universität wien

MASTERARBEIT / MASTER'S THESIS

Titel der Masterarbeit / Title of the Master's Thesis

„How is the globe represented in English Renaissance theatre and what are the implications of this on the formation of English collective identity?"

verfasst von / submitted by

Matthew David Higgins

angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master (MA)

Wien, 2018 / Vienna, 2018

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt / degree programme code as it appears on the student record sheet:	A 067 805
Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt / degree programme as it appears on the student record sheet:	Individuelles Masterstudium Global Studies – a European Perspective
Betreut von / Supervisor:	Ao. Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Friedrich Edelmayer, MAS

UNIVERSITÄT LEIPZIG

universität wien

MASTERARBEIT / MASTER THESIS

Titel der Masterarbeit /Title of the Master Thesis

„How is the globe represented in English Renaissance theatre and what are the implications of this on the formation of English collective identity?“

Verfasser /Author

Matthew David Higgins

angestrebter akademischer Grad / academic degree aspired

Master (MA)

Wien, 2018 / Vienna, 2018

Studienkennzahl / degree programme code:	A 067 805
Studienrichtung / degree programme:	Individuelles Masterstudium Global Studies – a European Perspective
Betreuer/Supervisor:	Ao. Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Friedrich Edelmayer, MAS

Abstract

Increasing interaction with and knowledge of the wider world coincided with the consolidation of the English state at the turn-of-the-seventeenth century. These seemingly divergent trends worked together to have a profoundly disruptive impact on the processes of communal-identity formation and on perceptions of global space in this society. In this paper, the work of popular dramatists is read alongside the historical context of increasing global interconnection to provide an insight into how the globe was represented to mass audiences in the public forum of the theatre. It finds a conception of global order constructed around classical understandings of 'civilised' urban space and 'barbaric' wild space in which the position of England is left uncertain. In this literature, an English communal identity is constructed around the concepts of isolation and otherness as a direct reaction to increasingly visible processes of globalisation.

Zunehmende Interaktion und Wissen über die sonstige Welt korrespondierte mit der Konsolidierung des englischen Staates um die Wende des 17. Jahrhunderts. Diese scheinbar divergierenden Trends wirkten zusammen auf die Prozesse der kommunalen Identitätsbildung und auf die Wahrnehmung des globalen Raums in dieser Gesellschaft stark disruptiv aus. In dieser Arbeit werden die Werke populärer Dramatiker neben dem historischen Kontext der zunehmenden globalen Vernetzung gelesen, um einen Einblick zu geben, wie die Weltkugel im öffentlichen Forum des Theaters einem breiten Publikum präsentiert wurde. Heraus bildet sich eine Konzeption der globalen Ordnung, die um das klassische Verständnis von "zivilisiertem" Stadtraum und "barbarischem" wildem Raum konstruiert ist, in dem die Position Englands unsicher bleibt. In dieser Literatur wird eine englische Gemeinschaftsidentität um die Konzepte der Isolation und Andersartigkeit als direkte Reaktion auf die zunehmend sichtbaren Prozesse der Globalisierung konstruiert.

Abbreviations

Alc.	*The Alchemist.*
Ant.	*Antony and Cleopatra.*
AYL.	*As You Like It.*
Bar.	*Bartholomew Fair.*
Fau.	*Doctor Faustus.*
JM.	*The Jew of Malta.*
MND.	*A Midsummer Night's Dream.*
MV.	*The Merchant of Venice.*
Oth.	*Othello.*
Rom.	*Romeo and Juliet.*
Tam. I.	*Tamburlaine the Great, Part I.*
Tam. II.	*Tamburlaine the Great, Part II.*
Temp.	*The Tempest.*
Vol.	*Volpone.*

Contents

How is the globe represented in English Renaissance theatre and what are the implications of this on the formation of English collective identity?

1. Introduction

On 23 April 2014 — the 450th anniversary of William Shakespeare's birth — a group of actors from the reconstructed Globe Theatre in London embarked on a remarkably ambitious world tour. Over the course of two years, the company performed a production of Shakespeare's Hamlet to audiences in 197 countries around the world. The elegance of the project's name, Globe to Globe, draws attention to the assertiveness of the name the playwright chose for the theatre constructed to stage his work; a name which betrays a confidence that a space on the southern fringe of London could represent an image of the entire world in one place and offer a form to its local conceptualisation. By its name, the theatre presents itself as a site for the discovery and exploration of all the world's diverse spaces and peoples. Shakespeare certainly wrote with global pretensions, and his theatre, a material microcosm of the globe, guaranteed him, at least nominally, a 'global' audience: it is exactly this "affrighted globe", which "yawns at [the] alteration" of Othello's temperament (*Oth.*, 5.2.101-2) and the "great globe" evoked by *The Tempest's* Prospero; memorable lines which connect the audience of the Globe to the imagined populations of the globe.

Without doubt, Shakespeare's writings have impacted the way in which the globe is spoken about in the English language and

consequently how it is imagined. His lines: "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players" (*AYL.*, 2.7.140-1) comprise perhaps the most famous vision of the globe in secular literature. The world is of great interest to the Shakespeare who does reflect on the expanding global horizons and connections of early modern England. Shakespeare furnishes the English language with its most enduring and optimistic cultural expression for grasping the experience of globality:

> O wonder!
> How many goodly creatures are there here!
> How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world
> That has such people in't.
>
> (*Temp.*, 5.1.182-4)

The profound importance of Shakespeare's work on the global imaginations of Anglophone cultures should not, however, distract from the globality of his audience. The universal themes portrayed on his stage are timeless and placeless, readily open to interpretation in any context. An important motif being the interplay of particularistic identities in a context of global interaction, a theme of specific interest in English literature at the turn of the seventeenth century, which has subsequently become a universal concern in a globalising world.

Shakespeare and his contemporaries both shaped and reflected the realities of their society in their imaginary constructions of spaces and characters for the stage. One of the interesting characteristics of this period in English theatre is that conceptions of space and identity are in a stage of transition. Working against the background of intensified global interconnection, discoveries of hitherto unknown lands and peoples, religious reformation, and national consolidation, English playwrights at the turn of the seventeenth century are

attempting to make sense of indefinite conceptions of both spaces and identities on a global and local scale.

In this paper I argue that the playwrights of the English Renaissance stage construct a simplistic image of the globe which is formed around binaristic oppositions. The space of the globe is organised into a 'centre', located around the highly connected trading cities of the Mediterranean, and a 'periphery' of untamed land, situated primarily in India and the Americas; a reservoir of easily accessible and easily exploitable wealth and luxury. The two regions are differentiated by their relationship to the concepts of sovereignty, law, and conventional religious practice. The ambiguity of England's place in this otherwise sharply-defined spatial order encourages the construction of a heavily isolationist communal identity, negatively defined in relation to the easily characterisable identities of foreigners. It is upon the anxieties and confusions of increasing globality that on-stage cultural constructions of national particularism are based; powerful and amoral 'outsiders' are foregrounded in the theatrical imagination, anti-heroes whose pursuit of English interests on foreign soil highlight the divine as opposed to the material basis of English power.

1.1. Theories of the global space and connection

The concept of globalisation will be frequently referred to in this paper, it is a phenomenon which is increasingly visible in late sixteenth century England with the increasing intensity of connections between people in different parts of the world. In their depictions of the wider world, early modern playwrights both describe and engage in the phenomenon. Globalisation is, however, a heavily contested topic with great disagreement over its nature and its historicity. The term itself came to prominence in the early 1990s to give an analytical framework to discussions of the increasingly interdependent nature of social life

across the globe.[1] Simultaneous globally-experienced societal change resulting from the collapse of the Cold War standoff, has commonly been uncritically bound together with this concept, producing a discourse which stresses both the modernity and the neoliberal basis of globalisation; common journalistic assumptions date its emergence to the 1980s and define it as a political force which urges societies across the globe towards social liberalism, market deregulation, and democracy.[2] The discursive link between globalisation and the economic and social changes of the 1990s has imaginatively connected one transformative process to another transformative moment which heralded the beginning of the decade, the ideological victory of the United States over its ideological rivals. Frederick Cooper argues that modern globalisation discourse takes much of its inspiration and imagery from the destruction of the Berlin Wall.[3] This can be read in the definition of the globalisation offered by the former Director General of the World Trade Organisation:

> "Globalisation can be defined as a historical stage of accelerated expansion of market capitalism… Globalisation has led to the opening, the vanishing of many barriers and walls, and has the potential for expanding freedom, democracy, innovation, social and cultural exchanges while offering outstanding opportunities for dialogue and understanding."[4]

---

1 Steger, Manfred. *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 1.

2 Hopkins, Anthony. "The Historiography of Globalization and the Globalization of Regionalism." *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, vol. 53, no.1, 2010, p. 26.

3 Cooper, Frederick. "What is the Concept of Globalization Good For? An African Historian's Perspective." *African Affairs*, vol. 100, 2001, p. 196.

4 Lamy, Pascal. "Humanising Globalization." World Trade Organization. 30 Jan. 2006, Santiago de Chile,

This imagery also looms large in the journalistic prose of Thomas Friedman, a prominent writer on the subject. The fall of the Berlin Wall is heralded by Friedman as the first step towards flattening the world, a personal euphemism for globalisation. The destruction of the wall "allowed us to think of the world as a seamless whole", having previous blocked mankind's "ability to think of the world as a single market, a single ecosystem, [and] a single community."[5]

Historians seeking to challenge the apparent novelty of globalisation have attempted to push the frontiers of analysis backwards through time and to disassociate cosmopolitanism from modernity. Christopher Bayly, for instance, has suggested that specifically premodern patterns of thinking and ideologies — such as "the notion of cosmic kingship; universal religion; and humoural understandings of the body and the land" — have driven and shaped premodern global flows of trade, people, and ideas.[6] For Bayly, the recent manifestations of globalisation which are discussed by the likes of Friedman are not new, unprecedented, or ahistorical. Rather, that globalisation has been integrating the world for many centuries, although there have been discernible qualitative changes in the set of ideologies which direct its shape and intensity.

Hopkins has likewise pointed to the long term, yet transformational nature of the processes of globalisation, offering the typology of 'archaic', 'proto-', and 'modern' globalisation in order to organise its shifting dimensions for analysis. He insists that these categories are overlapping and nonlinear, but he dates the shift from

---

www.wto.org/english/news_e/sppl_e/sppl16_e.htm. Accessed: 23 March 2018.

5 Friedman, Thomas. *The World Is Flat 3.0: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Picador, 2007, p. 54.

6 Bayly, Christopher. "Archaic and Modern Globalization in the Eurasian and African Arena, c. 1750-1850." in: Hopkins, Anthony, ed., *Globalization in World History*. London: Pimlico, 2002, pp. 50-51.

'archaic' to 'proto-globalisation' to around 1600, with the 'modern' form emerging around 1800. Processes of proto-globalisation are shaped and driven by the reconfiguration of the state system around the concepts of territory, taxation, and sovereignty.[7]

Hopkins' periodisation is supported by the research of a number of historians, who argue that the end of the seventeenth century is a period of great global change; Flynn and Giraldez, propose a symbolic emergence of globalisation in 1571 with the direct connection of Asia and the New World through the establishment of the Spanish entrepot at Manilla. This is the point at which "all heavily populated continents began to exchange products continually… and on a scale that generated deep and lasting impacts on all trading partners."[8] Furthermore, Cooper argues that with the widespread Dutch and Portuguese voyages at the end of the sixteenth century, "it became possible to think of the world as the ultimate unit of ambition and political and economic strategy".[9]

When discussing globalisation in this paper, I refer to a longstanding set of social processes occurring on a planetary scale, which increasingly integrate disparate societies by facilitating the movement of people, goods, ideas, and capital from one place to another around the world.

Distinct from the material process of globalisation is the subjective condition of globality. Cooper argues contrary to Flynn and Giraldez, that the structures of power and exchange in the sixteenth and seventeenth century were not, in fact, so 'global'. Instead, what had become global, in a real and transformative sense, existed merely in the

---

7 Hopkins, Anthony. "Globalization: An Agenda for Historians." in: ibid., p. 5.

8 Flynn, Dennis O., and Arturo Giraldez. "Path Dependence, Time Lags and the Birth of Globalization: A Critique of O'Rourke and Williamson." *European Review of Economic History*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2004, pp. 82-83.

9 Cooper, Frederick. "What is the Concept…", op cit., p. 201.

realm of political imagination.[10] Many historians have focussed their attempts to historicise globalisation on material indicators, quantitative data such as trade and migration figures. Globalisation, however, does not only have an objective impact, something which can be seen or counted; there is also a crucial subjective element, a recognition of living on an ever-shrinking planet. Manfred Steger suggests that both objective and subjective factors go "hand in hand"; heightened awareness of the globe as a whole shapes the decisions which prompt and guide the material flows around the globe,[11] while material flows of knowledge from one place to another prompt and shape that global awareness.

Roland Robertson argues that only since the twentieth century have there been realistic conceptions of humanity becoming a single society and have "considerable numbers of people living on different parts of the planet have spoken and acted in direct reference to the problem of the 'organization' of the entire… world."[12] This is what distinguishes the genuineness of contemporary globality from previous periods. The implied newness of this aspect of globality may well be a symptom of Robertson's self-aware "primary interest" in studying globalisation as a "relatively recent phenomenon".[13] Darren O'Byrne offers a reminder that "awareness of the globe as a perceivable whole is the product of cultural capital" and that "structural material restrictions limit access to this cultural capital to some members of society and

---

10 Ibid., p. 201.

11 Steger, Manfred. *The Rise of the Global Imaginary: Political Ideologies from the French Revolution to the Global War on Terror*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 11.

12 Robertson, Roland. *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture Theory, Culture & Society*. London: Sage, 1992, p. 54.

13 Ibid., p. 6.

exclude them from full participation in these processes."[14] In the seventeenth century, barriers to 'global consciousness' were even higher than in the present day, as the majority lacked access to education, literary material, and travel. Therefore, a broad-based societal awareness of one's global identity did not exist. This does not preclude the existence of global awareness among political leaders, as suggested by Cooper, or among the educated classes of readers and writers.

Despite a focus on present day mass-interconnection along the technologically modern infrastructures of mass global media, communications, and travel, Robertson's concept of 'global consciousness' nonetheless offers a valuable framework for historical analysis. By this measure, the genuineness of globalisation in the present day is distinguished by the "scope and depth of consciousness of the world as a single place."[15] This has "partly to do with the world being an imagined community";[16] it has emerged from the compression of the world into a single space, with the image of the "global village", and a consolidation of the "conception of humanity".[17] Understandings of space and identity, and historical aspects of these themes, are essential to assessing the historical aspect of the subjective condition of globality. In the same way Robertson identifies recent technological breakthroughs as spurring the realisation of global consciousness, it is very possible that technological advances implemented in early modern Europe and exemplified by the rapid development of the printing industry, had a similarly transformative impact on global aspects of identity and action.

---

14 O'Byrne, Darren, "Working Class Culture: Local Community and Global Conditions." in: Eade, John, ed., *Living the Global City: Globalization as Local Process*. London: Routledge, 1996, p. 74.

15 Robertson, Roland. *Globalization*, op cit., p. 183.

16 Ibid., p. 183.

17 Ibid., p. 184.

1.2. Theories of Identity

The advance of 'global consciousness' does not necessarily occasion a diminishment in the level of identification or consciousness of the local level of identity. In fact, writers such as Robertson and Hopkins have argued that a complex interrelationship exists between the two levels of identity; that an awareness of the globe shapes an understanding of the local and vice-versa. One cannot, after all, imagine a local place in the absence of an imagining context.[18] Hopkins argues that the cosmopolitan ideal emerged in conjunction, rather than in opposition to, the growth of the state. He states that a sense of Britishness and a sense of Frenchness, for example, were spurred on by global competition between the two nations.[19] For Hopkins, the period of proto-globalisation is one in which non-national loyalties — to religion, to family, to place, and to the polity — existed and exerted claims over individual identities alongside the slowly evolving sense of nationality.[20] Hannah Wojciehowski highlights the shock caused by the importation of Eastern philosophy to European thought in the early modern period. She argues that renaissance explorations of identity and selfhood in relation to the natural world can be traced to increasing contact between Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas, in which "colliding epistemes gave rise to intense questioning, often followed by equally intense retreats and retrenchments."[21] This process of 'self fashioning' in relation to the 'Other' has also created wider groups of insiders and outsiders congregated around a wide variety of non-national essentialisations. Virginia Mason Vaughan shows that by imagining the

---

18 Robertson, Roland. "Global Connectivity and Global Consciousness." *American Behavioral Scientist*, vol. 55, no. 10, 2011, p. 1339.

