to house musicians or spectators.

⓯ **Trap Door** Leading to the Hell area where a winch elevator was located.

⓰ **Hell** The area under the stage, used for ghostly comings and goings or for storage.

⓱ **Stage** Major playing area jutting into the Pit, creating a sense of intimacy.

⓲ **Lords Rooms** or private galleries. Six pennies let a viewer sit here, or sometimes on stage.

⓳ **The Pit** Sometimes referred to as "The Yard" where the "groundlings" watched.

⓴ **Main Entrance** Here the doorkeeper collected admission.

With a cast-list like that of the average Shakespearean play, there would be considerable doubling of parts. The text of the First Quarto has indicated the way in which one member of the company was apparently Marcellus, Voltimand and a Player in succession, and [possibly] the actor who played Laertes was not allowed to sit idle in the tiring-house during the long middle section of the play, when he was supposed to be away in France. Horatio, too, may well have had a temporary metamorphosis and "gone on" for a few lines as an unnamed Gentleman.…

The Hamlet Legend

The first biography of Hamlet was written by Saxo Grammaticus around 1200. Saxo probably based his account on Danish legends, although he may have been influenced by Icelandic and even Celtic oral traditions. His story of Amleth is found in the ***History of the Danes,*** *Books Three and Four. François de Belleforest retold it in his* ***Histoires tragiques*** *(1576). Shakespeare probably read the story in an English translation of Belleforest's popular work.*

Fortinbras of Norway, who makes a spectacular entry at the end and must be played by an actor capable of catching and holding the spectators' attention when their emotion is well-nigh exhausted, was probably Bernardo earlier in the play, and it is tempting to think that Polonius and the Ghost reappeared in the last act as two clowns digging Ophelia's grave.

The oldest known picture of Hamlet shows him holding the royal scepter and the orb.
Ambales Rimur (c. 1600)

In Shakespeare's London, a day's entertainment often began with a favorite amusement, bear-baiting. A bear would be captured and chained to a stake inside a pit. A pack of dogs would be released, and they would attack the bear. Spectators placed bets on who would die first. Some bears, such as "old Henry Hunks," became crowd favorites. Many bear pits had to keep up to 120 dogs at a time, just to ensure enough healthy dogs for the day's "sport." The bear pits only cost a penny, so they were very popular with the working-class Londoners.

After the bear-baiting was over, another penny purchased admission to a play. Each theater had its own company of actors. These actors were often supported by a nobleman or a member of the royal family. For example, Shakespeare was a member of the Lord Chamberlain's Men. The Lord Chamberlain arranged entertainment for the Queen and her court.

When he wasn't at Court, Shakespeare was busy as part-owner of the Globe Theatre. He wrote plays, hired actors, and paid the bills. Since the Globe presented a new play every three weeks, Shakespeare and his actors had little time to rehearse or polish their productions. To complicate matters even more, most actors played more than one part in a play. One troupe used only seven members to play 18 roles.

In order to overcome these problems, actors and managers had to improvise. If one cast member was sick, another took over. It didn't matter if the character was young or old, male or female. Makeup could

continued

[1] *Jutland:* a peninsula in Northern Europe that includes the Danish mainland and part of northern Germany

[2] *roving:* raiding

make anyone look old, and young boys played all the female roles. Most acting companies had three or four young boys who were practically raised in the theater. They started acting as early as age seven and played female roles until they began shaving. Shakespeare had a favorite boy actor (probably named John Rice) who played Juliet, Cleopatra, and Lady Macbeth. Actresses would not become part of the English theater for another 50 years.

On the day of a performance, a flag was raised at the tower of the tiring house. The flag showed the Greek god Hercules carrying the world on his shoulders. Hercules also appeared above the door, with the Globe's motto: *Totus mundus agit histronium* or "all the world's a stage." Rosencrantz's mention of "Hercules and his load" (2.2.345) is a punning reference to the theater in which *Hamlet* was performed.

Rosencrantz also mentions that the "tragedians of the city" were forced to go on tour because of competition from the "children." Three adult companies were authorized to perform in London. When the choirboys of St. Paul's Cathedral and the Children of the Chapel began performing, audiences flocked to private theaters to hear them. By 1608, however, the children were no longer a serious threat. The boys of St. Paul's used two reigning kings, including James I, as characters in a play. Some of the boys were imprisoned, and their theater was sold to one of Shakespeare's partners. As a result, Shakespeare acquired an interest in the Blackfriars theater. Because Blackfriars was more profitable than the Globe, he began to write romantic comedies again. These plays were better suited to Blackfriars' small stage.

Most plays were performed in the afternoon, since Elizabethan playgoers didn't have nine-to-five jobs. One writer noted, "For whereas the afternoon being the idlest time of the day, wherein men who are their own masters (such as Gentlemen of the Court and the number of Captains and Soldiers about London) do wholly bestow themselves upon pleasure...either into gaming, following of harlots, drinking, or seeing a play, is it not better...they should betake themselves to the least [of these evils] which is plays?" Shakespearean scholar Andrew Gurr estimates that one in ten Londoners attended plays on a regular basis.

The audience crowded into public theaters at about 2 P.M. The cheapest seats weren't seats at all but standing room in front of the stage. This area was occupied by "groundlings" or "penny knaves," who could be more trouble to the actors than they were worth. If the play was boring, people would throw rotten eggs or vegetables. They talked loudly to their friends, played cards, and even picked fights with each other. One bad performance could cause a riot. One theater was set on fire by audience members who didn't like the play.

The stage was open to the sky, so if it rained or snowed, the actors were miserable. The stage was rather bare, with only a few pieces of furniture. Some theaters did add a few special effects. For example, Shakespeare had trapdoors installed at the Globe Theatre. He used them when he needed a ghost to rise up on the stage. Blood was also a big attraction at most theaters. During battle and murder scenes, actors hid bags of pig's blood and guts under their stage doublets. When pierced with a sword, the bags spilled out over the stage and produced a realistic gory effect.

In addition to designing sets and finding actors, managers had to deal with the unexpected. In 1575, a group of players put on a pageant for Queen Elizabeth I. Unfortunately, one of the actors had drunk too much ale. In the middle of his performance, he pulled off his mask and shouted, "No Greek God am I, your Grace! Honest Harry Goldingham, that's me!" Luckily, Queen Elizabeth thought it was a great joke.

continued

Amblet from a manuscript dated 1597 Royal Library Stockholm

Despite all these obstacles, theater became widely popular. By the time Shakespeare died in 1616, there were more than 30 theaters in and around London. Even today, English theaters are considered some of the best in the world.

[3] *obsequies:* funeral or burial rites

Under a cloudless, inky sky in London, Valentine, friend of Proteus, the distinctly ungentlemanly gentleman in William Shakespeare's comedy *The Two Gentlemen of Verona,* was begging Julia to forgive Proteus for his infidelities. The sold-out audience of 1,500 inside the new Globe theater heaved a collective sigh of disgust. The couple expected to kiss and make up amid audience laughter, but the spectators had other ideas.

Suddenly, a voice from the standing crowd blurted out: "Don't do it, Julia." The actors stopped dead. In the intimacy of the open-air theater, this impassioned cry from the audience was like having an unexpected player thrust on stage—one incensed enough to rewrite the ending.

…Shakespeare and the late Sam Wanamaker [the American actor who spearheaded the Globe's rebirth] must have been smiling in the wings. Once more, a Globe audience had tossed a wrench in the theatrical works.

After an absence of nearly 400 years, Shakespeare's Globe theater rises again on the South Bank of the Thames River, 200 yards from its original 1599 site.…

…Authentically re-created from extensive scholarly and archaeological evidence, the Globe is once again the Bard's theater. Using Elizabethan building techniques, the theater was constructed as a 20-sided polygon, 100 feet in diameter and 45 feet high, with whitewashed, half-timber walls and a thatched roof crown. Inside, three tiers of wooden benches surround an open yard and platform thrust stage.

Within the roofless theater, plays are staged in much the same way as when Shakepeare's troupe produced them—without sets, decor, microphones or spotlights, or any of the techno-wizardry and theatrical prestidigitation now standard even in the most low-budget West End musical. The sole concession is a bank of floodlights to replicate daylight for evening productions.

…"Sam's dream was that we try to understand what Shakespeare was all about in his own theater," Sir Peter [Hall, a member of the board of trustees,] explained. "The essence of Shakespeare's drama is live inter-

"O Rose of May!"

Helena Faucit Martin's performance as Ophelia won critical acclaim for throwing new light on the part. The noted actress described her thoughts on the character in a letter to Miss Geraldine E. Jewsbury, which was later published in Lady Helena's ***Some of Shakespeare's Female Characters*** *(1885).*

action with a packed audience in a very small space in daylight, challenged to use their imaginations. There's nowhere else in Britain where that's happening."

Adds Globe architect Jon Greenfield, "…Seeing Shakespeare performed in the theater for which it was originally written will reveal even more about the text."

…[Architects and scholars reconstructed the Globe from] meticulous perspective drawings of the neighborhood in the early 1600s[,] …sophisticated guesswork and plans from similar theaters, classical models by the Roman architect Vitruvius in vogue at the time, and patchy archaeological finds from the old Globe and the nearby Rose Theatre.

…In a phenomenally painstaking process, the builders labored to replicate the wood-frame structure using the same carpentry techniques as the Elizabethan builders, from turning the balusters to thatching the roof by hand. Like the original Globe, the half-timber building is covered with several coats of a plaster mixture of lime, sand and animal hair.

The English oak timbers were cut green and joined together so that they will season into one another. "The joints are so tight a cigarette paper couldn't slide through them," boasted architect Greenfield.

…The stage is five feet above ground level to permit the summoning forth of demons and ghosts from a spacious underworld. A pair of wooden pillars, painted to look like marble, supports the indigo blue heavens, studded with gilt stars and crescent moons. Behind the stage is the much-disputed [nine foot high] balcony and colonnade elaborately carved with mythological figures. A gabled roof above the balcony holds equipment for lowering gods and spirits into the action—the deus ex machina, "god from the machine," of classical theater.

The interior sports the same kind of gaudy decorative paint job favored by decorators of the time, with the wooden figures and molding splashed with eye-jarring scarlet, egg-yolk yellow, and vermilion. "The Elizabethans were madmen for painting anything they could get a brush to," according to Greenfield.

The thatched roof is the first in London since a ban was imposed in the aftermath of the Great Fire of 1666 that leveled much of the city. To pass muster with the local fire department, the peaked water-reed thatch now sports a spiky row of sprinklers. Fire is no idle threat: the original Globe burned to the ground in 1613 after cannon wadding discharged during a performance of *Henry VIII* ignited the roof. A second Globe was built on the same site within a year.

The new Globe can seat about 1,500—with 500 on the ground and 1,000 on the tiered benches. In Shakespeare's day, when people were physically smaller and audiences more accustomed to jostling together, twice as many spectators could squeeze into the theater's narrow confines.

…Performing in the Globe was a free-for-all, a cross between acting in a goldfish bowl and playing a football match with words, words, words. The spectators became inextricably wrapped up in the action. "In Hamlet's soliloquy, you knew Hamlet wasn't alone," Gurr declared. "You could see a thousand people sitting or standing behind him. This completely altered the meaning of his speech, implicating the audience more closely than ever in his deeds."

…The Globe's new leader [artistic director Mark Rylance] is hardly on the verge of allowing a *Comedy of Errors* on motorcycles, but he's equally wary of having the Globe slide

continued

into museum theater. In Rylance's view, the theater should be not only about reinventing the past but also about using it to make completely new theatrical discoveries.

…The Wooden O has once more found its voice.

t this time Horwendil and Feng, whose father Gerwendil had been governor of the Jutes, were appointed in his place by Rorik to defend Jutland.[1] But Horwendil held the monarchy for three years, and then, to win the height of glory, devoted himself to roving[2]….