19 Hopkins, Anthony. "The History of Globalization and the Globalization of History." in: Hopkins, Anthony, ed., *Globalization*, op cit., p. 25.

20 Ibid., p. 24-25.

21 Wojciehowski, Hannah Chapelle. *Group Identity in the Renaissance World.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, p. 305.

Moor Othello in a certain way, audiences were able to consolidate their own imagined communities; identifying themselves as white against others colour-coded as black.[22]

While the people of early modern England and France were able identify themselves as English or French, the most effective matrix of identity, explains Jonathan Clark, was based around dynasticism, whose components were religion and law.[23] By the measures upon which Clark bases identity, Elizabethan England was remarkably unstable. The impact of the reformation and the uncertainty surrounding the succession to the throne, were an undoubted source of anxiety. An increasing awareness of the wider world, compressed into an ever smaller and more knowable unit could only highlight the precarity of early modern England, a peripheral place and a minor player in a world which, "in those parts of the world where Europeans mattered at all, it was the empires of Spain and Portugal."[24]

Jeffrey Knapp has argued that the process of relativisation which revealed the weakness of England in an ever-shrinking world is essential to understanding the emergent culture and identity. He describes how England only became a nation when it lost its possessions on the continent and became a clearly bounded island and that the renaissance obsession with the classics revealed a prescient image home, an island wholly cut off from the rest of the world. Knapp shows how the English learnt to see their island excluding the world as much as it was excluded from it.[25] Crystal Bartolovich, on the other

---

22 Mason Vaughan, Virginia. *Performing Blackness on English Stages, 1500-1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 170.

23 Clark, Jonathan C.D. "Protestantism, Nationalism, and National Identity, 1660-1832." The Historical Journal, vol. 43, no. 1, 2000, p. 251.

24 Ogborn, Miles. *Global Lives: Britain and the World, 1550-1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 16.

25 Knapp, Jeffrey. *An Empire Nowhere: England, America, and Literature from Utopia to the Tempest*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992, pp. 4-5.

hand, reads the situation more optimistically, interpreting late sixteenth century London as an emerging "world city… loosening its dependence on Antwerp and diversifying its trade relations, geographically and in content."[26] In both readings, global influences are attributed with having shaped identity and action on a national level.

2. Historical Background

Following Hopkins' typology, the period of 'proto-globalisation' is characterised by the emergence of the territorial state, bolstered by the concept of sovereignty. An emergence of national consciousness is heightened, hand-in-hand with a cosmopolitan aspect of identity and consciousness.[27] In late sixteenth century England these developments find a powerful symbolic intersection in the technological developments of cartography. These developments can be separated into two spheres of equally significant impact on sixteenth century identity formation and the concept of increasing global consciousness.

Firstly, there is objective progress in terms of the completeness of geographic knowledge which maps represent. If it is agreed that knowledge is generally preferable to ignorance, the little-over-a-century between Columbus' making landfall in the Americas and the year 1600 is a period of enormous accomplishment, the European map of the world doubled in size during this period.[28] The globe had become increasingly known and, through cartographic representation of that knowledge, had become increasingly knowable. Furthermore, the discovery and representation of spaces unaccounted for by existing

---

[26] Bartolovich, Crystal. "Baseless Fabric: London as a World City." in: Hulme, Peter and William Sherman, eds., *The Tempest and Its Travels*. London: Reaktion, 2000, p. 15.

[27] Hopkins, Anthony. "The History of Globalization…", op cit., pp. 24-25.

[28] Woodward, David. "Cartography and the Renaissance: Continuity and Change." in: Woodward, David., ed., *The History of Cartography, Vol. 3: Cartography in the European Renaissance*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007, p. 1.

frameworks of knowledge is a development which presented challenges to existing structures of identity and global understanding.

Alongside this, a second aspect of development transformed cartographic form and function. Medieval maps can be characterised by the representation of the symbolic and spiritual nature of the world rather than physical geography; he primary function of a map was not to measure space, but to impose a pervasive reminder and organisational outline of Christian history onto it.[29] These 'mappae mundi' were replaced in the sixteenth century by the secular, measured, projected, and scaled maps which had been developed by Claudius Ptolemy in the second century. The main function of the new cartography became merely to measure and depict the observed location of places and natural features in the world.[30]

Ptolemy's work had been rediscovered and redeployed in the renaissance centres of the western Mediterranean since the fifteenth century, however, as with other aspects of the renaissance, the English generally lagged behind their neighbours until the late sixteenth century.[31] Despite this, there had been dramatic improvements in land surveying in sixteenth century England owing to the large-scale land transfers occasioned by the Reformation and the administrative centralisation of the state under the Tudor monarchy,[32] subtly highlighting to the complex interconnections of cartographic development and state formation. Donald Smith highlights a turning point in English mapmaking in 1570 with the translation of Euclid's treatise on geometry, *The Elements*, arguing that this marks the advent of

---

29 Smith, D.K. *The Cartographic Imagination in Early Modern England.* Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008, p. 2.
30 Woodward, David. *The History of Cartography*, op cit., p. 6.
31 Ibid., p. 10.
32 Ibid., p. 10.

mathematical surveying in England.[33] The mathematical transformation of mapmaking lent it the authority of a science and decoupled the image of the land not only from religion, but also from the politics of dynasty and history with which it had become discursively combined by its supplementation to medieval history chronicles.[34] The image of the land becomes politically neutral; it is a known and fixed entity, which, though subject to appropriation and utilisation for political self-fashioning, remains itself constant.[35]

The first widespread application of confident mathematical surveying in England is seen in Christopher Saxton's *Atlas of the Counties of England and Wales*, published in 1579.[36] This institutes a standardised image of the nation as a holistic and unified space, which Richard Helgerson describes as the discovery of homeland.[37] The number of maps in circulation around Europe increased enormously in the sixteenth century; Robert Karrow estimates that there were only around 56,000 maps in Europe in the early years of printing, between 1472 and 1500. By 1600, there were millions. In terms of the resources invested and work produced, Europe and the various 'homelands' of contemporary cartographers were the parts of the world most thoroughly 'discovered' during the Renaissance.[38]

The increasing availability of maps in this period reflects the increasing number of practical functions they were created to serve. The increasingly complex administrative bureaucracies of European states

---

33 Smith, D.K. *The Cartographic Imagination*, op cit., p. 8.

34 Gillies, John. "Elizabethan Drama and the Cartographizations of Space." in: John Gillies and Virginia Mason Vaughan, eds., *Playing the Globe: Genre and Geography in English Renaissance Drama*. New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1998, p. 22.

35 Ibid., p. 22.

36 Smith, D.K. *The Cartographic Imagination*, op cit., p. 14.

37 Helgerson, Richard. "The Land Speaks: Cartography, Chorography, and Subversion in Renaissance England." *Representations*, vol.16, 1986, pp. 51-85.

38 Woodward, David. *The History of Cartography*, op cit., pp. 10-11.

utilised maps for such purposes as the organisation of public works, town planning, setting boundaries, commercial navigation, and military strategy.[39] The increasing prevalence of maps in the coordination of real-world space, argues John Gillies, led to the cultural invention of a "map mindedness" among sixteenth century Europeans. By this he refers to the pervasive effect of map imagery on how an individual experiences territory. Spatial awareness is culturally constructed. It is argued that one's experience of the world is as fully derived from maps as maps are derived from the world.[40] In their role as consumer commodities, the graphic form of maps as well as their function was important in establishing a holistic view of the world. While the representative vision of kingdoms and counties may not have been scientifically accurate, "it engendered", according to Woodward, "a culture of cosmopolitanism in a larger range of social classes."[41] Gillies argues that map mindedness is more pervasive than geographical knowledge.[42] When considering the experience of globality, this is an important distinction. One does not need to perceive the wider world with scientific exactness in order to betray a global consciousness, rather, it can be inferred from the frameworks by which representations of the globe are patterned.

The development of printing in Europe was essential to the rapid spread of standardised representations of cartographic space, Eisenstein calls it a "communications revolution in itself", that "identical images, maps, and diagrams could be viewed simultaneously by scattered readers".[43] The printing press also allowed the

---

39 Ibid., p. 11.
40 Smith, D.K. *The Cartographic Imagination*, op cit., pp. 1-2.
41 Woodward, David. *The History of Cartography*, op cit., p. 22.
42 Gillies, John. "Elizabethan Drama…", op cit., p. 30.
43 Eisenstein, Elizabeth. *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and cultural transformations in early-modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, p. 53.

dissemination of geographic knowledge in the form of travel literature, which was published in abundance in late-sixteenth century England, most of it translated from the works of Italian, Spanish, Flemish, and German writers and map-makers.[44] Advances in print technology created the book trade and the profession of publisher.[45] This new industry brought ideas both from the wider world and about the wider world inwards and mediated them, by translation, for consumption by English readers.

The nascent publishing industry provided an opportunity for propagandists to directly influence perceptions about the nature and the purpose of the wider world. This is seen most explicitly in literature concerning the Americas. England was a relative latecomer to the sixteenth century European voyages of exploration, trade, and colonisation;[46] permanent English settlements in the New World were not envisaged until the last quarter of the sixteenth century.[47] Transatlantic colonial ventures were greeted without enthusiasm at the top of the state hierarchy; Elizabeth I never invested any money in settlement projects in the New World. For her, a voyage for trade and looting with the immediate prospect of reward was one thing; visionary, long-term, expensive and potentially profitless schemes of settlement were quite another.[48] There were daunting psychological barriers which made the English reluctant to get involved in the Americas; opinions had been shaped by costly attempts to expropriate land from the Irish,[49]

---

44 Elton, Geoffrey. *England Under the Tudors. 3rd ed.* London: Routledge, 1999, p. 348.

45 Ibid., p. 433.

46 Barbour, Richmond. *Before Orientalism: London's Theatre of 'the East', 1576-1626*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 1.

47 Hulme, Peter. *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797*. London: Methuen, 1986, p. 90.

48 Elton, Geoffrey. *England Under the Tudors,* op cit., p. 351.

49 Helms, Stephen. "English Superiority in Roanoke Propaganda." *The Alexandrian*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2014, pp. 17-39.

to say nothing of the great body of travellers' tales detailing the presence of Satan and cannibalistic savages in the New World.[50]

There were numerous published accounts of the transatlantic English voyages of the 1580s written as propaganda to shape opinions in England by assuaging fears and promoting the opportunities of the New World.[51] These writers pointed to the abundant resources in Virginia which could provide employment[52] at a time when domestic fears of overpopulation, unemployment, and vagabondage were rife.[53] The economic considerations of the propagandists heavily influence the descriptions of the native people they published for their domestic readership; in his popular treatise, *The Discovery of the Large, Rich, and Beautiful Empire of Guiana*, Walter Raleigh renders the Native Americans as similar as possible to the English partly as a means to attract capital and personnel for his American colonial ambitions.[54] This highlights both the ways in which images of the wider world are becoming increasingly available to readers in early modern England and how those images are manipulated to construct a certain discourse of similarity, difference, and of the purpose of the New World in relation to England's perceived domestic problems.

Michael Ryan argues that these discourses of similarity in the New World were used as a tool for mediating the assimilation of newly discovered people and places into perceptual frameworks which were not well suited to comprehending novelty.[55] The acknowledged biblical

---

50 Ryan, Michael. "Assimilating New Worlds in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 23, no. 4, 1981, p. 530.

51 Helms, Stephen. "English Superiority…", op cit.

52 Ibid.

53 Elton, Geoffrey. *England Under the Tudors,* op cit., p. 349.

54 Golinelli, Gilberta. "In Dialogue with the New: Theorizations on the New World in Titus Andronicus." in: Del Sapio Garbero, Maria, ed., *Identity, Otherness, and Empire in Shakespeare's Rome*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2009, p. 140.

55 Ryan, Michael. "Assimilating New Worlds ...", op cit., p. 527.

and classical sources of the early modern knowledge contained no explanation for the Americas, so assimilating it into European discourse presented a big problem for travel writers. Native Americans were therefore constructed for European thought as pagans, following the patterns of European antiquity.[56] The development of publishing and printing industries in Europe had laid the ground for a large-scale rediscovery of the classics; an enormous body of literature on paganism was therefore available with which to analyse and understand the globe's newly visible populations.[57] This mode of assimilating Native Americans robbed them of their difference; paganism is a highly inclusive and unambiguous category of 'otherness' which was applied not only to Americans, but also to the non-Islamic populations of the East.[58] Early ethnography was often written by missionaries and formed part of the debate on conversion; religion was an important part of early interest in the Americans, with writers providing taxonomies of American gods which highlighted their parallels to the gods of Mediterranean antiquity. Pignoria explained that the Mexican gods were derived from the gods of Ancient Egypt and Juan de Torquemada found that the entire Greco-Roman pantheon was worshipped by alternative names in the Americas.[59] The discourse of paganism ensured the humanity of Native Americans in the eyes of European Christians, as pagans could, as the ancients had been, converted.[60]

The emergent interest in the classics in England goes hand-in-hand with the emergence of humanism, as the guiding influence of thought and education in the sixteenth century. Humanism represented a shift away from medieval orthodoxies of religion to something

---

56 Ibid., p. 525.
57 Ibid., p. 525.
58 Ibid., p. 525.
59 Ibid., p. 528.
60 Ibid., p. 534.

different and ineluctably cosmopolitan, drawing on the influence of Erasmus, an extensively well-travelled individual. The influence of Erasmus' philosophy of education brought Greek and Latin into the English education system along with History, Philosophy, Literature, and all other aspects of classical civilisation. Humanism also drew a great deal of influence from the extensive Italian rediscovery of the classics. It affected a paradigm shift in the philosophy of man's collective identity and position in relation to the globe;[61] it put man at the centre of the universe as opposed to the medieval 'contemptus mundi' and saw the ideal outcome of education shift away from the training of clergy for the benefit of the church towards the training of civil servants for the benefit of the state.[62]

The shift of education away from purely religious means and ends is of particular relevance in sixteenth century England after the Reformation; there are two aspects to this argument. The first is bound up with the above mentioned interest in state sovereignty over religious interests: The Reformation of Henry VIII was a deliberate exercise in sovereign authority, this is evident in the wording of the Statute in Restraint of Appeals (1533), which provided its legal framework:

> … this realm of England is an empire, and so hath been accepted in the world, governed by one Supreme Head and King having the dignity and royal estate of the imperial Crown of the same, unto whom a body politic compact of all sorts and degrees of people divided in terms and by names of Spirituality and Temporalty, be bounden and owe to bear next to God a natural and humble obedience.

---

61 Rummel, Erika, "Desiderius Erasmus", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2017/entries/erasmus/.

62 Elton, Geoffrey. *England Under the Tudors*, op cit., p. 431.

The Reformation of Henry VIII was merely a jurisdictional revolution in the Church, not a religious revolution; there was no attempt to reform the doctrine of the church, merely to assert the dominance of the state over its archiepiscopal provinces lying in England.[63]

The second pertains to the great instability religious reform wrought upon the state. The Reformation was not the linear change from Catholicism to Protestantism that its name suggests. The English Reformation incorporates three transformations of state religion in the space of just twenty-five years. Henry VIII's Reformation merely continued Catholicism with the English monarch installed at its head; under Edward VI the Protestant nature of the Reformation was strengthened under the zealous influence of his advisors. A brief counter-reformation under Mary I had left England technically Catholic and reunited to Rome, before Elizabeth I brought an end to this arrangement with the 1558 Act of Supremacy. Against this background, a humanist education system provided a necessary alternative source of philosophical and spiritual guidance[64] through classical thought in a period dominated by a highly political appropriation of religion. While, the classics provided a link between the literate English population and the centres of European culture which had been severed by the state's break from the Universal Church, Protestant particularism allowed for a greater distinction with which the English could define themselves. Diplomatic and cultural isolation, by the very way in which it intensifies awareness of precarity, can but heighten the awareness of England's place in the wider world.