[Horwendil] had now passed three years in valiant deeds of war; and, in order to win higher rank in Rorik's favour, he assigned to him the best trophies and the pick of the plunder. His friendship with Rorik enabled him to woo and win in marriage his daughter Gerutha, who bore him a son Amleth.

Such great good fortune stung Feng with jealousy, so that he resolved treacherously to waylay his brother, thus showing that goodness is not safe even from those of a man's own house. And behold, when a chance came to murder him, his bloody hand sated the deadly passion of his soul. Then he took the wife of the brother he had butchered, capping unnatural murder with incest….

[Feng] glossed over fratricide with a show of righteousness. Gerutha, said he, though so gentle that she would do no man the slightest hurt, had been visited with her husband's extremest hate; and it was all to save her that he had slain his brother; for he thought it shameful that a lady so meek and unrancorous should suffer the heavy

Sir John Everett Millais' *Ophelia* (1852)

The Spanish Tragedy

by Thomas Kyd

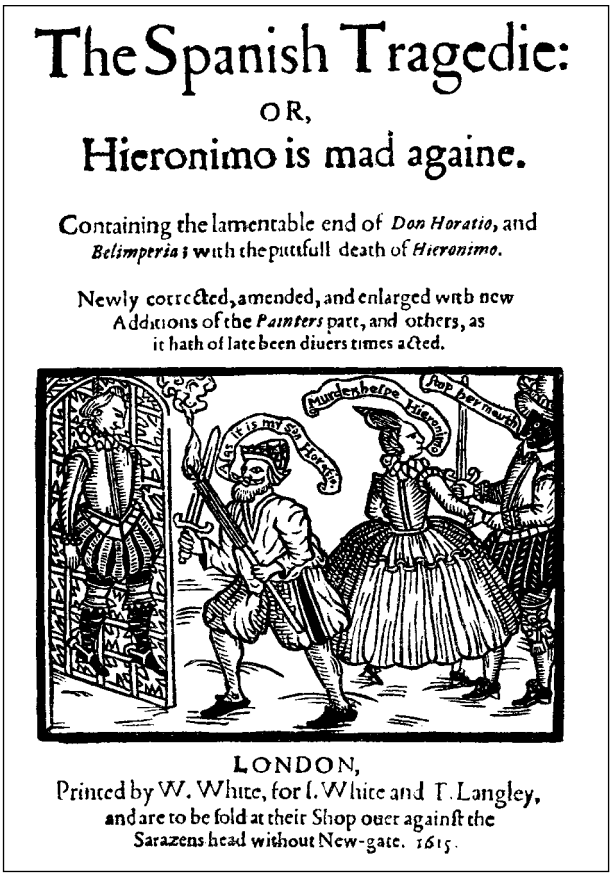
Violent revenge tragedies were popular in Shakespeare's time. In this excerpt from ***The Spanish Tragedy,*** *Hieronimo vows revenge for the death of his son.*

disdain of her husband. Nor did his smooth words fail in their intent; for at courts, where fools are sometimes favoured and backbiters preferred, a lie lacks not credit. Nor did Feng keep from shameful embraces the hands that had slain a brother; pursuing with equal guilt both of his wicked and impious deeds.

mleth Pretends Insanity

Amleth beheld all this, but feared lest too shrewd a behaviour might make his uncle suspect him. So he chose to feign dulness, and pretend an utter lack of wits. This cunning course not only concealed his intelligence but ensured his safety. Every day he remained in his mother's house utterly listless and unclean, flinging himself on the ground, and bespattering his person with foul and filthy dirt. His discoloured face and visage smutched with slime denoted foolish and grotesque madness. All he said was of a piece with these follies; all he did savoured of utter lethargy.… He used at times to sit over the fire, and, raking up the embers with his hands, to fashion wooden crooks, and harden them

Thomas Kyd and the *Hamlet* Tradition


The Spanish Tragedie:
OR,
Hieronimo is mad againe.

Containing the lamentable end of *Don Horatio*, and *Belimperia*; with the pittifull death of *Hieronimo*.

Newly corrected, amended, and enlarged with new Additions of the *Painters* part, and others, as it hath of late been diuers times acted.

LONDON,
Printed by W. White, for I. White and T. Langley, and are to be sold at their Shop ouer against the Sarazens head without New-gate. 1615.

Thomas Kyd was one of many playwrights who wrote in the tradition of Seneca, whose tragedies featured bloody action and pompous speeches.

Kyd is probably the author of the ***Ur-Hamlet,*** *a play based on the legend of the Prince of Denmark. No copies of this play exist, but mocking reviews survive.*

In 1596, Thomas Lodge satirized its "ghost which cried so miserably at the Theatre, like an oyster-wife, Hamlet, revenge.*"*

Kyd's most famous play is probably ***The Spanish Tragedy*** *(1592), in which a father seeks revenge for the death of his son. Like* ***Hamlet,*** *the action includes murder, madness, a play-within-a-play, and a ghost.*

The cover of Kyd's ***Spanish Tragedy*** *(shown at left) suggests the play's violent content. Here the hero finds his son dead and his daughter mutilated.*

The Tyrant and the Sponge

pride, may be withdrawen and pluckt away from it. Whereunto hee doeth adde weeping and mourning, which doe conteine an outward profession of repentance, which is very needefull and necessary,….

Hee teacheth then, that another manner of thing is required, that is, that they must be contrite in their heartes, that they must utterly detest and abhorre sinnes, and being at defiance with them, returne unto the Lord their GOD, from whome they went away before.

"Sycophants and Sponge" from Jeffrey Whitney's *Emblems* (1586).

[1] Du Mornay, 1579

Suggested Reading and Viewing List

*If you enjoyed reading **Hamlet,** you may want to explore some other works about ambition and Shakespeare's life and times. The following list offers some suggestions for further reading and viewing.*

in the fire, shaping at their tips certain barbs, to make them hold more tightly to their fastenings. When asked what he was about, he said he was preparing sharp javelins to avenge his father. This answer was not a little scoffed at, all men deriding his idle and ridiculous pursuit; but the thing helped his purpose afterwards. …He always watched with the most punctual care over his pile of stakes that he had pointed in the fire. Some people, therefore, declared that his mind was quick enough, and fancied that he only played the simpleton in order to hide his understanding, and veiled some deep purpose under a cunning feint. His wiliness (said these) would be most readily detected, if a fair woman were put in his way in some secluded place, who should provoke his mind to the temptations of love…. If his lethargy were feigned, he would seize the opportunity.…[A warning from his foster-brother allows Amleth to escape the trap.]

mleth Kills a Spy

[A friend of Feng suggested that] Feng was purposely to absent himself, pretending affairs of great import. Amleth should be closeted alone with his mother in her chamber; but a man should first be commissioned to place himself in a concealed part of the room and listen heedfully to what they talked about. For if the son had any wits at all he would not hesitate to speak out in the hearing of his mother.… [Feng pretended to leave and the friend hid in the queen's straw mattress.] But Amleth had his antidote for the treachery. Afraid of being overheard by some eavesdropper, he at first resorted to his usual imbecile ways, and crowed like a noisy cock, beating his arms together to mimic the flapping of wings. Then he mounted the straw and began to swing his body and jump again and again, wishing to try if aught lurked there in hiding. Feeling a lump beneath his feet, he drove his sword into the spot, and impaled him who lay hid. Then he dragged him from his concealment and slew him. [Amleth disposed of the body by cutting it up, boiling the pieces, and throwing it into the sewer. He then reproached his mother, saying,] "Thou hast entered a wicked and abominable state of wedlock, embracing with incestuous bosom thy husband's slayer.… As for me, not idly do I wear the mask of folly; for I doubt not that he who destroyed his brother will riot as ruthlessly in the blood of his kindred.… Yet the passion to avenge my father still burns in my heart; but I am watching the chances, I await the fitting hour.…" With such reproaches he rent the heart of his mother and redeemed her to walk in the ways of virtue.…

When Feng returned, nowhere could he find the man who had suggested the treacherous espial; he searched for him long and carefully, but none said they had seen him anywhere. Amleth, among others, was asked in jest if he had seen any trace of [the spy], and replied that the man had gone to the sewer, but had fallen through its bottom and been stifled by the floods of filth, and that he had been devoured by the swine that came up all about that place. This speech…seemed senseless, though really it expressed the truth.

mleth Escapes Death

Feng now suspected that his stepson was certainly full of guile, and desired to make away with him, but durst not do the deed for fear of the displeasure, not only of Amleth's grandsire Rorik, but also of his own wife. So he thought that the King of Britain should be employed to slay him, so that another could do the deed, and he be

continued

able to feign innocence. Thus, desirous to hide his cruelty, he chose rather to besmirch his friend than to bring disgrace on his own head. Amleth, on departing, gave secret orders to his mother to hang the hall with woven knots, and to perform pretended obsequies[3] for him a year thence; promising that he would then return. Two retainers of Feng then accompanied him, bearing a letter graven on wood—a kind of writing material frequent in old times; this letter enjoined the king of the Britons to put to death the youth who was sent over to him. [Amleth found the letter and changed the instructions to order the death of Feng's friends and to request that the king's daughter marry the wise youth Feng had sent to visit him. Amleth then convinced the king of his wisdom by solving mysteries about the king's parents. The king] gave him his daughter to wife [and] hanged Amleth's companions on the morrow. Amleth, feigning offence, treated this piece of kindness as a grievance, and received from the king, as compensation, some gold, which he afterwards melted in the fire, and secretly caused to be poured into some hollowed sticks.

mleth Avenges His Father

When he had passed a whole year with the king he obtained leave to make a journey, and returned to his own land, carrying away of all his princely wealth and state only the sticks which held the gold. On reaching Jutland…he entered the banquet-room where his own obsequies were being held, and struck all men utterly aghast, rumour having falsely noised about his death.…When he was asked concerning his comrades, he pointed to the sticks he was carrying, and said, "Here is both the one and the other." [He then encouraged the lords to drink heavily. After they fell into drunken sleep,] he brought down the hanging his mother had knitted… and knotted and bound them up in such insoluble intricacy, that not one of the men beneath, however hard he might struggle, could contrive to rise. After this he set fire to the palace. The flames spread, scattering the conflagration far and wide. It enveloped the whole dwelling, destroyed the palace, and burnt them all while they were either buried in deep sleep or vainly striving to arise. Then he went to the chamber of Feng, …plucked up a sword that chanced to be hanging to the bed, and planted his own in its place. Then, awakening his uncle, he told him that his nobles were perishing in the flames, and that Amleth was here, armed with his old crooks to help him, and thirsting to exact the vengeance, now long overdue, for his father's murder. Feng, on hearing this, leapt from his couch, but was cut down while, deprived of his own sword, he strove in vain to draw the strange one. O valiant Amleth, and worthy of immortal fame, who being shrewdly armed with a feint of folly, covered a wisdom too high for human wit under a marvellous disguise of silliness! and not only found in his subtlety means to protect his own safety, but also by its guidance found opportunity to avenge his father. By this skilful defence of himself, and strenuous revenge for his parent, he has left it doubtful whether we are to think more of his wit or his bravery.

Suggested Activities

Using Latitudes in Your Classroom

Bryntysilio, August 10, 1880

…Ophelia was one of the pet dreams of my girlhood—partly, perhaps, from the mystery of her madness. …

And now to tell you, as nearly as I can, what that dream was. I pictured Ophelia to myself as the motherless child of an elderly Polonius. His young wife had first given him a son, Laertes, and had died a few years later, after giving birth to the poor little Ophelia.…The baby Ophelia was left, as I fancy, to the kindly but thoroughly unsympathetic tending of country-folk….

When we see Ophelia first, this "Rose of May" is just budding; and, indeed, it is as a bud, never as a full flower, that she lived her brief life.