This is especially poignant with the excommunication of Elizabeth I in 1570 and the issuing of the *Regnans in Excelsis*, a papal bull

---

63 Ibid., p. 165.

64 Harrison, G.B. *Introducing Shakespeare*. 3rd ed., Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1966.

which called for the queen's deposition. In this, Pope Pius V declares a direct challenge to the idea of monarchical sovereignty by declaring:

> … the nobles, subjects and people of [England] and all others who have in any way sworn oaths to [Elizabeth I], to be forever absolved from such an oath and from any duty arising from lordship, fealty and obedience; and we do, by authority of these presents, so absolve them and so deprive the same Elizabeth of her pretended title to the crown and all other the above said matters. We charge and command all and singular the nobles, subjects, peoples and others afore said that they do not dare obey her orders, mandates and laws. Those who shall act to the contrary we include in the like sentence of excommunication.[65]

The Papal intervention confirms the alterity of Catholics living in England and sets them in direct conflict with the state. Questions of identity and belonging are brought to the fore with doubts over the loyalties of this internal 'Otherness'. This can be read as a symbolic moment of territorialisation and state formation, though importantly for the nature of the present thesis, one which is prompted by an external force; non-national loyalties to the universal church and its global identity are made untenable among the English masses. G.R. Elton argues that a hardening of particularistic Protestant identity was a reaction to the hard line taken by the Papal Bull and the perceived aggressiveness of Catholic states.[66]

Diplomatic and cultural isolation from the Catholic centres of power in Europe has another important influence on the relationship

---

[65] Pius V. "Regnans in Excelsis: Excommunicating Elizabeth I of England". *Papal Encyclicals Online*. www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius05/p5regnans.htm. Accessed: 23 March 2018.

[66] Elton, Geoffrey. England Under the Tudors, op cit., p. 309.

with England and the world by creating the necessity of diplomatic expansion. Under Elizabeth I, the English state was forced to cultivate diplomatic and trading links with Islamic kingdoms and empires in North Africa and the East. In 1581, Elizabeth and Ottoman Sultan Murad III agreed to lawfully allow English and Turkish traders into each others' kingdoms, Elizabeth also engaged in correspondence with the Moroccan ruler Ahmad Al Mansur,[67] who in 1600 dispatched sixteen embassy visitors to London.[68] In that same year, a royal charter was also granted to the East India Company.[69]

Despite the enormous opportunities arising in the East for English merchants and the increasingly cordial diplomatic relations, two-dimensional representations of Islam persisted on the stage and in literature.[70] Richard Knolles' *The Generall Historie of the Turkes* (1603) is the first prime example of the of what Aune terms 'proto-Orientalism', a popular history book which reinforced existing notions of a world divided in two between Christendom and Islam.[71] Despite the religious schism with the Catholic world, there remained support for a common Christian league against the better defined 'Other', with the likes of Edmund Spenser identifying England with Venice on the frontline of the perceived civilizational divide.[72]

In these representations, though it is tempting to identify what would come to be labelled 'Orientalism' in a later age, it must be borne

---

67 Hollings, Marion. "Romancing the Turk: Trade, Race, and Nation in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*." in: Johanyak, Debra and Walter S. Lim, eds., *The English Renaissance, Orientalism, and the Idea of Asia*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p. 57.

68 Johanyak, Debra.'"'Turning Turk': Early Modern English Orientalisms, and Shakespeare's *Othello*." in: Ibid., p. 80

69 Stone, James. "Indian and Amazon: The Oriental Feminine in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*." in: Ibid., p. 104.

70 Barbour, Richmond. *Before Orientalism*, op cit., p. 5.

71 Aune, M.G. "Early Modern European Travel Writing After Orientalism." *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2005, p. 128.

72 Hollings, Marion. "Romancing the Turk…", op cit., p. 55.

in mind that the power relations which distinguish Orientalism were not yet in place. In fact, English expressions of cultural and political superiority often belie cultural nervousness concerning the East's political and military might as well as its vibrant economic life in controlling the major trade arteries of the world.[73] In the century between 1450 and 1550, Muslim armies had inflicted a series of highly symbolic defeats on their Christian enemies.[74] At the turn of the seventeenth century, different cultures were encountering and representing one another without the burden of inequality in which Edward Said would locate the construction of Orientalist difference in the late eighteenth century.[75] Representations produced by English authors in this period shouldn't be read teleologically as the foundations of an imperial culture. In this period, the major 'imperial' focus was directed at home and this project to unify England and Scotland and to rule Ireland did not speak of far flung colonial ambitions.[76]

3. The Public Theatre

The theatre in Elizabethan and Jacobean London was an important new forum for public debate, the representation of ideas, and the shaping of imaginative discourse on the most important transformations of the period. Though cultural production in late-sixteenth century England did continue to operate within the economic and political logics of a patronage-based society, public theatre was nonetheless a space for 'popular audiences' and 'popular drama'.[77] David Mayer defines 'popular drama' as "that drama produced by and offered for the enjoyment or edification of the largest combinations of groupings

---

73 Lim, Walter S. "Introduction" in: Johanyak, Debra and Walter S. Lim, eds. *The English Renaissance*, op cit., p. 17.
74 Ibid., p. 4.
75 Aune, M.G. "Early Modern European…", op cit., p. 131.
76 Barbour, Richmond. *Before Orientalism*, op cit., p. 40.
77 Leggatt, Alexander. *Jacobean Public Theatre*. London: Routledge, 1992, p. 28.

possible within that society"; adding that while "the educated, moneyed, aristocratic and professional classes" can be spectators too, but cannot expect their special tastes to affect the performance".[78] While it is true that royal and aristocratic patronage conferred an important and coveted level of social status on the acting companies and their playwrights, their economic survival depended chiefly on appealing to and attracting mass audiences to their theatres.[79] Ben Jonson coined the word 'playwright' as a derogatory term to describe the business of cultural production in the period under discussion; in doing so he likened his contemporaries to other craftsmen, such as shipwrights or wheelwrights, who were employed to create a product to satiate consumer demand. For this reason, the surviving texts of 'popular drama' in this period can be a useful primary source for observing the nuances of language and perception which connect to global themes. These are representations aimed at and influenced by the interests of a wide section of contemporary society, not merely those in the upper echelons.

A reader of these plays must bear in mind that they naturally provide a certain 'theatrical' image of discourse and perceptions necessitated by the limitations of the early modern stage and society. Popular theatre was in a precarious position relative to state authority, there were attempts by the English crown to limit, control, and profit from the professional theatre; censorship was enforced and the acting companies were limited, licensed, and taxed.[80] This is partly responsible for the geographical expansion of the theatre's repertoire; while a play concerning Machiavellian corruption in the English court would have

---

78 Mayer, David. "Towards a Definition of the Popular" in: Mayer, David, and Kenneth Richards., eds., *Western Popular Theatre*. London: Methuen, 1977, pp. 263-265.

79 Montrose, Louis. *The Purpose of Playing: Shakespeare and the Cultural Politics of the Elizabethan Theatre*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996, p. 75.

80 Ibid., p. 99.

been an unacceptable challenge to authority, the same themes transplanted to the Italian city states may well have passed the censors unscathed. Furthermore, the history plays, until they were banned in 1599, emerging in the Elizabethan period represent an image of identity and Tudor dynastic legitimacy heavily determined by the stage's submissiveness to the crown. Therefore the mere representation of foreign lands as a setting or of English identity cannot be read at face-value as evidencing the existence of a global geographical awareness or of a national identity; the impact of 'real world' political pressures on the process of cultural production must be taken into account.

What is of interest for this paper is not necessarily the nakedly political shaping of communal identity for the approval of aristocratic patrons or the crown as is evident in history plays. Instead, it is to look at how the processes of self-identification and global consciousness are woven into the imaginative worlds of fictitious tragedy and comedy. How is the globe utilised as an imaginary stage, how is a diverse humanity utilised to populate that stage, and what do their actions tell us about the condition of globality at the time they were first performed? A number of playwrights emerged around the turn of the seventeenth century who dealt with these imaginative uses of this material, creating popular representations, as popular entertainment, for popular audiences. Among these writers, the names Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Jonson stand firmly in the English literary canon, having influenced successive generations with their interpretations of these themes. This paper focuses on a selection of fictional works by these three authors. These will be read for their representations of global space, global action, and the characterisation of humanity as well as their interpretations of local space and local identity parallel to the historical context in which they were first conceived. I will be using these texts as historical documents offering a record of what type of

world was being represented to Elizabethan and Jacobean audiences and to gauge whether discernible themes can be found and whether these images amount to a discourse of globalisation.

4. Primary Sources

This paper will deal with the fictional plays of three of the outstanding popular dramatists at the turn of the seventeenth century — Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare, and Ben Jonson — as primary sources revealing contemporary depictions of the globe. The plays included in this piece were all written within the space of thirty years, laying either side, of the year 1600; the earliest play of this selection is Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great* (part one), from around 1587, the latest is Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, first performed around 1614. The boundaries of this periodisation have been placed around the sources themselves, rather than sources found to fit a supposedly distinct epoch. As described above, this period falls somewhere along the course of distinct trends towards greater global interconnection, increased visibility of the wider-world from the fixed point of the City of London, and the consolidation of the English state.

These three playwrights have been chosen on the basis of their popularity, both among broad-based contemporary audiences and with global audiences in subsequent centuries, as well as for the clear dialogue which can be read between their works. Harold Bloom writes that:

> There are only three significant literary influences upon Shakespeare: Marlowe, Chaucer, and the English Bible.

> Marlowe was swallowed up by Shakespeare, as a minnow, by a whale… [81]

This is discernible in noticeable thematic similarities in the works of the two playwrights; Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (c. 1596) bears clear similarities to Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* (c. 1589),[82] *Antony and Cleopatra* (c. 1606) to the *Tamburlaine* plays (c. 1587),[83] and *The Tempest* (c. 1611) to *Doctor Faustus* (c. 1588).[84] Jonson's work is also influenced by that of his forerunners; he wrote extensively for the Globe and is likely to have been frequently in contact with and influenced by the man he addressed as "my beloved… Mr William Shakespeare".[85] He even contributed verses for the preface of Shakespeare's first folio (1623); in these he also paid homage to the debt the English language owed to Marlowe's artistry; what he called "Marlowe's mighty line".[86] Jonson was, however, critical of his forerunners' thematic impact on the London stage. Jonson scorns the subject matter of his contemporaries, deriding "those that beget Tales, Tempests, and suchlike drolleries" in the prologue to *Bartholomew Fair* (*Bar.*, Prol., 150-1) and decries "the Tamerlanes and Tamer-chains of the late age, which had nothing in them but… scenical strutting".[87] The focus of Jonson's work on the

---

81 Bloom, Harold. *Ruin the Sacred Truths: Poetry and Belief from the Bible to the Present*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991, p. 53.

82 Logan, Robert. *Shakespeare's Marlowe: The Influence of Christopher Marlowe on Shakespeare's Artistry*. London: Ashgate, 2007, pp. 117-142.

83 Ibid., pp. 17-18.

84 Ibid., pp. 197-230.

85 Farley-Hills, David. *Shakespeare and the Rival Playwrights, 1600-1606*. London: Routledge, 1990, p. 1.

86 Jonson, Ben. "To the Memory of My Beloved, The Author, Mr. William Shakespeare, and What He Hath Left Us (1623)", in: Stephen Greenblatt and Mike Abrams, eds., *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: Volume I*, 8th ed., New York: Norton, 2006, p. 1445.

87 Jonson, Ben. "Timber." in: Jonson, Ben. *Discoveries: Made Upon Men and Matter and Some Poems* (c. 1640). London: Cassel & Co., 1892. [E-Book] *Project Gutenberg.* www.gutenberg.org/files/5134/5134-h/5134-h.htm. Accessed: 23 March 2018.

discovery of local space and character can be read as a ration to the weaknesses he perceived in the work of his contemporaries.

The plays studied in this paper are placed in dialogue with one another as this is the context in which they were written. They were produced in a theatrical world of close collaboration, commercial rivalry, and artistic inspiration. Despite that what links the work of these three writers, there are clearly identifiable differences in their perspectives and temperaments. Robert Logan, for instance, argues that while Shakespeare did emulate "the theatrical and literary techniques… that made [Marlowe] a successful commercial playwright", he made no attempt to ape his Cambridge intellectualism by "reflecting and moralizing on serious issues".[88] Jonson's work is focussed at an entirely different level of action to both Marlowe and Shakespeare, interested less in the machinations of states and leaders and more on the minutiae of human society. The varied viewpoints and intellectual interests of these three playwrights make their writing an interesting source from which to piece together those contemporary understandings of the globe which were represented to broad audiences within the public forum of the theatre.

This paper focuses on those plays which deal most directly with the concepts of spatiality and identity on the either the domestic or global scale. For this reason I will look at those plays which deal with two overarching themes which characterise the mediation of the early modern English society with the intensifying global condition of their age: the spatial organisation of the globe and the encounter with otherness. In this paper, both of these concepts will be shown to impact as much on ideas of self and home as on global patterns of action and identity.

---

[88] Logan, Robert. *Shakespeare's Marlowe*, op cit., p. 120.

5. Representations of global space

In the first section of this analysis, representations of space will be examined. Questions are asked of how the space of the globe imagined on the stage, what are its component parts and how are they characterised and divided? This section will argue that simplistic binaries of spatial units are commonly represented on stage and pieced together into a global construct which mirrors the spatial configuration of Elizabethan England. The implication of this is that the globe is imagined as a world order centralised on the highly connected space of the Mediterranean, an order in which England is located towards the periphery.

5.1. Components of global space

The most prominent subdivision of space for these playwrights is the city; it is here that the primary settings of these plays is located, it is the stage on which human action is performed. By foregrounding the city, there is recognition among playwrights that it was there, in those vibrant hubs of social life, that diverse groups of people are brought into contact with one another and where events worthy of popular entertainment happen. The stories played out on stage are universal, they deal with subjects of human emotion, such as love, jealousy, greed, and forgiveness; it is this universality which has made the works of these three playwrights, Shakespeare specifically, so mobile and enduring. This universality as well as the bareness of the stage, suggests that the decision of where to situate a play was not obviously constrained. The fact that these plays take place inside or in direct reference to the city was a deliberate choice, one which alludes to a perception that the city is a natural reference point from which and against which to interpret human nature and the space of the wider world.

The city would have been a familiar space to the playwrights and their intended audience, most of whom would have had everyday experience of urban life in and around London. Despite the heterogeneity of an Elizabethan or Jacobean audience, the communal experience of city life would have bound them together and allowed for shared understandings of certain images and representations. This applies not only on a domestic register, but also on a universal or global scale. Urban life is fundamentally cosmopolitan, not only was the population of individual cities drawn from diverse backgrounds — as evidenced in *Othello*, where both the Venetian general and his lieutenant, Othello and Michael Cassio, are migrants to the city — but civic life itself is a shared experience with common attributes and characteristics regardless of which city is actually being represented, Ben Jonson rails against the foreign settings of contemporary comedies by declaring in his prologue to *The Alchemist*:

> Our scene is London, 'cause we would make known,
> No country's mirth is better than our own:
> No clime breeds better matter for your whore,
> Bawd, squire, impostor, many persons more".
>
> (Alc., Prol. 5-8)

Jonson locates the common culture of city life in the vice which he sees as its intrinsic characteristic. His earlier comedy, *Volpone*, shows the vice and corruption of Venice. He achieves this through focussing on the disappointment of English travellers who have relocated to the city in order to improve themselves in a supposedly more refined, cultured, and civilised environment than would be found at home. These characters are relentlessly mocked by the playwright for their naivety. Jonson instead proposes that a universalistic urban culture exists in which corruption and sin are ubiquitous features.

The concept of universal city culture can be seen in the degree of interchangeability which exists between cities, it is generally agreed that many of the cities represented on the renaissance stage are 'politically correct' substitutes for London; Jean E. Howard observes that, in city comedies, "London is the locus of the action, even when the city in question is putatively Venice or Vienna."[89] It is partly a means of avoiding official censorship since, while it would be unacceptable to stage a play detailing Machiavellian intrigue in the London court, the same story may be allowed to play unquestioned if ostensibly set in a foreign city; *Measure for Measure* is held up as a prime example of this. Shakespeare uses the example of the absolutist Duke of Vienna as a mirror to King James I's belief in his own divine right. Debra Shuger argues that *Measure for Measure*, which was performed at court in December 1604, holds up a somewhat welcome mirror to King James: "If one wished to grasp what royal absolutism "felt" like in the first year of James's reign, Duke Vincentio might not be a bad exemplar."[90] This idea of equivalence between cities, that a city play is a city play, irrespective of the ostensible location, is an important indicator of a cosmopolitan pre-modern mindset; one which allows a sense of global identity and an appreciation of the common travails of humanity within a certain environmental setting.

Aspects of this concept of urban equivalence can also be read as an attempt to connect contemporary London with the great imperial cities of antiquity. An interesting part of the process of equivalence in the establishment of geographical similarity; as mentioned above, similarities are found between contemporary cities on the basis of

---

89 Howard, Jean. "Shakespeare, Geography, and the Work of Genre on the Early Modern Stage." in: Cohen, Stephen, ed., *Shakespeare and Historical Formalism*. Abington: Ashgate, 2007, pp. 49–67, 53.

90 Shuger, Debra. *Political Theologies in Shakespeare's England: The Sacred and the State in Measure for Measure*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001, p. 91.

cultural links, such as the existence of similar characters: Shakespeare's absolutist ruler or Jonson's prostitutes and fraudsters. When finding equivalence across time, similarities are established in key material features, most notably the fixed and timeless River Thames, which finds its parallel in the Tiber and the Nile. In Shakespeare's tragedy, Antony declares to Cleopatra:

> Let Rome in Tiber melt, and the wide arch
> Of the ranged empire fall! Here is my space.
> Kingdoms are clay: our dungy earth alike
>
> (*Ant.*, 1.1.33-5)

The illusory power of the stage is able to link the transient historical world to the present space through the fixed material site of the river; Carlo Pagetti has used this to argue that Shakespeare's Rome is London, mirroring its streets, stones, monuments, stinking common people.[91] This follows Ifor Evans' influential lecture on Shakespeare's geographical imagination, which finds the imagery of early modern London to be ubiquitous in his descriptions of foreign places, especially in the Roman plays.[92] In the same play, Cleopatra declares:

> Rather a ditch in Egypt
> Be gentle grave unto me! rather on Nilus' mud
> Lay me stark nak'd, and let the water-flies
> Blow me into abhorring! rather make
> My country's high pyramides my gibbet
> And hang me up in chains!
>
> (*Ant.*, 5.2.57-62)

---

[91] Pagetti, Carlo. "Shakespeare's Tales of Two Cities: London and Rome." in: Del Sapio Garbero, ed., *Identity, Otherness, and Empire,* op cit., pp. 151-154.

[92] Evans, Ifor. "Shakespeare's World." in: Sutherland, James and Joel Hurstfield, *Shakespeare's World*, London: Edward Arnold, 1964, pp. 21-22.

By equating the famous landmarks of ancient Egypt to the easily-recognisable imagery of contemporary London street life, the gibbet used for public executions, Shakespeare links the material geography of London to the distant, ancient, and exotic civilisations of antiquity; this suggests an understanding of geography and history founded not on the basis of difference, but of similarity. This construction of equivalence, it can be argued, enhances the status of London, attaching it to the prestigious and influential centres of the classical and biblical world. At a point when England's weakness and peripherality was so pronounced, this is an important act of civic self-fashioning.

The city as a unit of political organisation plays a very important role in renaissance humanist conceptions of an idealised society. Classical philosophers, who comprise the foundations of western political thought, conceived of the city as the natural unit of human organisation; those classical debates on the ideal organisation of the state, which influenced renaissance political thought, were generally formed around the blank canvas of the city. The impact of this intellectual heritage can be seen in renaissance political treatises such as Thomas More's *Utopia*, which details an ideal political space in which extensive communal life is able to function inside a collection of highly regulated cities, and Tommaso Campanella's *The City of the Sun*, which describes an ideal city society in which labour and dignity are shared equally for the benefit of all citizens. The prominence of the city as a spatial unit of organisation is not merely a product of philosophy or literary self-fashioning; according to Fernand Braudel, the profound disruption of the Black Death in the mid-fourteenth century led to the breakdown of "cumbersome" land empires and so "the Mediterranean and the active part of Europe were reduced more than ever to

'archipelagos' of cities."[93] The recentring of the European economy which followed, allowed the Italian city-states to become the dominant centres of economic and cultural power in Europe. It is no coincidence that it is here that the cultural blossoming of the renaissance emerged and from where the English renaissance drew the most inspiration.

The fundamental political and cultural differences between these city-states, which were governed as tools for the benefit of a wealthy merchant elite, and London, the capital city of a larger territorial kingdom, is not fully appreciated in the representations of equivalence which appeared on the Elizabethan and Jacobean stage. This finds an equivalent in the policy of Thomas Gresham, an advisor to the Queen, to establish the Royal Exchange in London in 1566. Originally called the 'Bourse' after the Antwerp Bourse, the purpose of the Royal Exchange was to loosen English dependence on Antwerp.[94] The imitation of city-state institutions in London signals both a political will for the London economy to compete with the city-states of Europe and an identification with them. London's dominant relationship over the wider English economy, which can be seen from the national distribution of agricultural and primary resource production, and its integration with international trade networks, highlight the complexity of London's identity as city which, despite being part of a larger political unit, held a cosmopolitan affinity with the merchant-dominated city states of continental Europe.

Larger units of territorial organisation, such as kingdoms and empires, do not hold a prominent position in the fictional plays of Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Jonson. This may be in part due to the difficulties of showing such a sprawling political unit in the confines of

---

93 Braudel, Fernand. *Civilization and Capitalism, Vol. III: The Perspective of the World*. London: Collins, 1984, p. 117.

94 Ibid., p. 153.

the stage and in part because there was no single conception of nation for a heterogeneous audience to identify with. It must be noted, however, that Shakespeare's history plays did at least manage to pose questions about the kingdom as a territorial whole; Michael Hattaway argues that the histories ask their audiences whether in fact England is governable against a backdrop of a scheming Catholic Church, insubordinate elites, and power-hungry nobles.[95] In the comedies and tragedies of the period, the territorial whole is subordinate to its constituent cities; kingdom and empire exist, notably in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great* plays, but these are merely represented as a collection of cities loosely strung together for the financial and reputational benefit of a king. The geographic area comprising an empire is not a reliable indication of its stability and power. In the first instalment of *Tamburlaine*, the audience is introduced to the emperor and noblemen of Persia, who control a huge empire bordering both Africa and Europe and who compare themselves with the Persian rulers of classical antiquity:

> How easily may you, with a mighty host.
> Pass into Graecia, as did Cyrus once
>
> (Tam. I., 1.1.129-130)

Yet the scale and decentralised nature of this empire is shown to be a liability as the emperor based in Persepolis is unable to effectively handle the threat posed by brigands and pirates at the fringes of his territory:

---

[95] Hattaway, Michael. "The Shakespearean History Play." in: Hattaway, Michael, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's History Plays*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 22.

> Men from the farthest equinoctial line
> Have swarm'd in troops into the Eastern India,
> Lading their ships with gold and precious stones
> (Tam. I., 1.1.119-121)

The nature of the kingdom described here is so lacking in unity and identity, that the invasion of its Indian provinces is received by conspiratorial noblemen as an opportunity not just to usurp the throne, but also "to gain the title of a conqueror" (*Tam. I.*, 1.1.125). There is a clear fluidity in the borders and boundaries of kingdoms and empires. Stability and territorial integrity is not an aim for the leaders of states, only riches and reputation. In a rallying cry to their soldiers, the Persian rulers are shown to be willing and able to carve up their own empire in order to achieve military glory; their soldiers are offered entire provinces in return for the heads of enemy generals:

> He that can take or slaughter Tamburlaine,
> Shall rule the province of Albania.
> Who brings that traitor's head, Theridamas,
> Shall have a government in Media
> (Tam. I., 2.2.30-33)

Contrary to this representation, it is suggested that the empire built by Tamburlaine has a great deal of integrity; he inspires both fear and loyalty to pacify his conquered territories, there are no instances of either military defeat or territorial loss. In the first part of *Tamburlaine*, the protagonist finally accepts the limits on his imperial ambitions and consolidates his territory; he tells his followers to:

> Cast off your armour, put on scarlet robes,
> Mount up your royal places of estate,
> Environed with troops of noble men,
> And there make laws to rule your provinces:

> Hang up your weapons on Alcides' post;
> For Tamburlaine takes truce with all the world.
>
> (Tam. I., 5.2.462-467)

In the sequel, however, Marlowe highlights the futility of empire building. Tamburlaine takes up arms once more to continue his conquests; despite his military successes, the audience is fully aware from the outset that his efforts are in vain, for the prologue announces that "death cuts off the progress of his pomp, and murderous Fates throw... all his triumphs down." (*Tam. II*., Prol. 4-5) Both the Persian Empire and the Empire of Tamburlaine can be said to have overreached: while the Persian Empire quite simply collapsed on account of, what would come to be called, 'imperial overstretch', Tamburlaine's ambition to rule the world, through no fault of strategy or motivation, ends in despairing frustration; on his deathbed he laments:

> Whereas the sun, declining from our sight,
> Begins the day with our Antipodes!
> And shall I die, and this unconquered?
> Lo, here, my sons, are all the golden mines,
> Inestimable drugs and precious stones,
> More worth than Asia and the world beside;
> And from th' Antarctic Pole eastward behold
> As much more land, which never was descried,
> Wherein are rocks of pearl that shine as bright
> As all the lamps that beautify the sky!
> And shall I die, and this unconquered?"
>
> (Tam. II., 148-158)

His greedy desire for more territory, more wealth, and more fame deprive him of the fulfilment which he possesses at the end of the first

book. By representing empire in this way, Marlowe connects the moral compulsion to stay within certain 'natural' limits, a theme which recurs in *Doctor Faustus* and which echoes the Greek myths of Icarus and Phaethon, to the process of territorial expansiveness. By this negative example the city-state, or at least the small, centralised, and defensible territorial-state, is suggested to be the 'natural' unit of political organisation.

Another important component of the imaginary geography of the Elizabethan and Jacobean stage, not wholly distinct from the representation of the city, is the island. The islands which feature as settings are always represented in conjunction with cities; they are either merged into a single unit of spatial organisation, or they are heavily contrasted. On the renaissance stage, island settings can either be a container of cities or a container of wilderness. Venice is a prominent example of the former, the unnamed island ruled by Prospero in *The Tempest* and the representation of Cyprus in *Othello* the latter.

These two examples of islands containing wilderness could, quite simply, be referred to as desert islands; although Cyprus is represented as a fortress island, a stepping-stone on a medieval Crusade-route or a *costeggiare* trade path between Venice and the Levant,[96] it is, like Prospero's island, the site of a shipwreck. Although Cyprus is the intended destination of Othello's army, the shipwreck of the Turkish fleet means that the Venetians characters are an army without an enemy to fight, stranded and waiting to return to the city. This is an important parallel between the two islands under discussion, since the ostensible relationship between the characters and the islands is very different: in *The Tempest* Prospero has been exiled to an island, it is his prison and a limitation of his horizons; Othello and his army, on

---

[96] Braudel, Fernand. *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II: Vol. I*. New York: Harper & Row, 1972, p. 103.

the other hand, are consciously seeking adventure, fame, and status by sailing to Cyprus. This distinction highlights the complexity islands in the early modern imagination; John Gillis states that "islands remained the favored location for western dreams and fears throughout the early modern period."[97] On the stage, these two desert islands are a space of fear and anxiety. Not because they are islands, as such, rather because they are far removed from the civilising forces of human society, they are wild spaces in which wild inhibitions are unleashed.

Remote islands in the early modern imagination could also be the site of ideal societies, as portrayed in Thomas More's *Utopia* and Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis*. In this literature, insularity is seen as neither good nor bad per se; islands are merely an attractive theoretical space for exploring questions of human nature and society. This is because islands are enclosed spaces, which are individually unique, yet generic and therefore equivalent;[98] therefore each one of the seemingly inexhaustible supply of new islands being discovered and charted could be imagined as a completely different world set within comprehensible boundaries. This paralleled a mode of thinking about islands which is seen in the emergence of the isolario, a cartographic and literary form that remained popular throughout the early modern era.[99] Isolario were textual and pictorial, described by Gillis as "compendiums of facts and fiction organized around chapters on islands real and imagined, which encouraged speculation on the diversity of the world's peoples and

---

97 Gillis, John. "Islands in the Making of an Atlantic Oceania, 1500 –1800", in: Bentley, Jerry, Renate Bridenthal, and Karen Wigen, eds., *Seascapes: Maritime Histories, Littoral Cultures, and Transoceanic Exchanges*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007, p. 25.

98 Steinberg, Philip. "Insularity, Sovereignty and Statehood: The Representation of Islands on Portolan Charts and the Construction of the Territorial State." *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, vol. 87, no. 4, 2005, p. 254.

99 Conley, Tom. "Early Modern Literature and Cartography: An Overview." in: *The History of Cartography, Vol. 3,* op cit., p. 405.

cultures, reflecting but also facilitating the process of global encounters that Europe had embarked upon."[100]

Steinberg argues that the representation of islands in renaissance cartography, especially the portolan charts which aided maritime navigation, laid the foundations for conceptions of the sovereign territorial state which would come to dominate political thinking in subsequent centuries. While mainland kingdoms in early modern portolan maps were rarely shaded to designate territory, the entire space of an island is typically represented in a garish colour or its coastline is highlighted with prominent, coloured brushstrokes. Political leadership of the mainland was signalled merely by a flag in the capital or port city, islands were represented as "bounded political territories in which a sovereign has control over a unified space", in some cases the name of a kingdom or coats of arms was placed over the entire territory of an island.[101] Islands are attractive spaces for utopias and nightmares because their space is unambiguous. Unlike the porous empires portrayed in the *Tamburlaine* plays, they are sites of unequivocal sovereignty, so they can provide a distinctive background to a story. Prospero is the ruler of his island, there is no question of that. Despite Caliban's protestations of unfairness, he must either submit to Prospero's sovereignty or support an external aspirant who must in turn seize that sovereignty with violence. There is no alternative, he cannot cross a border beyond Prospero's control, sovereignty is absolute.

Though islands are an important feature of the imaginative space of the renaissance theatre, they are not spaces in their own right like cities are. Islands are merely containers of space which present an attractive imaginary vacuum which encourage conceptions of unique social orders.

---

[100] Gillis, John. "Islands in the Making…", op cit., p. 25.
[101] Steinberg, Philip. "Insularity, Sovereignty and Statehood…", op cit., p. 258.

5.2. Boundaries and characteristics of global spaces

Cities are the most important spaces in theatrical representation of the globe, these are the points at which and between which action occurs. This picture strongly resembles the contemporary spatial model posited by 'global city theory', a structure which is brought about by important shifts in the global economy which increase the role of the city at the expense of the territorial state. Movements of goods, capital, people, and ideas move with increasing ease and intensity between various 'global cities', while the territorial-state becomes increasingly irrelevant and dependent on the city.[102] In this model, cities are connected directly to one-another and clearly distinguishable from their hinterlands, which are relegated to the status of an anonymous 'in-between space'. The city is distinguished on the early modern stage as a physically bounded space. City walls and the sea are the main features by which the space and identity of cities and islands are differentiated from the spaces and identities of the rest of global space.

The city, similar the above discussion of islands, is a bounded space. Its walls mark a significant delineation of what and who belongs within its space, and are therefore a necessary component for conceptions of identity formation. On a simple level, the wall binds a heterogeneous group of individuals together into an easily imagined group; a collective identity which is defined by living on a certain side of a physical line, a collective identity which the diverse and cosmopolitan characters on the stage share with their audiences, whether groundlings in the yard or gentlemen in the gallery.