…When we first see her, we may fairly suppose that she has been only a few months at court.…Her heart has been touched, and has found its ideal in the one man about the court who was likely to reach it, both from his rare and attractive qualities, and a certain loneliness in his position not very unlike her own. How could she help feeling flattered—drawn towards this romantic, desolate Hamlet, the observed of all observers, whose "music vows" have been early whispered in her ears? On the other hand, what sweet repose it must have been to the tired, moody scholar, soldier, prince, dissatisfied with the world and all its ways, to open his heart to her, and to hear the shy yet eloquent talk which he would woo from her—to watch the look, manner, and movements of this graceful child of nature—watch, too, her growing wonder at her new surroundings….

…I never could get over the shock of [Laertes] lecturing her "touching the lord Hamlet," when we first see them together as he is starting for France. Poor maiden! to have this treasured secret of her inner life, her very life, her very soul, a secret so sweet, so sacred, so covered over, as she thinks, from all eyes—thus dragged rudely to the light; discussed in the most commonplace tone, and her very maidenly modesty questioned! …Then, to be commanded to deny herself to the one being dear to her, and with whom she had sympathy: what a feeling of degradation as well as anguish must have been behind the few words she utters! "I shall obey, my lord."

…Ophelia's conduct in reference to the meeting with Hamlet, concerted by her father and the king, has drawn upon her head a world of, I think, most unjust censure and indignation. When the poor girl is brought, half willingly, half unwillingly, to that (for her) fatal interview, we must not forget the previous one, described by her to her father, when she rushes in affrighted, and recounts Hamlet's sudden and forbidden intrusion upon her in her closet….

All this is startling and sad enough, but not entirely hopeless or remediless. Ophelia has, at least, the solace of hoping, believing, that she is beloved by her "soul's idol." Could she, then, but see him once again, she might learn whether Hamlet's strange agitation were really what was represented—whether, as her father had said, he were indeed

continued

"mad for her love"!…

She will test his affection by offering to return his love-tokens, his gifts and letters—anything to end this torturing suspense. We can believe how cautiously, how tenderly her approaches are made to her so deeply loved, and, as she fears, so sadly afflicted Prince. That Ophelia should, after repeatedly denying her presence to him, thus place herself in his path, and challenge his notice, at once excites in Hamlet's mind a suspicion.…That this innocent girl, as he had thought her, should lend herself to entrap him, drives him past patience; and without mercy he begins to pour down upon her the full vials of his wrath.…

When suddenly challenged, "Where's your father?" …[w]hat can she do but stammer out in reply, "At home, my lord"? Shall she expose the old man, when thus called to answer for him, to the insults, the violence of Hamlet's mad anger, which she fears would have fallen upon his head had she told the truth? No; like Desdemona she faces the falsehood, and, to screen her father, takes it upon her own soul.…I have seen Ophelia's answer brought forward as proof of her weakness of her character; and this weakness asserted to be the cause of Hamlet's failure, or, at least, to play an important part in the tragedy of his character. Such weakness I call *strength*, in the highest, most noble, because most self-forgetting sense of the word.

And so Ophelia, in her "weakness," fears to tell the truth, lest, in this too terrible paroxysm of madness which now possesses him, Hamlet might possibly kill her father. But this catastrophe, alas! is soon to follow, and proves to be the drop too much in her cup of lonely anguish.…

…Only "when they shall meet at compt" will Hamlet even know the grief he has brought upon, the wrong he has done to, this deep and guileless spirit. So far as we see, he has indeed blotted her from his mind as a "trivial fond record." He is so self-centred, so enwrapped in his own suffering, that he has no thought to waste on the delicate girl whom he had wooed with such a "fire of love," and had taught him to listen to his most honeyed vows. He casts her from him like a worthless weed, without a word of explanation or a quiver of remorse.…

Poor rose of May! Who does not give a sigh, a sob of grief, at miserable Gertrude's beautiful account of the accidental watery death of this fragile bud, cut down by the cold spring storm, before her true midsummer had arrived? She sings her own requiem, and carries the flowers of her innocence along with her to the end.…

Dear friend, these are little better than rough notes. I have written much, yet seem to have said nothing of what I would fain have said. "Piece out my imperfections with your thoughts."

Yours always affectionately,

HELENA FAUCIT MARTIN

continued

O eyes, no eyes, but fountains fraught with tears;
O life, no life, but lively form of death;
O world, no world, but mass of public wrongs,
Confus'd and fill'd with murder and misdeeds;
O sacred heavens! if this unhallow'd deed,
If this inhuman and barbarous attempt,
If this incomparable murder thus
Of mine, but now no more, my son,
Shall unreveal'd and unrevenged pass,
How should we term your dealings to be just,
If you unjustly deal with those that in your justice trust?
The night, sad secretary to my moans,
With direful visions wake my vexed soul,
And with the wounds of my distressful son
Solicit me for notice of his death
The ugly fiends do sally forth of hell,
And frame my steps to unfrequented paths,
And fear my heart with fierce inflamed thoughts.
The cloudy day my discontent records,
Early begins to register my dreams
And drive me forth to seek the murderer.

Fiction and Short Works

Doctor Faustus by Christopher Marlowe. Powerful drama of a man who sells his soul to the Devil. Signet, 1969. [RL 5 IL 8+]

In the Hall of the Dragon King by Stephen Lawhead. The mighty king Eskevar has been imprisoned by a craven usurper. It's up to a young priest to save his king in this first volume of a fantasy trilogy. Avon, 1982. [RL 7 IL 8+]

A Parcel of Patterns by Jill Paton Walsh. In 1665, a parcel of dress patterns spreads the plague to a small English village. 16-year-old Mall is forced to live through the horror of mass illnesses and separation from her love. Farrar, 1983. [RL 7 IL 7-12]

The Poems by William Shakespeare. This collection includes all of his sonnets, as well as the long poems *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece.* Bantam, 1988. [RL 9 IL 9-12]

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead by Tom Stoppard. A revision of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as seen through the lowly eyes of the title characters. Grove Press, 1967. [RL 9 IL 10+]

Nonfiction

Elizabethan England: Living Through History by Geoffrey Regan. Fifteen brief biographies of such famous Elizabethans as Christopher

continued

Marlowe, Sir Walter Raleigh, and Mary, Queen of Scots. Includes illustrations, maps, and a glossary. Batsford, 1990. [RL 7 IL 7+]