The representation of city walls on the renaissance stage goes further than this simple binary though, it attaches a normative

---

[102] Brenner, Neil. "Global Cities, Glocal States: Global City Formation and State Territorial Restructuring in Contemporary Europe." *Review of International Political Economy*, vol. 5, no. 1, 1998, pp. 1-37

judgement to both the spaces which are enclosed and the spaces which are excluded by city walls. Echoing the classical binary of citizen and barbarian, spaces were demarcated as 'civilised' and 'wild', with an explicit division occurring at the city's physical boundary. The identity portrayed in 'civilised' space is linked by these playwrights to the 'ideologies' of sovereignty, law, and conventional religious observance, which are portrayed as existing more naturally within boundaries. 'Wild' space, on the other hand, is ungovernable, anarchic, and godless. The concept of 'civilisation' represented in this literature is a wholly spatial phenomenon, fixed to a specific place not to its citizens. Consequently, a citizen who leaves 'civilised' space exposes himself to the risk of unleashing his own 'barbarian' nature.

The physical distinction between 'civilised' and 'wild' space is nowhere more sharply defined than *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, where a dark and mysterious forest is located directly outside the gates of Athens. The forest is an entirely different realm to that of the city; it is the Kingdom of the Faeries replete with its own king and queen. The faeries are completely nomadic creatures; asked where they are wandering, a faerie replies:

> Over hill, over dale,
> Thorough bush, thorough briar,
> Over park, over pale,
> Thorough flood, thorough fire;
> I do wander everywhere
> Swifter than the moon's sphere
>
> (MND., 2.1.2-7)

This movement doesn't respect the boundaries and borders of the rural world, the faeries are able to circumnavigate the world with great speed and ease using their magic; one faerie claims that he can "put a girdle

round about the earth in forty minutes". (*MND.*, 2.1.175-176) The imagery of the faeries' realm is naturalistic, placing it in direct contrast to the 'civilised' space of the city.

Shakespeare is especially interested in the idea of 'civilised' space, something that he explores in depth with *Othello*, *The Tempest*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Each of these plays follows its protagonists outside the bounded space of the city and examines the impact a change of scenery has on their behaviour. *Othello* is an interesting place to start as the title-character is not a native to the 'civilised' space; he is a foreigner, whose self-narrated backstory depicts a nomadic warrior:

> Rude am I in my speech
> And little blessed with the soft phrase of peace…
> little of this great world can I speak
> More than pertains to feats of broil and battle
>
> (*Oth.*, 1.3.81-7).

The 'civilised' space of Venice 'civilises' Othello, who is presented to the audience as a paragon of 'civilised' society; in his introductory scene he stands up to the fury of his wife's father with pacific calm and good humour:

> Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them.
> Good signior, you shall more command with years
> Than with your weapons.
>
> (*Oth.*, 1.2.59-61)

He proceeds eloquently to defend his courtship of Desdemona against accusations of witchcraft and piracy before the Venetian court. Inside the 'civilised' space of the city, the nomadic Othello becomes a 'citizen' in the broadest sense; He adheres to the laws of that space, he has

accepted conventional local religious practice by baptism (*Oth.* 2.3.310), and he accepts the sovereignty of the Duke and his governors:

> Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors,
> My very noble and approved good masters".
> (*Oth.*, 1.3.76-77)

However, by taking Othello once more outside the city limits, Shakespeare is able to show his conception of the territorial-boundedness of 'civilisation'. When the setting of the play switches to the "warlike isle" (*Oth.*, 2.1.43) of Cyprus in the second act, the legal, normative, and religious properness expected of Othello and his army in the city is eroded. As general of the army, Othello makes an attempt to moderate the behaviour of his men by ordering his otherwise reliable and honest lieutenant, Michael Cassio, "not to out-sport discretion" with celebratory drinks (*Oth.*, 2.3.3). In a scene which contrasts with the earlier depiction of the Duke's norm-based sovereign control of the city, this order is ignored by Cassio, who under the influence of the play's villain, Iago, becomes inebriated and is lured into a fight with the Cypriot Governor. "Are we turned Turks[?]" asks an infuriated Othello of the "barbarous" behaviour of his army as he steps in to reinstate order (*Oth.*, 2.3.153); a question which insinuates a collapse of the religious unity which binds the identity of Venetians.

The culmination of this play sees Iago drive Othello to madness with insinuations about his wife's unfaithfulness. Along with the change in setting, the audience witnesses a horrifying transformation in Othello's character throughout the play. It is perhaps best allegorised in the protagonist's own ponderance:

> Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse
> Of sun and moon, and that th'affrighted globe
> Should yawn at alteration.
>
> (*Oth.* 5.2.100-2)

The self-controlled and law-abiding Christian 'citizen' is eclipsed by a pitiless and vengeful monster, driven by "some bloody passion" (*Oth.*, 5.2.44) to murder his beloved wife. For Shakespeare, the individual is not morally improved by 'civilised' space per se, rather, his 'wild' nature is restrained by it. City limits are therefore portrayed as a boundary which an individual crosses at his own peril.

In Othello's own explanation of his crime, he claims that Iago, who he terms a "demi-devil", was able to ensnare his "soul and body" (*Oth.*, 5.2.299). This alludes to a prominent aspect of 'wild' space in renaissance thought, the existence of devils or malevolent spirits. Michael Ryan shows how Satan became a key means of understanding the beliefs and practices of the recently discovered peoples of the New World and the polytheistic eastern cultures within the frameworks of early modern European thought; since his religion and behaviour was known and predictable, the heathen peoples were likewise made knowable by association. Satan therefore appears in much sixteenth and seventeenth century travel literature as a feature of the 'wild' space of the globe.[103] This portrayal is also clearly represented in *The Tempest* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Caliban is the demonic figure of *The Tempest* who, like Iago, attempts to ensnare the mind of an Italian 'citizen' and lead him to act against the norms of 'civilised' space. He seduces the shipwrecked butler, Stephano, with promises of power and sovereignty, telling him that: "thou shalt be lord of [the island], and I'll serve thee" (*Temp.*,

---

[103] Ryan, Michael. "Assimilating New Worlds…", op cit., pp. 529-30.

3.2.54). Stephano is urged to kill Prospero and usurp his throne, challenging the legal basis of sovereignty which ought to be respected by a 'citizen'. Caliban further draws Stephano away from the norms of 'civilised' space by encouraging him to think of himself as a god: "I will kiss thy foot. I prithee, be my god" (*Temp.*, 2.2.146), to which Stephano replies: "Come on, then, down and swear." (*Temp.*, 2.2.150). By entering the 'wild' space of the city, Stephano leaves himself vulnerable to blasphemous and traitorous fantasies as encouraged by the devil.

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the faeries are also able to manipulate the behaviour of 'citizens' who venture beyond the city limits. The faeries use their magic to make the play's four young Athenian characters fall in and out of love with one another against their initial predispositions; the liberation of their sexuality contradicts the patriarchal sovereignty of Theseus in the city by overruling his decree that Hermia must marry Demetrius along with her father's wishes. The 'wild' space is one in which the structures of control present in the city are subverted; this applies not just to political control but also normative control of the self. This is further symbolised by the faeries' ability to transform a 'citizen' into an ass; the literal dehumanisation of Bottom in this scene suggests that the 'wild' space is one in which humans don't have a natural place.

Marlowe highlights with *Doctor Faustus* that it is not so much the space itself that protects 'citizens' from devilish forces, but the presence of community within that space. In this portrayal, the devil actually comes within the city walls, but only by the invitation of Faustus; who is depicted as something of an outcast from 'civilised' society. He does not follow the religious practices of the city, instead he is cloistered away in his study practicing necromancy. In the closing scenes his colleagues attempt to save him, however Faustus refuses the help and accepts his fate. His last contact with the devil happens

characteristically behind closed doors, separated from the wider community of the city. In this reading, the power of the city is that it ensures conformity of religious practice and prevents individuals from straying.

It could also be argued that Faustus' great transgression is to bring magic inside the 'civilised' space of the city. This is an act of defiance against the enlightened legal systems which administer the ideal 'civilised' space. On the stage, the law-based society of the city is commonly juxtaposed with might-based systems outside the city. This is evident in *The Tempest*, where Prospero rules his island through naked force, backed up by the power of his magic; he is seen constantly to threaten violence against Caliban, who is a resentful and unwilling slave: Fetch us in fuel, and be quick thou 'rt best,

> To answer other business. Shrug'st thou, malice?
> If thou neglect'st, or dost unwillingly
> What I command, I'll rack thee with old cramps,
> Fill all thy bones with aches, make thee roar,
> That beasts shall tremble at thy din.
>
> (*Temp*., 1.2.371-2)

In order to return to the 'civilised' space of Milan in the concluding scene, there is a very deliberate and permanent renunciation of his magical powers. He destroys his magic book and staff, which were merely a necessity for the 'wild' space of the island:

> … this rough magic
> I here abjure…
> … I'll break my staff,
> Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
> And deeper than did ever plummet sound
> I'll drown my book.
>
> (*Temp.*, 5.1.50-7)

Magic is incompatible with the ideologies of 'civilised' space both in that it is sacrilegious and that it subverts sovereignty on the basis of legality. Magic cannot exist alongside the conventional religious practice and the legal systems which define the space within the limits of the city.

City walls function not only as a dividing line between 'civilised' and 'wild' space, they also protect 'civilised' space from the incursion of 'wild' space. In Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*, the invading Turkish leader threatens to "turn proud Malta to a wilderness" by levelling its walls and towers with his artillery. (*JM.*, 3.6.25) 'Civilised' space cannot exist without its walls. Similarly, the walls which are besieged by Tamburlaine function to keep his 'wildness' at bay, if only temporarily.

Tamburlaine, as a character, is the personification of 'wild' space. He is a nomad, whose home is in the 'wild' space outside the cities of the Persian Empire. His pillaging of merchants outside Persepolis shows both a disdain for the sovereignty of the Persian Emperor and for the urban culture of trade. He also ignores the territorial sovereignty of the Turkish Emperor, the self-claimed "high and highest monarch of the world" (*Tam. I.*, 3.1.26), who "wills and commands" him "not once to set his foot in Africa, or spread his colours in Graecia" (*Tam. I.*, 3.1.27-29). Furthermore, he has no respect for the nobility of kings, keeping his defeated enemies as slaves to pull his carriage and to serve as his footstool.

Like the faeries of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, he is fantastically mobile and can move his army across vast geographical distances quickly and easily. The only features of the global space that brings his restlessly mobile army to a halt are city walls, which must be slowly besieged. For the nomadic Tamburlaine, the world is experienced from the outside of cities; he moves from place to place besieging his enemies' walls while they conspire against him from within. Tamburlaine is shown to be actively hostile to bounded space; it is his only notable adversary. His armies' superiority is such that they don't face any real threat from their rivals, the only defeat dealt to Tamburlaine in either of the plays is the death of his wife, which he blames on the town in which it occurs, declaring: "This cursed town will I consume with fire, because this place bereft me of my love" (*Tam. II*, 2.4.136). This apportioning of blame and the revenge he takes highlights a clear antipathy towards 'civilised' space.

Further protection of sovereign space is offered by the sea, which functions as the other major demarcation and divider of space in the imagined globe of the renaissance stage. The sea is portrayed as wilder and more dangerous than terrestrial 'wild' space, as man can have absolutely no mastery over it. This is represented in *The Tempest* by Prospero, who is able to use his magical powers to impose some kind of order on 'wild' space, though unable, with the same powers, to escape the island by crossing the seas.

The sea is commonly portrayed as a physically daunting natural phenomenon, an elemental space which is not bound by the rules of man and cannot be controlled by him. The ship's officer caught up in Shakespeare's eponymous tempest makes this point very brusquely to the Duke of Milan's interfering counsellor:

> You are a counselor. If you can command these elements
> to silence, and work the peace of the present, we will not

> hand a rope more, use your authority. If you cannot… make yourself ready in your cabin for the mischance of the hour… Out of our way, I say.
>
> (*Temp.*, 1.1.20-6)

The 'wild' space of the sea does not obey the 'civilised' structures of sovereignty which belong in the city, there is a clear division in the nature of the two spaces.

Shipwrecks are a major plot point in Shakespeare's work. He is well aware of the resonance this experience has with his audiences, regardless of their social class. One of the shipwrecked Milanese nobles is made to reflect upon the universality of his experience:

> Our hint of woe is common, everyday some sailor's wife, the masters of some merchant, and the merchant have just our theme of woe.
>
> (*Temp.*, 2.1.3-6)

The futility of man's attempt to stay in control of his fortunes at sea is a common theme in this literature. The vulnerability of the ships is juxtaposed to the awesome power of the 'wild' sea, in the following: "what ribs of oak, when mountains melt on them, can hold the mortise?" (*Oth.*, 2.1.8-9).

Antonio, the protagonist of *The Merchant of Venice*, is almost ruined when he sends his fortune out to sea in trade vessels bound for various points around the world. He is portrayed as having lost control of his fate by entrusting his assets to the unpredictable sea. His careful management of risk, splitting his fortune between different ships, is scorned as a hubristic presumption of mastery over nature by the villain, Shylock, who points out that "ships are but boards, sailors but men" (*MV.*, 1.3.18).

Many references to the dangers of the sea portray a connection to the divine, highlighting a distinction to the 'wild' space of the land, which is shown so often as the domain of the devil. This can be seen in Prospero's survival at sea; he is rescued by coming across his island "by Providence divine" (*Temp.*, 1.2.179), having been sacrificed to the sea in an unrigged bark by his treacherous brother. This is echoed by Othello, who declares that "heaven hath forbid the Ottomites" from doing harm to the Venetians (*Oth.*, 2.3.152), in reference to the storm which had destroyed the Turkish fleet. In these examples, the space of the sea protects Venetian sovereignty over Cyprus and prevents greater injustice being done to Prospero following the usurpation of his sovereignty over Milan. The sea is portrayed here as a protective barrier which supports the sovereignty and religion of 'civilised' space, however, the dominant representation of the sea is of a 'wild' and dangerous space which shouldn't be ventured into.

Interestingly, Tamburlaine is the only character who considers himself able to bring order to the seas. For him, control of the land leads to control of the seas and control of the land means spreading terror. If he and his armies are feared enough in the territory around the Caspian, the "Christian merchants… shall vail to us as lords of all the lake." (*Tam I.*, 1.2.194-6) When he defeats the Ottoman armies, his first task is to sink all of the pirates who prey on Christian shipping in the Mediterranean (*Tam I.*, 3.3.249) and aims to circle the globe and have navies "keeping in awe… all the ocean by the British shore." (*Tam I.*, 3.3.259) For Tamburlaine, 'wild' space can only be brought under control through great force; this echoes the dominion of Prospero over Caliban and stands at odds with the ideal of control in 'civilised' space.

5.3. Connections between global spaces

For all of the barriers, distinctions, and dangers which divide the components of early modern imaginary geography, there is movement across these boundaries and between places. The physical movements of people and trade around the globe are prominently represented as are the various cognitive connections of the globe; that cosmopolitan identification with distant lands and peoples fostered by the flow of knowledge, ideas, and information around the globe. The prominence of the sea as a means for physical connection and the social space of the city for the connection of cosmopolitan identity privileges certain spaces, which have greater access to global flows. The globe is by no means imagined as a freely connected whole, the distinction between 'civilised' and 'wild' space which imagines 'wild' space as a vacuum for the ideologies of 'civilised' space, places limits on the implications of action, meaning that global space is a fundamentally fragmented space, with limited routes of connection.

The sea is the key means of physical connection between places; it is the link which joins city to city. The nature of the connection provided by the sea prioritises those port cities lying on the most profitable trade routes, these places are shown to be the site of great wealth. Malta is one such place shown to be in an ideal location for the accumulation of wealth in the middle of the Mediterranean; Barabas, the Jew of Malta, boasts that he is "on every side enriched" from the rich trade of the region, (*JM*., 1.1.112) his ships well "Spanish oils and wines of Greece" to Italy and the Middle East (*JM*., 1.1.4-5) and bring back "Persian silks… gold, and orient pearl." (*JM*., 1.1.88) This portrayal highlights the benefit of Malta's centrality and insularity: the greater the coastline, the greater the access to trade.