James I edited by Chelsea House. A lively biography of England's first Scottish king, illustrated with period art and artifacts. Chelsea House, 1990. [RL 7 IL 7+]

Readings on the Tragedies of William Shakespeare edited by Clarice Swisher. Twenty-four critical essays explore Shakespeare's universal appeal, his portrayal of women characters, and aspects of individual plays. Greenhaven, 1996. [RL varies IL 9+]

Shakespeare Alive! by Joseph Papp and Elizabeth Kirkland. Rediscover the world of Shakespeare in this captivating book that describes his world and takes the reader along with a touring company of actors. Bantam, 1988. [RL 8 IL 8+]

Shakespeare A to Z: The Essential Reference to His Plays, His Poems, His Life and Times, and More by Charles Boyce. An informative and easy-to-use reference book that includes more than 3,000 entries, covering each play and poem, every character, theater terms, and more. Dell, 1990. [RL 9 IL 9+]

Videos

The Elizabethan Age. Brought to life with period art and music, this program gives students an overview of the life and times of England's greatest ruler. 1994. Social Studies School Service.

Hamlet. Shakespeare's story of royal revenge, featuring the Prince of Denmark. 1990. Perfection Learning Corporation.

William Shakespeare. Filmed on location at Stratford-upon-Avon, this film provides a valuable introduction to the life and works of Shakespeare. 1958. Social Studies School Service.

Electronic Resources

Editions and Adaptations of Shakespeare. Displays several versions of Shakespeare's plays, from the First Folio through 25 contemporary editions. CD-ROM. Chadwyck-Healey, Inc.
(800-752-0515).

The Globe Home Page. This Web site includes virtual reality views of the reconstructed Globe Theatre. *http://www.rdg.ac.uk/globe.*

Mr. William Shakespeare and the Internet. Honored as one of 500 Best Sites by *HomePCMagazine,* this site has excellent links. *http://daphne.palomar.*

continued

edu/shakespeare.

Shakespeare Illustrated. Harry Rusche "explores nineteenth-century paintings, criticism and productions of Shakespeare's plays and their influences on one another." *http://www.cc.emory.edu/ENGLISH/classes/Shakespeare_Illustrated/Shakespeare.html.*

Shakespeare Search Engine. Search the text of Shakespeare's plays at *http://www.ghics.su.oz.an/~matty/shakespeare/shakespeare.html.*

Resources for Teaching *Hamlet*

Critical Approaches to *Hamlet*

Convenient anthologies of critical opinion include *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Hamlet* and *Shakespeare Survey,* volume 19 (1966).

Reading Aloud/Performing

Michael Tolaydo suggests that students do multiple line-by-line readings of a scene. He gives suggestions on preparing scripts and discussing the readings in "Three-Dimensional Shakespeare," an article in The Folger Library's *Shakespeare Set Free: Teaching HAMLET and HENRY IV PART 1* (Pocket Books, 1994).

Peter Reynolds suggests that students do "walk throughs" of plays in *Practical Approaches to Teaching Shakespeare* (Oxford University Press, 1991).

Other classroom-tested approaches to teaching the Shakespeare canon are presented in *Teaching Shakespeare Today: Practical Approaches and Productive Strategies,* edited by James E. Davis and Ronald E. Salomone (NCTE, 1973).

Shakespeare's England

Excellent visual resources are provided in *The Reader's Encyclopedia of Shakespeare*, edited by Campbell and Quinn (Crowell, 1966) and Maurice Hussey's *The World of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries: A Visual Approach* (Heinemann, 1978).

Detailed descriptions of special effects at the Globe are available in Hodges' *The Third Globe* (Wayne State University Press, 1979).

Renaissance beliefs in the supernatural are discussed in R. H. West's *The Invisible World* (1939) and J. Dover Wilson's *What Happens in Hamlet* (1959).

Shakespeare's Language

Several worksheets to help students deal with early modern English are

continued

available in Randal Robinson's *Unlocking Shakespeare's Language: Help for the Teacher and Student* (NCTE: Theory and Research into Practice series, 1989).

An interesting discussion of "Elizabethan Speech and Shakespearean Language Use" is available in Mary Ann Rygiel's *Shakespeare among Schoolchildren: Approaches for the Secondary Classroom* (NCTE, 1992).

Hamlet, A Parallel Text, Second Edition has modern-language and original text versions of the play on facing pages. Available from Perfection Learning (800-831-4190).

continued

The following discussion topics and activities are suggestions for incorporating pieces from ***Latitudes*** *into your curriculum. Most suggestions can be adapted for independent, small-group, or whole-class activities. In addition, the list includes activities that can be done before, during, and after reading the play. The variety of choices allows you to modify and use those activities that will make* ***Hamlet*** *meaningful to your students.*

About the Author

1. Before students read this selection, explore what they already know about Shakespeare and the preconceptions they have about the man and the plays. After students have read the biography, discuss whether their views have changed.
2. Encourage students to speculate about what kind of works Shakespeare might write today and which current playwright he might be most like.
3. Scholars have argued for centuries about whether William Shakespeare really wrote the plays published under that name. Explore whether knowing who wrote *Hamlet* makes any difference to students' appreciation of the play.

Critics' Comments

1. Encourage students to define what makes a literary work a "classic." Then ask them to apply their criteria to *Hamlet.*
2. Ask students to identify possible reasons for the wide range of critical views about *Hamlet.*
3. After students have read the play, invite them to write their own critical statements about *Hamlet.* Remind them to support their opinions with evidence from the play. Then post unsigned comments written on large sheets of paper around the room. The class can discuss the different reactions.
4. Michael Platt believes that "Shakespeare's plays turn around certain questions. Sometimes the question is voiced aloud in the play by one or more of the characters. More often it is the tacit or explicit answers the characters offer which betray the unvoiced questions they struggle with. Hence it is the task of the interpreter to discover the questions and to ask the questions." Invite students to identify the question(s) in *Hamlet.* (Platt's comment is from his *Rome and Romans According to Shakespeare,* in *Jacobean Drama Studies* 51, 1976.)