The affluence of Venice is also attributed to its access to the Mediterranean trade, the Duke proclaims that "the trade and profit of

the city consisteth of all nations" (*MV.*, 3.3.30-31), a boast that suggests a great deal of connectivity and cosmopolitanism. News of the world's trade is learnt from the great conglomeration of international merchants at the Rialto, the Venetian exchange. This portrayal of these Mediterranean island-cities depicts them like magnets, drawing inwards the entire world's wealth. *Volpone* is Ben Jonson's depiction of the ease of accumulation in Venice, the protagonist describes this as follows:

> I gain
> No common way: I use no trade, no venture;
> I wound no earth with ploughshares; fat no beasts
> To feed the shambles; have no mills for iron,
> Oil, corn, or men, to grind 'em into powder;
> I blow no subtle glass; expose no ships
> To threat'nings of the furrow-facèd sea;
> I turn no moneys in the public bank,
> Nor usure private
>
> (*Vol.*, 1.1.32-40)

Volpone hasn't laboured or traded to acquire his enormous riches, he is shown not even to get out of bed, he merely lies in one place and tricks his naive and greedy victims into coming to him and handing over their possessions. Volpone is a magnet for wealth, personifying a common representation of Venice. This is also portrayed in the *Merchant of Venice* with the arrival of suitors from all over the world to court Portia, "from the four corners of the world, they come to kiss this shrine, this mortal breathing saint." (*MV.*, 2.7.39) This depiction not only centres the world on Venice, it highlights the ease with which Venetians come into contact with the wider world. This correlates with the above discussion of contemporary 'global city theory' in that the people, the wealth, and the culture of the global congregate into the city-hubs which are central to the world order; in this representation, the island-cities of the

Mediterranean are the central to this order on account of their access to the connectivity of the sea.

The centrality of these places is portrayed as both a blessing and a curse as it locates them on the frontline in the civilisational struggle between western Christianity and eastern Islam, which is a dominant theme in this literature. In *The Jew of Malta*, Malta is caught between the two major powers of the Mediterranean, the Spanish and the Ottomans, both of which attempt to assert their influence over the island, which despite being the location of wealth, is politically and militarily insignificant. While the connectivity of the sea brings great benefits, it also leaves the island accessible to hostile navies which seek to extort tribute or conquer territory. Turkish diplomats threaten the Maltese governor with a list of islands already conquered by the Ottomans "we came from Rhodes, from Cyprus, Candy, and those other Isles that lie betwixt the Mediterranean seas" (*JM*., 2-4). The small size — and therefore apparent weakness — of Mediterranean islands, their importance to trade, and their centrality to a binaristically portrayed clash between Istanbul and the Catholic West make them prime territories to be fought over and controlled from without in these representations.

Cosmopolitanism is also represented as a potential liability to the island-cities in these texts; although Barabas and Shylock provide important financial services to their territories, their disloyalty to the territorial religion of Malta and Venice pose a threat to the 'citizens' whom they live among. Barbas, in particular shows himself completely indifferent to the fortunes of the Maltese, reflecting on the Turkish threat: "let 'em combat, conquer, and kill all! So they spare me, my daughter, and my wealth." (*JM*., 1.1.152-3) Having been slighted by the state, this indifference becomes outright hostility: "I'll help to slay their children and their wives, to fire the churches, pull their houses down"

(*JM*., 5.1.64-5). Jonson's portrayal of Venice is one of corruption and decay, reflecting a commonly held English image of the city as both corrupt and decadent, as well as being famous for outbreaks of bubonic plague brought in on ships by trade with the East.[104] This is reflected in the attempt by the Englishman, Sir Politic, to devise a method of detecting "whether a ship newly arrivèd from Syria, or from any suspected part of all the Levant, be guilty of the plague" (*Vol.* 4.1.101-4). Jonson also links the idea of cosmopolitanism to venereal disease; Volpone's servant tells of his many illnesses in the same space as he recounts his affairs with "Gypsies... Jews, and black-moors" (*Vol.*, 1.5.45).

The early modern stage represents the material wealth and importance of the island-cities, brought about by the heightened connectivity, centrality, and cosmopolitanism of their geographical location and demographic composition. However, these positives are tempered by the great dangers to law, sovereignty, and religion that these characteristics can facilitate. In this manner of presentation, the peripherality of England is styled as a positive. Its removal from the connectivity of the wider-world is an important barrier protecting its 'civilised' space.

Another key connection between spaces, and one which would be far more relevant to a greater number of people in early modern London, is the imaginary connection between places as experienced in the theatre. There are a number of imaginative connections between spaces around the globe represented in these plays. This gives an insight into how the playwrights understood the task of representing the globe.

Key among these is the effort to fashion the globe for local consumption. This creative process bears some resemblance to the

---

[104] Stout, Michael. *Volpone by Ben Jonson: Macmillan Master Guides*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988, p. 79.

concept of 'glocalisation', the process of reinterpreting global phenomena at a local level. A prime example from the Jacobean stage is Ben Jonson's refashioning of Christopher Marlowe's global image of *Hero and Leander,* as a folk puppet show in *Bartholomew Fair*. Jonson was critical of the wide-ranging global narratives which he saw as fashionable on the London stage, regarding the exotic scenery as superficial and distracting from the mimetic function of theatre, its foundation in reality, and its relevance to its audiences. In *Bartholomew Fair*, his characters reimagine Marlowe's play by transporting it from the Hellespont to the Thames:

> I have only made it a little easy and modern for the times, sir, that's all; as, for the Hellespont, I imagine our Thames here; and then Leander I make a dyer's son, about Puddle Wharf; and Hero a wench o' the Bankside, who going over one morning to Old Fish Street, Leander spies her land at Trig Stairs, and falls in love with her.
>
> (Bar., 5.3.112-5)

Jonson's characters project a vision of the wider world onto the fixed local space of London, in doing so they make a global story understandable and relatable to the London audience. Jonson recognises the universality of the experience of love and separation and shows that stories of these human experiences from a distant place in the world can be appreciated locally. Geographical knowledge is not the core of a cosmopolitan imagination for Jonson; instead cosmopolitanism is signalled by interest in and understanding of foreign stories, something which he realises most effectively through cultural mediation and projection onto a local stage.

This mode of connecting the world is depicted more cynically in *The Alchemist*, where the global imagination of the conmen's victim,

Sir Epicure Mammon, is linked to his greed and naivety. Jonson makes Mammon project his visions of the world onto the confined space of the conmen's London basement to highlight his ability to deceive himself:

> Come on, sir. Now you set your foot on shore
> In Novo orbe; here's the rich Peru,
> And there within, sir, are the golden mines,
> Great Solomon's Ophir!
>
> (Alc., 2.1.1-4)

The conmen encourage these fantasies, by promising their victim worldly status and wealth in distant and exotic places, such as a personal kingdom in the East Indies (*Alc.*, 2.3.320). Mammon' is able to connect with distant lands in his mind, though Jonson warns of the dangers of greed in the desire to make that cognitive connection a material one. This preference of an imaginative link to the globe to a material one is echoed in Bartholomew Fair: "he that had the means to travel your head, now, should meet finer sights than any are i' the fair, and make a finer voyage on't" (*Bar.*, 1.5.82-4); here the speaker is praising the richness of the imagination over the disappointment of reality.

Othello and Tamburlaine are both also storytellers and constructors of imaginary worlds. Both characters court their future wives with their ability to bring images of distant lands inwards to a local space. Othello speaks of his "travels' history" (*Oth.*, 1.3.138), which brings forth fantastic images of a geography and humanity scarcely recognisable in the 'civilised' space of Venice:

> … of antres vast and deserts idle,
> Rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch heaven,
> … And of the cannibals that each other eat,

> The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads
> Do grow beneath their shoulders.
>
> (*Oth.*, 1.3.139-144)

Tamburlaine's courtship is less a "travels' history" and more a prospectus for future travels. Tamburlaine brings the exotic imagery of frozen lands before Zenocrate, the King of Egypt's daughter, to entice her to join him in his project of world conquest.

> With milk-white harts upon an ivory sled
> Thou shalt be drawn amidst the frozen pools,
> And scale the icy mountain's lofty tops
>
> (Tam. I., 1.2.98-100)

Both Othello and Tamburlaine bring imagery of the excitement and adventure inwards to the local and cloistered lives of their audience. Shakespeare demonstrates this by showing Desdemona hastily undertaking her domestic chores in order to "devour up [Othello's] discourse" (*Oth.*, 1.3.146-149). Othello feeds her imagination with exciting views of the wider world beyond the confines of her household.[105]

Desdemona takes Othello as her husband in an attempt to possess the exciting worldly adventure that he represents. However Shakespeare, like Jonson, warns against her attempt to use her imagination of the globe as the basis of material interaction with it; when Desdemona tries to embrace adventure in a material sense, by accompanying her husband to war, she exposes herself to great danger and is destroyed.

Imaginary connections between the various spaces of the world are very important in early modern England, this is the only way which

---

[105] Johanyak, Debra. "Turning Turk…", op cit., p. 79.

most people could experience the wider world. It is one of the most attractive features of the theatre, that it can allow local audiences to experience distant realities. Although there were technological limitations which prevented most early modern Londoners from travelling the world, they were able to travel the world in the imagination; this applies to most playwrights as well as their audiences. Representations of imaginary global connections within these plays give an insight into how playwrights themselves thought about the process of mediating distant imagery for a local audience and how they considered the concept of global awareness itself. Connections are drawn to excite and fascinate their audiences, to open up the horizons and exhilarate them with the knowledge that they are part of something much bigger than their domestic lives. Entertainment and knowledge, in the most limited sense, are all the connections are good for; increasing global awareness is presented as a threat, the lure of the devil, which brings the curious outside the safe and 'civilised' space of the local.

This cannot be portrayed as an example of global consciousness in a modern sense though. The implications of actions are firmly limited to local space by the fragmented manner in which the globe is pieced together. The binary way in which sovereignty, law, religion, and other social norms are juxtaposed in representations of space inside and outside of the city mean that the consequences of actions fail to move from place to place. Marlowe's Faustus recognises this in his claims that "emperors and kings are but obeyed in their several provinces" (*Fau.* 1.1.57-8), but his assumption that his sorcery will outreach those temporal sovereigns and into "mind of man" (*Fau.* 1.1.60) is used by Marlowe as an example of the hubristic conceit of mortals who aspire to global influence; Faustus wastes his powers not on shaping the globe as a whole, but performing magic tricks for the aristocrats he derides.

Since so little regard is paid to the world outside of the 'civilised' space of cities, the hinterlands of these cities are, effectively, a world apart. This distinction is utilised, especially by Jonson as a plot device to function as a hiding place for his characters. The owner of the London townhouse which provides the entire setting for *The Alchemist*, is for the first five acts of the play hidden in the invisible space of the countryside to avoid the ravages of the plague. This representation of the countryside creates a binary distinction of experience and circumstance on the two sides of the boundary. It also suggests a lack of fluidity across that border on the basis of social class, since the wealthy gentleman can escape the negative aspects of urban life into this alternative world. To an extent, the class distinction at the border is also portrayed by Romeo's exile in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet.* As the son of an aristocratic family, he is permitted to hide beyond the border from the consequences of the murder his has committed.

At a different level of society, it is shown that the legal implications of criminality do not reach beyond the limitations of the city and therefore the area beyond the border is an escape route and a chance for a new life. The clearest example of this is in the case of the conmen at the centre of *The Alchemist*, who, as their scheme begins to break down, they plan to flee the city. The narrow geographical limits of the consequences of their actions would not be lost on original London audiences as they set their destinations variously to "Ratcliff[e]" (*Alc.*, 5.1.125) and to "Brainford [Brentford]" (*Alc.*, 5.4.77), hidden spaces a mere few miles from the scene of their crimes. This process is shown in reverse in *The Tempest*, where the implications of Stephano's attempted coup, drunkenness, and thievery while in the 'wild' space of the island are pardoned then and there before crossing the boundary back into the 'civilised' space of the city (*Temp.*, 5.1.295-6).

5.4. The spatial order of the globe

These spaces, boundaries, and connections are organised in a particular way on the early modern stage to give a pattern to global imagination which is divided first into a degrees of visibility and secondly into two overlapping binaries, 'civilised' space versus 'wild' space and 'centre' versus 'periphery'. The geographical knowledge of early modern playwrights was far from perfect, while many regions appear very blurry, some regions are almost completely omitted; notably there exists only a few minor references to China, Japan, and the entirety of Sub-Saharan Africa. This suggests that these areas were less understood and less attractive than other relatively distant and unknown places such as India and the Americas, which though highly distorted, figure prominently in depictions of the world. It is particularly notable that the *Tamburlaine* plays, which depict a self-styled conqueror of Asia, make no mention of the largest empire in the region. As alluded to above, the land lying around the Mediterranean is the most visible space in theatrical depictions of the world.

The Mediterranean world also lies at the centre of the global order of the early modern stage. It is here that major rifts in politics, religion, and identity are located and played out in the clash of Christendom and Islam. The dialectical opposition of the two sides in this civilisational struggle provides the energy which sets many of these plays in motion. *The Jew of Malta*, *Othello*, and *Volpone* all use this rivalry as an important plot point, while many others make reference to it directly or indirectly. The military and naval dominance of the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century Mediterranean was a cause of great anxiety in England and could easily be presented on stage as an existential struggle between good and evil.

The Mediterranean also represents the centre of the classical and the biblical world picture, upon which the philosophical and

historical understandings of the renaissance were built.[106] The geographical knowledge of the early modern playwrights is heavily influenced by biblical and classical texts; for instance, Marlowe's Barabas claims that he trades with both the "Sabans and the men of Uz" (1.1.4), referring to the Sabini — an Italic tribe detailed by Ovid, Plutarch, and Cicero — and the biblical land of Job. The emergence of the renaissance in early modern Italy also functions to place the region at the centre of the world order, since it is the culture which is so greatly admired in contemporary England. Furthermore, the Dukes of Venice as portrayed in *Othello* and the *Merchant of Venice* betray a profound civility in their determination to maintain the rule of law in their territory. Two particular aspects of Venetian law were praised by contemporary authors. One was its inviolability, highlighted when Portia is urged to take the law into her own hands and replies that "no power in Venice can alter a decree established" (*MV.*, 4.1.214-215). The other was the law's availability to all; *Othello* shows a belief that "a private suit would obtain a fair hearing in the middle of an emergency council of war."[107] The 'civilised' space of the Italian states, specifically Venice, is admired by English writers who may interpret this as the advanced 'centre' which the 'periphery' ought to emulate.

The importance of the Mediterranean is also seen in its representation as a highway of trade between the major commercial hubs of Europe, the Levant, and North Africa. The cities around the Mediterranean are enriched by the heavy flows of trade and they are empowered by it; the space of the Mediterranean is dominated by powerful cities. Characteristic of these cities in this literature is 'civilised' space; the existence of conventional religious practice and functional

---

[106] Vidal-Naquet, Pierre, and Janet Lloyd. "Atlantis and the Nations." *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 18, no. 2, 1992, pp. 300-326.

[107] Mahood, Molly, ed., *The New Cambridge Shakespeare: The Merchant of Venice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 14-15.

legal systems situated inside defensive walls. While these spaces are represented in the Mediterranean, they are not a feature of the 'periphery', which is located in India and the Americas. The periphery is essentially the area across the sea that is defined by its lack of cities. These areas are passive and undefended and have no great distinction between the realms of man and of nature as suggested in one of the few direct references to America in *Bartholomew Fair* where a character sceptical of tobacco demands "who can tell if, before the gathering and making up thereof, the alligator hath not pissed thereon." (*Bar.*, 2.6.25-6). This points to ideas of the exotic danger and difference of this 'wild' and 'peripheral' space.

While these spaces are portrayed as being extraordinarily rich, they lack the organisational structures found in the Mediterranean world. Barabas comments on the abundance of natural wealth and the lack of property rights or control of extraction in India:

> Give me the merchants of the Indian mines,
> That trade in metal of the purest mould;
> The wealthy Moor, that in the eastern rocks
> Without control can pick his riches up,
> And in his house heap pearls like pebble-stones
>
> (*JM.*, 1.1.19-23)

These areas are naturally prone to exploitation and domination by kings and merchants from the 'centre' of the global order. Prospero's island, though ostensibly located in the Mediterranean, is characteristically peripheral: it is a newly discovered place, it has no city walls, and it has no recognisably 'civilised' order. This island is, therefore, easily and seemingly naturally dominated by European visitors. Two of the shipwrecked Italians, Gonzalo and Stephano, are driven to imagine themselves as rulers of the island, the former constructs an image of

Utopia and states that he "would with such perfection govern… to excel the Golden Age." (*Temp.*, 2.1.161-162) The latter, instinctively imposing Neapolitan norms of monarchical succession on the island, tells his companion that with the presumed death of the Italian nobles, they have become the rightful rulers of the island: "the king, and all our company else being drowned, we will inherit here." (*Temp.*, 2.2.164-5) 'Wild' lands in the 'periphery' exist to be controlled by those in the 'civilised' spaces at the 'centre'. This is echoed in the fantasies encouraged by the conmen in Jonson's *The Alchemist*, who claim the power of enormous wealth can crown their victims the "king of Bantam" (*Alc.*, 2.3.320) or buy the King of Spain "out of his Indies" (*Alc.*, 3.2.49); by which, the land in the global 'periphery' is commoditised — something to be bought, sold, and bartered from the 'centre'.

The primary importance of these spaces, in the world order of the stage is the abundance of wealth and luxury which exists there, it is a common trope that extreme wealth is compared with these spaces; for instance, Tamburlaine boasts the loyalty of his army is such that "not all the gold in India's wealthy arms" could "buy [his] meanest soldier" (*Tam. I.* 1.2.85-86). These spaces are rich like the 'civilised' centre of the Mediterranean, with a key difference: the wealth of 'peripheral' spaces is the natural mineral wealth of the land, whereas wealth at the 'centre' is earnt through trade and finance. The economy of the peripheral spaces is based solely on the extraction of luxuries, however, what is luxurious in the 'centre' is commonplace in the 'periphery'. In India, pearls are heaped "like pebble-stones" and "sold by the weight" (*JM.*, 1.1.23) along with:

> Bags of fiery opals, sapphires, amethysts,
> Jacinths, hard topaz, grass-green emeralds,
> Beauteous rubies, sparkling diamonds,
> And seld-seen costly stones of so great price
> (*JM.*, 1.1.24-7)

The value of these luxuries is simply not understood in the periphery, Shakespeare's *Othello* refers this in a parable of the "base Indian" who "threw a pearl away" (*Oth.*, 5.2.343). This distinction, which is a power relation, fosters a discursive relationship between the 'centre' and 'periphery' which is mirrors, on a global scale, the national economic relationship between the city and the hinterland, specifically the dominant and centralised relationship between London and England. As Braudel demonstrates, the city does not produce primary resources, these are laboured on its behalf by the hinterland, but it does dictate levels of production by controlling access to trade.[108] Wealth is produced in the 'periphery' for the enrichment of the 'centre'.

England, takes its position in this imagined global order on the periphery of the 'civilised' world. It is far less wealthy and less important than those places in the 'centre', but its 'civilised' space has greater protection from the threats of destruction and cosmopolitanism than the cities of the Mediterranean. England and its people are largely portrayed as recipients of global action, not as actors in their own right. England is the recipient of trade routes, Antonio sends his ships outwards from Venice to "Tripolis… the Indies… Mexico" and "a fourth for England" (*MV.*, 1.3.15-17), portraying a position in a dispersed outer ring of places around a Venetian core. Tamburlaine plunders the "merchants of Persepolis" who are "trading by land unto the Western Isles" (*Tam. I.*, 1.1.37-38), highlighting the passivity of

---

[108] Braudel, Fernand. *Civilization and Capitalism, Vol. III*, op cit., pp. 295-6, 365-9.

England's relationship to the wider world. Even the era defining religious schism between England and her neighbours is not reflected in these texts, suggesting its lack of importance to the Catholic powers at the centre of history. All of whom are engaged in defending against the existential threat to Christendom posed by the Islamic powers. There is, however, a connection drawn between London and the mercantile cities of the 'centre' in its role as a cosmopolitan financial city. However, it is poorly placed in the network of trade to benefit from trade with the exotic cities of the east, where the greatest riches exist.

6. Representations of Identity

Communal identity became an important site of interest in Elizabethan England; "to men born in the 1550s and 1560s", writes Richard Helgerson, "things English came to matter with a special intensity both because England itself mattered more than it had and because other sources of identity and cultural authority mattered less."[109] The duality of church and state had been destroyed in favour of the state, the crown had triumphed over its rivals, parliamentary statute had superseded the abstract laws of Christendom, and a self-contained national unit came to be accepted as a consciously desired political goal.[110] Despite this, fictional representations of English identity on stage were remarkable for their lack of clarity and profound underlying insecurity. As the boundaries and particularities of early modern England were sharpening, horizons were also broadening; early modern London was becoming ever more connected to the wider world and an increasingly cosmopolitan space. These connections bred a heightening awareness of foreign cultures and identities and their apparent similarities and differences. The increasingly important concept of Englishness was, in

---

[109] Helgerson, Richard. *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994, p. 3.

[110] Elton, Geoffrey. *England Under the Tudors*, op cit., pp. 161-176.

this way, relativised as just one subtly different identity in a shrinking world of many.

6.1 The construction of alterity

The strong identities and stereotypes attached to foreign characters on stage suggest an important lack of confidence in the local identity. Firstly, drawing distinctions and particularities between the peoples of Catholic Europe can be understood as a means of disguising English isolation. Marlowe's Malta is betrayed by the untrustworthy and "haughty Spain" (*JM*., 5.2.3), whose vice-admiral, with stereotypical arrogance, had pledged to protect the island against Ottoman aggression for commercial privileges. A similar depiction of the Spanish character can be seen in Shakespeare's Prince of Arragon in *The Merchant of Venice*, whose arrogance and lust for silver supersedes his courtship of Portia (*MV*., 2.9.49-51). By showing the self-interest and untrustworthiness of the major Catholic powers, English playwrights suggest the superior morality of their community's own isolation. Examples of this manner of constructing the image of a corrupt Catholic world are especially prevalent in the works of Christopher Marlowe; the Pope in *Doctor Faustus* is devious and self-seeking, the Holy Roman Emperor in the second *Tamburlaine* play is treacherous and displays a self-defeating arrogance in breaking a treaty with the Ottomans, and the religious orders in *The Jew of Malta* are willing to overlook the key tenets of their religion to obtain Barabus's wealth. By imaginatively fragmenting Catholic universalism, English isolation is made to appear less of a liability; the importance of this framework to English theatrical representations of the European political order suggests an anxiety among playwrights regarding the diplomatic isolation of their Anglican particularism.

Secondly, increased contact between diverse peoples in early modern Europe had revealed the boundaries of early modern English identity to be quite permeable. Aune suggests that theatrical imaginaries of the period demonstrate how anxieties caused by the permeability of identity gave rise to discoveries of difference, which is given shape in extreme stereotypes.[111] One prominent stereotype was the coarse and warlike Muslim. This trope is portrayed crudely in Marlowe's Ithamore, who speaks with relish of "setting Christian villages on fire, chaining of eunuchs, [and] binding galley-slaves" (*JM*., 2.3.206-207), yet also with more nuance in Shakespeare's Prince of Morocco, who despite appearing the least objectionable of Portia's royal suitors, reproduces the prevailing stereotype in both his frightening appearance, which is said to have "feared the valiant" (*MV*., 2.1.9), and in his boasts of his military valour (*MV*., 2.1.24-6).

The most prominent example of a nuanced deployment of stereotypical Islamic features can be seen in the character of Othello, whose introduction of himself before a court of Venetian nobles highlights an array of characteristics which English playwrights commonly made use of to draw their Muslim characters:

> Rude am I in my speech
> And little blessed with the soft phrase of peace,
> For since these arms of mine had seven years' pith
> Till now some nine moons wasted, they have used
> Their dearest action in the tented field;
> And little of this great world can I speak
> More than pertains to feats of broil and battle;
>
> (*Oth.*, 1.3.81-87)

[111] Aune, M.G. "Early Modern European…", op cit., p. 135.

Othello admits to his own inarticulacy and coarseness and points to the centrality of war to his experience and understanding of the world. It is interesting that Shakespeare gives Othello such beautiful poetry with which to describe his lack of culture and eloquence, it is almost as if the playwright is mocking the stereotype.

Another prominent stereotype is the avaricious, disloyal, and bloodthirsty Jew. Examples of which are foregrounded in *The Jew of Malta* and *The Merchant of Venice*. Barabas and Shylock both represent a danger the 'civilised' spaces they inhabit; they declare a hatred for the dominant religious group and revel in their failures. They also challenge the laws of the city in the elaborate schemes of revenge they plot against their perceived enemies. Barabas does not identify with the Maltese state. He locates his loyalties with the "scattered nation" of the Jewish diaspora (*JM*., 1.1.121) and values his private wealth above the existence of the state (*JM*., 1.1.188). This 'non-national' loyalty to religious identity parallels the perceived threat of Catholicism in Elizabethan England and points to the dangers of cosmopolitanism and non-conformism to the wellbeing of the community.

A stereotype is also proposed for the people who inhabit the vast 'wild' spaces of the periphery, an all encompassing pagan trope, which binds into an indistinguishable whole, the cultures of both India and the Americas. Attempts to assimilate the New World into European cognitive frameworks sought to identify the increasingly visible monotheistic populations of the periphery with the pagans of classical antiquity.[112] As a result, the pagan mind became characterised in the same way as the ancient mind: whimsically inconsistent, childishly docile, containing the capacity to deify anything, fearful, and unable to transcend the concrete.[113] These characteristics can clearly be identified

---

[112] Ryan, Michael. "Assimilating New Worlds", op cit., p. 529.
[113] Ryan, Michael. "Assimilating New Worlds", op cit., p. 531.

in the implied passivity and commercial naivety of the populations of the east depicted on the early modern stage, as mentioned above. However, there is one character of early modern English theatre above all others, who displays this pagan mindset, Shakespeare's Caliban.

Caliban is the archetypal New World native and he displays a range of common classical pagan characteristics. He is portrayed as a profoundly unstable character, lurching between the extremes of emotion from explosive aggression to passive timidity. Shakespeare mocks his understanding of religion by highlighting his capacity to deify anything, including Stephano, the drunken castaway butler (*Temp.*, 2.2.108-9). Caliban is, at the same time, a cause for great fear and anxiety – he plans to kill his European sovereign (*Temp.*, 3.2.27-8) and has attempted to rape his daughter (*Temp.*, 1.2.349) – and an easily manipulated, gullible, and highly exploitable creature. Caliban is a feature of 'wild' space; he is incompatible with the core ideologies of the city and of the 'civilised' space within. He is resentful of his sovereign's rule, practices religion unconventionally, and attempts to control and is controlled by naked violence as opposed to the rule of law.

In the 'civilised' spaces of Europe, there are a great many individual national stereotypes in the literature which portray various aspects of the perceived cultures and identities of Europeans. The Dutch are overweight (*Alc.*, 4.3.27-28), presumably because they are famed for eating copious amounts of butter (*Bar.*, 2.5.115-117). The French are compulsive dancers (*MV.*, 1.2.50) who speak the "courtliest tongue" (*Alc.*, 4.4.60). The Germans do "nothing but frown" (*MV.*, 1.2.39) and when drunk are "little better than" beasts (*MV.*, 1.2.72-73). The conmen in *The Alchemist* show great admiration for the culture of Spain:

> Ask him from your courtier to your inns-of-court-man,
> To your mere milliner. They will tell you all,
> Your Spanish jennet is the best horse; your Spanish
> Stoop is the best garb; your Spanish beard
> Is the best cut; your Spanish ruffs are the best
> Wear; your Spanish pavan the best dance;
> Your Spanish titillation in a glove
> The best perfume; and for your Spanish pike
> And Spanish blade, let your poor
> Captain speak.
>
> (Alc., 4.4.7-15)

Foreignness is valued and prized by Jonson's English characters; the rarity of foreign produce makes certain luxuries desirable, if not necessarily useful or pleasant. In *The Alchemist*, Mammon's fantasises about all if the exotic things he could buy with the riches of alchemy. Many of these objects are plainly ridiculous, such as "tongues of carps… and camels' heels boiled in [gold]" (*Alc.* 2.2.75-76), yet their foreignness gives them value and makes them attractive. Another of victims in *The Alchemist*, Kastril, is likewise depicted as holding a slavish admiration for the value of foreignness, he attempts to convince his sister to marry a Spaniard, as he believe the status of this will advance the standing of his whole family (*Alc.*, 4.4.87). The conmen play on this notion by urging not only that "she shall be a countess", but with a special emphasis, she shall be "a *Spanish* countess." (*Alc.*, 4.4.22-23)

6.2 Portrayals of Englishness

Increasing interaction between the English and the wider world had allowed the formation of a clear opinion of who these various peoples were, what they looked like, how they behaved, and what they were good at. Representations of Englishness were far less clear-cut. Stereotypical Englishness is commonly portrayed as a mongrel identity

aping and in awe of the more refined and more clearly defined cultures elsewhere. In his *Seven Deadly Sins of London*, Thomas Dekker pours scorn on the dress of a fashionable Englishman: his suit, he says "is like a traitors bodie that hath beene hanged, drawne, and quartered, and is set up in severall places: his Codpeece is in *Denmarke*, the collor of his Duble[t], and the belly in *France*; the… sleeve in *Italy*; the short waste… in [Utrecht]... his huge sloppes… *Spanish*, [and] *Polonia* gives him the [boots]".[114] Shakespeare's Portia makes a similar observation of the English lord who attempts to court her:

> How oddly he is suited! I think he bought his
> doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany,
> and his behaviour everywhere.
>
> (*MV*., 1.2.60-2)

The juxtaposition between clear-cut definitions of the identities assigned to foreigners and the indefinable self-identity is a clear site of anxiety for English writers; in correspondence with Gabriel Harvey in 1580, Edmund Spenser asks: "Why a God's name, may not we as else the Greeks, have the kingdom of our own language?",[115] expressing both an artistic desire to take control of national culture and a deep insecurity about English mimicry of external influences. Dekker, anxious of communal prestige, writes that:

> "we that mocke [every] Nation, for keeping one fashion, yet steale patches from [every] one of them… are now laughing-stocks to them, because their cut so scurvily becomes us."

---

[114] Dekker, Thomas. *The Seven Deadly Sins of London (1606)*. London: Edward Arber, 1879, pp. 36-37.

[115] Helgerson, Richard. *Forms of Nationhood*, op cit., p. 1.

As a great source of inspiration for the English renaissance, the setting of a great many plays, and the imagined 'centre' of a global order, Italy and specifically Venice is a particularly visible place to early modern Englishmen. A great deal of scorn is thus reserved for stereotypes of Venetian identity and for those Englishmen who are perceived to be enthralled by it. An influential example can be found in Roger Ascham's 1570 treatise on education, *The Schoolmaster*, in which he cautions against the vice of Italian culture and its influence on a travelling Englishman:

> … he that by living and traveling in Italy bringeth home into England out of Italy the religion, the learning, the policy, the experience, the manners of Italy. That is to say, for religion, papistry or worse; for learning, less, commonly, than they carried out with them; for policy, a factious heart, a discoursing head, a mind to meddle in all men's matters; for experience, plenty of new mischiefs never known in England before; for manners, variety of vanities and change of filthy living. These be the enchantments of Circe brought out of Italy to mar men's manners in England.[116]

Ascham pillories the "Englishman Italianated" for infecting England with the blasphemies, vanity, and Machiavellianism which he attributes to Italian society. However, as is a common theme in early modern discussions of English identity, Ascham shows himself to be more certain of what an Englishman ought not to be, than what he actually should be — what English culture isn't, rather than what it is.

The English admiration for Venice, in contrast to the apparent ambiguity of local culture is a source of anxiety in renaissance England.

---

[116] Ascham, Roger. *The Schoolmaster (1570)*, in: Greenblatt and Abrams, eds., *The Norton Anthology of English Literature, op cit.*, p. 644.

This is explained by Shakespeare's portrayal of acquiring foreign mannerisms as a consequence of an embarrassment of one's own 'national' identity. In *As You Like It,* Rosalind chides a traveller who has picked up certain affectations of Venice:

> … you lisp and wear strange suits; disable all the benefits of your own country; be out of love with your nativity, and almost chide God for making you that countenance you are…
>
> (*AYL*., 4.1.26-9)

To admire foreignness is equated with an insult to one's native communal culture and to visit foreign lands is to betray one's own; Rosalind further scorns the traveller by stating "I fear you have sold your own lands to see other men's" (*AYL*., 4.1.17-8).