Voices from the Play

1. Share one or more of these quotations with students before they read the play. Encourage them to make inferences about the speakers and predictions about the plot.
2. After students have read the play, ask them to identify the speaker of each quotation in a timed competition or on a test.
3. Suggest that students write a paragraph or critical essay about how one of these passages applies to the character who speaks it.

continued

Reading *Hamlet*

1. You might give your students a preview of the key events of each act before they read the play.
2. Help your students get the beat. Challenge them to find the rhythmic pattern in the words to their favorite music or to convert a passage from the play to a rap. Students might also record a conversation among themselves and then try converting their dialogue to iambic pentameter.
3. To help students interpret the play orally, you might direct their attention to passages where the thought continues past the end of the line, as in "Therefore I have entreated him along/With us to watch" (1.1.31–32). You might also show them how rapidly the dialogue moves when two characters share an iambic pentameter line. For example, you might read the conversation between Horatio and the guards at the beginning of act 1 with awkward pauses, then with the characters' lines alternating more quickly as if in a conversation. Students might then try reading the confrontation between Hamlet and his mother (3.4.11–36).
4. You might show an introductory scene from the play on video. See how much students can deduce simply from the words they are able to catch and nonverbal cues such as gestures, facial expression, and tone of voice.
5. Preparing special scripts may help your students become comfortable with reading Shakespeare. Michael Tolaydo recommends multiple line-by-line readings of a scene in "Three-Dimensional Shakespeare," an article in The Folger Library's *Shakespeare Set Free* (Pocket Books, 1993). Peter Reynolds describes "walking through" a play in *Practical Approaches to Teaching Shakespeare* (Oxford University Press, 1991).
6. As students read the play, invite them to compile their own tips and suggestions to help next year's class handle *Hamlet*.
7. Encourage students to explore Web sites related to Shakespeare's language. A unique perspective is available on the Klingon Language Institute Web site at *http.//www.kli.org/KLIhome.html.* Shakepeare's *Hamlet* was the Institute's first published translation. Several sites feature Shakespearean insults.

The Geographical Picture

1. Encourage students to trace geographic references in *Hamlet* on the map.
   - act 1 scene 1: King Hamlet wins land from the King of Norway
   - act 1 scene 2: Laertes plans to return to France; Horatio comes to Elsinore from Wittenberg
   - act 4 scene 4 : Hamlet, en route to England, meets Fortinbras's army on the march toward Poland
2. Discuss why Shakespeare set his drama in Denmark instead of England. Students may find it helpful to know that Shakespeare stopped writing about English history for a time after the Earl of Essex commissioned a private performance of his *Richard II,* a play

about a weak English king who was replaced by a strong, ambitious subject. Essex was known to be concerned about who would succeed the childless Queen Elizabeth and was suspected of planning to seize the throne. Shakespeare's company was rebuked by the Court for the performance, and Essex was eventually beheaded for treason. The question of the succession was not resolved at the time *Hamlet* was written.

3. Explore whether *Hamlet* would have been as effective if it were set in another country. You might want to call students' attention to references to the Danes' "placable nature" in "An Englishman Visits Elsinore" (pages 26–27) and to the elected kingship in the final scene of *Hamlet*.

A Time in History

1. If you wish to provide additional historical background for students, a useful summary of the political plots of the time can be found in Mary Ann Rygiel's *Shakespeare among Schoolchildren* (NCTE, 1992).
2. The dedication of the 1611 "King James" Bible refers to the translators' relief "when we beheld the Government established in Your Highness, and Your hopeful Seed, by an undoubted Title, and this also accompanied with peace and tranquility at home and abroad." Invite students to use information on the timeline to speculate about why the translators felt such relief at the prospect of an orderly succession.
3. *Hamlet* contains more references to Elizabethan theater than any other Shakespearean play. Show students how footnotes in the edition they are using explain topical allusions such as the reference to the Children of the Chapel as "little eyases" (2.2.363). The competition between the children and the public theaters is explained in "One Day at the Globe" (pages 32–33).

Heavenly Spirit or Fiend from Hell?

1. Before students read the selection, ask them how a character returned from the grave might be handled in a play written in our time. What special effects might be used to portray the character? Could audiences ever take it seriously, or would it have to be portrayed as an hallucination?
2. Students might summarize the selection by making a chart in two columns. The first column should list signs that a spirit is good in their own words. The second column should summarize signs that a spirit is evil.
3. Ask students to use information in this selection to deduce how Shakespeare's audience would have judged the Ghost.

continued

4. In a typical revenge play, the hero does not test the ghost that calls him to vengeance. Invite students to speculate about how the play might have been different if Hamlet had simply done the Ghost's bidding.
5. Critics do not agree on whether the Ghost brings "airs from heaven or blasts from hell." Students who want to explore the question further might read J. Dover Wilson's *What Happens in Hamlet?,* Robert West's *The Invisible Threshold,* Lily B. Campbell's *Shakespeare's Tragic Heroes: Slaves of Passion,* or Eleanor Prosser's *Hamlet and Revenge.*

Most Wicked Speed

1. Before students read this selection, ask them how soon they think it is appropriate for someone to remarry after the death of a spouse. Also discuss ways of showing grief in students' own cultures.
2. After students have read the description of funeral customs, ask them how they think Elizabethans would have judged Gertrude's remarriage. Discuss their opinions about Gertrude's actions and character.
3. Discuss how the information in this selection affects students' understanding of Laertes' reaction to his father and Ophelia's "maiméd rites."
4. Point out to students that the Danish king was elected by the nobility, so Gertrude's hasty remarriage deprived Hamlet of a chance to participate in the election and secured the throne for Claudius. Ask them to reread Hamlet's first soliloquy (1.2.133–64) in the light of this knowledge.

Incestuous Sheets

1. Before students read this selection, ask them to think of examples of people who have made public admission of wrongdoing. They may recall fictional characters such as Hester Prynne or examples from current events.
2. After students have read this selection, ask them to make a list of all that is "not well" in the state of Denmark.
3. Explore the contrast between Claudius's smooth facade and his crimes.
4. Discuss whether the information in this selection influences students' judgments of the appropriateness of Hamlet's grief at the beginning of the play and his confrontation with the Queen in act 3 scene 4.
5. Isaac Asimov has a different interpretation of Hamlet's reaction to Gertude's remarriage. In *Asimov's Guide to Shakespeare,* he suggests that "state reasons often made it necessary for royalty to make marriages that would be considered incestuous under ordinary conditions, and the church was usually indulgent in such cases." However, Gertrude remarried before Hamlet could return from Wittenberg and attempt to claim the throne. Encourage students to find evidence to support both Frye's and Asimov's interpretations. Then encourage them to develop their own opinions about how the issue of incest affected Hamlet's feelings and actions.

continued

The Passion of Revenge

1. Before discussing the subject of Hamlet's madness, introduce the Elizabethan meanings of the term. (See the Glossary and the introduction to this selection.)
2. Ask students to find all references to madness, "sore distraction," or "antic disposition" within the play. After they have reviewed the references, ask them to decide whether Hamlet is right when he says his "madness" wronged Laertes (5.2.240–53).
3. Invite students to chart Hamlet's thoughts and feelings about revenge throughout the play.
4. Discuss whether Hamlet is made cruel and inhuman by his thoughts of revenge, or whether he is redeemed from this "vicious" passion.
5. Students who wish to explore this issue further might read the Hazlitts' *The Revenger's Madness* or Eleanor Prosser's *Hamlet and Revenge.*

Turning from Sin

1. In act 3 scene 3, Claudius says, "My words fly up, my thoughts remain below." Ask students to use the information in this selection to explain why Claudius is unable to repent. You might point out that he is planning to murder Hamlet even as he asks forgiveness for fratricide.
2. Ask students to determine whether Gertrude truly repents.
3. Explore how the idea of repentance applies to Hamlet. How is he influenced by the fact that his father had no chance to confess his sins before he died? To what extent does Hamlet sin, repent, and receive forgiveness?
4. View and critique a live or videotaped performance of Shakespeare's dramatization of Claudius at prayer (3.3.40–103) or Hamlet's confrontation with Gertrude (3.4).

Memento Mori: The Readiness Is All

1. Before students read this piece, you might ask them to identify symbols of death that they frequently see or hear. Discuss the response(s) that these symbols evoke in them.
2. If a picture of someone contemplating a skull is available, you might display it before students read this selection. Several examples are shown in Frye's *The Renaissance Hamlet.*
3. Explore the parallels between this meditation and Hamlet's language in the graveyard (5.1).
4. Ask students to comment on what Hamlet means when he tells Horatio that "the readiness is all" (5.2.237).

An Englishman Visits Elsinore

1. Invite students to compare Moryson's description of Denmark with references to the land and its people in the play.
2. Ask students to use information in the article and on the timeline on page 17 to determine whether Shakespeare describes the Denmark of his time or an earlier, more aggressive Denmark.
3. Discuss how the custom of revenge affects the action of the play.

continued

Wisdom Is Free from Fortune

1. Before students read this selection, you might ask them to think or write about how much their lives are controlled by luck.
2. Suggest that students trace references to Fortune throughout the play. (Such references include 2.2.246–60, 3.1.64–68, 3.2.57–79 and 380–402.) Invite students to speculate about why the idea of Fortune appears so often in *Hamlet.*
3. Claudius, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern are controlled by Fortune, suggests Roland Mushat Frye in *The Renaissance Hamlet.* Ask students whether people who act only for their own self-interest still "fall" today.
4. Stories about people of high rank whose faults brought them to disaster were popular in Shakespeare's time. Encourage students to develop their own definitions of *fatal flaw* and *tragic hero* and apply them to *Hamlet.*
5. Encourage students to develop original proverbs or metaphors that express the ideas symbolized in Fortune's wheel.

King James' Revenge

1. If possible, have a reproduction of *The Darnley Memorial* available for viewing. The painting and related art are shown in black-and-white in Frye's *The Renaissance Hamlet.*
2. Ask students to compare the way Laertes and Hamlet react to the death of their fathers. Remind students to consider the way Hamlet's royal status affects both his obligation and desire for revenge. You might share this comment from *Asimov's Guide to Shakespeare.* "It is [Hamlet's] desire for the throne that introduces the endless complications. (If we interpret Hamlet's actions as being the result of a desire for revenge only, then the play is and must remain an unanswerable puzzle.)"

Traveling Players

1. You might assign groups of students to read one of four selections about Shakespeare's theater: Traveling Players, *Hamlet* and the Lord Chamberlain's Men, One Day at the Globe, and The Globe Today. Students could then share what they learned about how Shakespeare adapted his plays to his actors, his theater, and his audience.
2. Ask students to compare Moryson's description of the players to Shakespeare's traveling players (2.2.339–570; 3.2.1–47).
3. Explore whether any entertainers today might be considered "traveling players."

Hamlet and the Lord Chamberlain's Men/One Day at the Globe

1. Historian Edith Hamilton wrote that "there is no better indication of what the people of any period are like than the plays they go to see." After students have read these selections, ask them to draw conclu-

Sample selections from
***Hamlet* LATITUDES**

About the Play

About the Author
Story Synopsis
Critics' Comments
Voices from the Play
Glossary
Reading *Hamlet*
The Geographical Picture
A Time in History

Beliefs and Symbols

Heavenly Spirit or Fiend from Hell?
Most Wicked Speed
Incestuous Sheets
The Passion of Revenge
Turning from Sin
Memento Mori: The Readiness Is All

The Court and the Stage

An Englishman Visits Elsinore
Wisdom Is Free from Fortune
King James' Revenge
Traveling Players
Hamlet and the Lord Chamberlain's Men
One Day at the Globe
The Globe Today

Comparative Works

The Hamlet Legend
"O Rose of May!"
The Spanish Tragedy
The Tyrant and the Sponge
Suggested Reading and Viewing List

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