This point is central to Jonson's moralism. One of the key themes running through his work is the question of why anyone would ever need to travel abroad. He argues with far greater confidence than the aforementioned writers that all the variety of the world already exists inside the city walls of London. The allure of foreign lands is mocked and shown to be a figment of the imagination, merely a locally-constructed obsession with the exotic. The conmen of *The Alchemist* demonstrate this by convincing Mammon that their associate, a local prostitute, is a foreign aristocrat. Jonson highlights the absurdity of the English admiration for the value of the foreign as Mammon projects the features of European nobility onto her face:

> There is a strange nobility, i' your eye,
> This lip, that chin! Methinks you do resemble
> One o' the Austriac princes...
> The house of Valois, just, had such a nose.
> And such a forehead, yet, the Medici
> Of Florence boast.
>
> (*Alc.*,4.1.54-9)

Likewise, in *Volpone*, Lady Would-Be's veneration of an idealised vision of Venetian culture is contrasted by the reality of the immorality and corruption into which it draws her. For Jonson, the world is best experienced locally in the imagination as idealised images of abroad are more dangerous and disappointing in reality, the world is therefore best admired from a distance.

6.3. Cultural Relativisation

The key danger of cosmopolitanism is an erosion of identity; this concept makes itself felt not just in the field of culture but also in what one Italian writer has deemed the re-emergence, in the renaissance, of the prominent classical concern for the contamination of the race by miscegenation.[117] Following on from the previous discussion, the lascivious culture of Venice is shown to be a negative influence on the sexual morality of English women. Lady Would-Be, an Englishwoman in Venice, is revealed to have offered herself to Volpone's servant, in order to be mentioned in his master's will. The warning lies in the fact that she visits Venice to learn of the culture and manners of the Venetian courtesans and has ended up, just like them, selling herself for money.[118] On stage, women's sexuality is shown as something to be controlled in the name of national pride. Dame Pliant, a character in *The*

---

[117] Golinelli, Gilberta. "In Dialogue with the New…", op cit., p. 132.
[118] Stout, Michael. *Volpone by Ben Jonson*, op cit., pp. 71-72.

Alchemist, is a held up as a positive example. She refuses the conmen's attempt to marry her to a fake Spanish Count, despite her naive brother's support. "I shall never brook a Spaniard", she tells them, "Never [since] eighty-eight could I abide 'em" (*Alc.*, 4.4.27-9). With this allusion to the year of the Armada, Jonson links the idea of national defence to the purity of the race. Elsewhere, the same character's advances on the conmen's associate, Dol Common, is similarly met with the imagery of national defence, he is described as "[making] his battery upon our Dol, our castle, our Cinque Port, our Dover pier, our what thou wilt." (*Alc.*, 3.3.17-9)

The concept of the racial purity is explored further in *Volpone*, where lasciviousness is portrayed as not merely a concern for the morality of the state, but also the health and well-being of the citizens. It is rumoured that by his drunken affairs with objectionable 'others' — "beggars, Gypsies… Jews, and black-moors" — Volpone has fathered many abnormal bastards, such as "the dwarf, the fool, [and] the eunuch" (*Vol.*, 1.5.44-7). Though it is highly debatable whether Shakespeare intended *Othello* to represent a warning against mixed marriage or a critique of the society which disapproves of it,[119] the character Othello's sexual identity is a noticeable obsession of his Italian characters. Iago attempts to enrage Desdemona's father by using animalistic imagery to describe their relationship, in doing so he insinuates the damage miscegenation will do to his bloodline: "you'll have your daughter covered with a Barbary horse, you'll have your nephews neigh to you, you'll have coursers for cousins, and jennets for germans [kinsmen]." (*Oth.*, 1.1.111-3) This fixation with race and sex is also shown to have roots in a sense of sexual jealousy. Othello's prowess as a sexual being is taken for granted by Iago, he tells Desdemona's former suitor, that when Desdemona is bored of "the act

[119] Loomba, Ania. *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. London: Routledge, 1998, p. 74.

of sport" she will look for a more serious relationship elsewhere (*Oth.*, 2.1.216-8).

The representations of identity on the early modern English stage suggest a great deal of insecurity and uncertainty over what it is to be English. Englishness was more something to be isolated and consolidated than to be thrust abroad in a global imperial age. Jeffrey Knapp has argued that the very idea of an English nation is one of isolation and weakness. The circumscription of England by its enemies, whether by their seizure of its continental territories or their dominance in the New World had created a bounded nation, indivisible and eternal. What would otherwise have appeared tokens of weakness — its littleness, its boundaries, its isolation, its female monarch — could signify, instead, its solemn repudiation of material or worldly means to power and its extraordinary reliance on God.[120]

The glorious isolation of English national identity is played out on the stage in a peculiar way. The lack of serious English protagonists in fictional renaissance theatre is obviously apparent; the English are portrayed, almost without exception, as targets of ridicule. In imaginary interactions with the wider world on stage, the leading role is commonly handed to 'Others', characters who are outsiders. In their 'Otherness' they bear a striking similarity to the marginality and isolation of the fledgling English national identity. Although these characters do not fit into simple binaries of good and evil, they all attack the enemies of the English state; something to be welcomed in an English playhouse, irrespective of the amorality by which their actions are taken.

The titular characters of Christopher Marlowe's tragedies are good examples of an English identification with 'Otherness'. Tamburlaine, Faustus, and Barabas are all clear examples of 'outsiders'. An important factor in this is their atypical relationship with the

---

[120] Knapp, Jeffrey. *An Empire Nowhere,* op cit.*, p.* 4.

dominant religions; Tamburlaine refuses to follow an organised religion; Faustus sells his soul to the devil; and Barabas is wholly defined by his religious difference. This 'Otherness' reflects the position of Protestant England in a predominantly Catholic Europe. In the contest for dominance between Catholic and Muslims powers which is so influential in early modern theatre, the Protestant English lack a clear-cut affinity. English society began to have more contact with Islamic societies in the late sixteenth century as the threat from its Christian neighbours increased. The first English ambassador to the Ottoman Empire was sent in 1583, the Levant Company was established in 1592, and in 1600 Queen Elizabeth received a delegation of diplomatic visitors from Morocco.[121] Relations appeared so vibrant to contemporary observers, that the Venetian leadership feared an alliance would be negotiated between the English and the Ottomans.[122]

Faustus, together with the audience who follow his actions, uses his ill-gotten powers to spy on "the Pope and the manner of his court", revealing his cunning and cruelty. The Pope uses the imprisoned Saxon Bishop as a "footstool" and plots against the sovereignty of the German states by deposing and excommunicating the Holy Roman Emperor (*Fau.*, 3.1.127-129). For his transgressions, which echo Pius V's excommunication of Elizabeth, Faustus physically assaults the Pope, giving him "a box of the ear" (*Fau.*, 3.2.86). While Faustus is not a typically 'good' character, he does perform an imaginary act of revenge on behalf of the English. The fact that the means to power is Faustus' a deal with the devil, one again highlights the ambiguity of English identity. This is furthered in the example of Barabas, who is, ostensibly, an entirely unsympathetic character and the epitome of the

---

[121] Johanyak, Debra. "Turning Turk…", op cit., p. 80.

[122] Mason Vaughan, Virginia. *Othello: A Contextual History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 26-27

'evil' Jewish stereotype. Two greedy friars who are aware of the grievous crimes he has committed overlook justice to bring his money into their own monasteries (*JM*., 4.1.80), standing against this example of Catholic corruption, Barabas maintains his 'Otherness', as the friars turn against one another and fight (*JM*., 4.1.99). The greed of the Catholic Church is exposed and destroyed.

Furthermore, despite improving diplomatic and commercial relations between England and the Islamic world, English anxieties held considerable momentum[123] and on stage Islam had to be defeated.[124] Not only does Barabas defeat the Catholic friars, he also betrays the Turks and destroys their army, delivering Malta from its subjection. The Maltese governor calls it:

> A Jew's courtesy:
> For he that did by treason work our fall,
> By treason hath delivered thee [the Turkish Prince] to us:
> Know, therefore, till thy father hath made good
> The ruins done to Malta and to us,
> Thou eanst not part: for Malta shall be freed,
> Or Selim ne'er return to Ottoman.
>
> (*JM*., 5.5.108-114)

Barabas, by his villainy, brings about the conclusion of the play most favourable to contemporary English audiences. Its money-grabbing religious orders are punished, the Turkish military threat is defeated, and all without the help of "haughty Spain". Malta owes its victory to nothing but divine intervention, enacted through the treachery of Barabas. Barabas is not a likeable or sympathetic character, yet his function as the anti-hero of the play is a prime example of what Knapp

---

[123] Barbour, Richmond. *Before Orientalism*, op cit., p. 194.
[124] Ibid., p. 5.

calls its supposed immaterial "means to power".[125] There is no need for a protagonist for an audience to support and identify with if their desired outcome is ordained by a divine will; identification can be invested instead into the territory and the territory alone and the audience can passively watch the amoral 'Other' defeating their enemies and himself.

Tamburlaine has been variously described by critics as "God's agent for the cruelty meted out on Christians by the Ottoman Sultan"[126] and a symbol of naive self-regarding fantasies of English mastery on foreign soil.[127] He is another troubling protagonist, infanticidal like Barabas and heretical like Faustus. His cruelty towards his enemies and their subjects is such that even his loyal wife is shown to be dismayed at the severity of his actions:

> Wretched Zenocrate, that livest to see
> Damascus' walls dy'd with Egyptian blood,
> Thy father's subjects and thy countrymen;
> Thy streets strowed with dissevered joints of men
> (Tam. I., 5.2.257-60)

Yet, as a tyrant fighting against other Muslim tyrants, he is cast as a saviour of Christians, in the broadest and least sectarian manner. As a "Scythian slave" (Tam. I., 3.3.68), he is also identified with the suffering of Christian galley slaves.[128] He speaks emotively of the condition of Christian slaves:

---

125 Knapp, Jeffrey. *An Empire Nowhere,* op cit.*, p.* 4.

126 Andrea, Bernadette. "Persia, Tartaria, and Pamphilia: Ideas of Asia in Mary Wroth's *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania, Part II*." in: Johanyak and Lim, eds., *The English Renaissance*, op cit., p. 30.

127 Barbour, Richmond. *Before Orientalism*, op cit., p. 8.

128 Malieckal, Bindu. "As Good as Gold: India, Akbar the Great, and Marlowe's Tamburlaine Plays." in: Johanyak and Lim, eds., *The English Renaissance*, op cit., p. 150.

> That naked row about the Terrene sea,
> And, when they chance to rest or breathe a space,
> Are punish'd with bastones so grievously
> That they lie panting on the galleys' side,
> And strive for life at every stroke they give.
>
> (*Tam. I.*, 3.3.50-4)

And vows to set them free by defeating the Turk and destroying their supposed alliance with North African pirates. Despite his origins in Asia, Tamburlaine is depicted as visibly European: he is "pale of complexion" (*Tam. I.*, 2.1.19) with "amber hair, wrapped in curls, as fierce Achilles' was" (*Tam. I.*, 2.1.23-4). This visual familiarity with an English audience also typifies his externality in his own context. This is furthered by his great hostility towards the dominant religion, whose scripture he burns and whose prophet he curses (*Tam. II.*, 5.1.184). Tamburlaine is an outsider and a heretic, opposed by both the Holy Roman Emperor and the Islamic rulers. This position of isolation echoes the contemporary role of England, especially in the world order of the theatrical imagination. By imagining 'Othered' and 'isolated' protagonists as dispensers of divine justice against perceived enemies, English playwrights bolstered that aspect of national identity which held an image of an island isolated from the rest of the world.

The ambiguous character of theatrical representations of English identity can also be seen in *Othello*. Iago is an entirely wicked character who is depicted as the devil incarnate, yet Shakespeare chooses to identify him with England. He sings English drinking songs and praises "O sweet England!" (*Oth.*, 2.3.75), a country in which he has lived and whose inhabitants he admires for their heavy drinking (*Oth.*, 2.3.66). This connection is unmistakable due to how out of place and jarring it seems amid a cast of foreign character and how far-removed it is from any other reference to England. This does, however, seem to fit

with the wider message of the play, the idea that evil is not necessarily confined to the 'Other' or the foreigner, but is also found within one's own community. It is interesting though, that the solitary mention of England in this play bears such a negative connection.

Only the comedies of Ben Jonson actually foreground English characters and those focus largely on portrayals of criminality and naivety. The English identity proposed on the Renaissance stage is therefore left highly ambiguous; there are no English heroes on stage with which to identify, neither is there a clearly defined non-national focus for identity. While Christianity as a faith is deemed preferable to Islam, the most influential representatives of Christianity on a global stage are not necessarily drawn with sympathy. English identity trod a narrow middle path in the major struggle of identities, between Islam and Catholicism, which belies many contemporary representations of the globe. From a position of isolation English communal identity and interest is defined, above all else, by a wish to see a plague on both houses.

7. Conclusion

The late-Elizabethan and Jacobean era was a time of extraordinary cultural development in England. In roughly thirty years straddling either side of 1600, a disproportionate part of the English literary canon was created. Central to this was a body of popular theatrical work which has endured as a cultural touchstone throughout the world up to the present day. The wider world's interest in turn-of-the-seventeenth-century English theatre is reflected by the theatre's interest in the people and structures of the wider world. Written at a time when the globe was coming into a sharper focus than ever before, when contact with the wider world was intensifying at an unprecedented speed, and when foreign peoples, ideas, and commodities were becoming more

visible and more important to the local communities of London, it comes as little surprise that the representation of the globe on stage would be so central to contemporary cultural production.

This was a transitional period in the history of London, in which it was becoming concurrently both a world city and the capital city of a consolidating territorial state. These were two divergent civic identities which had to be carefully negotiated by its inhabitants and by the artists attempting to portray their condition. The popular theatre provided a forum, largely free from the editorial control of vested interests, in which to explore the position of London and of England within the context of the wider world.

The spaces of the wider world in the theatrical imagination draw inspiration from the familiar spaces of London. The cities of the world are constructed as idealised or critical reflections of home. Since imagined foreign cities are imbued with the imagery of home, a sense of imaginative cosmopolitanism is engendered in which the city is a familiar and sympathetic space regardless of its geographical location. This applies not only to contemporary cities, but also the cities of antiquity. As a result, cities are characteristically timeless and natural spaces for people and for social organisation. The bounded and distinctive space of the city is portrayed as the natural container of sovereignty, law, and religion. These three characteristics are the key distinction between 'civilised' space and 'wild' space.

Cities are distinguished from the rest of space by the physical boundaries of city walls and the sea; they are divided from one another by a perceived vacuum of space in the 'wild' areas in between. The flows of people and goods around the world follow routes directly from city to city and are principally waterborne, the city-states and islands of the Mediterranean are therefore prioritised as the natural site of global interconnection. The Mediterranean is depicted as the centre of global

wealth and the location intense global interaction. Since these cities are constructed as reflections of London, they are portrayed not only as trading cities and social units, but also as places from which 'wild' territory ought to be controlled and organised.

An imaginative world order is constructed in which the 'civilised' and highly connected cities of the Mediterranean 'centre' are juxtaposed with the 'wild' spaces of the periphery. The 'wild' periphery is located primarily in India and the Americas and is characterised by a lack of city walls; as a consequence, this space is undefended, disorganised and irreligious. These peripheral spaces are also hugely rich in natural resources which are easily and profitably possessed by and for the benefit of the centre.

In this world order, England is deprived of a role equal to that of London in the national order, as the controller and organiser of trade. Instead the more important societies of the Mediterranean are depicted as the Londoners of the world, in an order fashioned around the English state system. England is instead placed in an ambiguous position somewhere between the centre and the periphery, 'civilised' yet unimportant. When representing the identities of their countrymen in relation to the wider world, London's playwrights had a difficult task of overcoming this uncertainty.

The common utilisation of national, ethnic, and religious stereotypes on stage for comic effect and as instantly recognisable tropes constructs an imaginary solidity of foreign communal identity. Each grouping of foreigners will dress the same, sound the same, and act the same on the stage. This contrasts with the ambiguity of English identities, of which there are many. Since the conception of Englishness is so insecure, the encroachment of aspects of outside culture is seen as a sign of weakness and any sense of globality or cosmopolitanism are cause for anxiety. In these plays, English identity is characterised on by

a constant reminder of what it is not and what it should not be. External cultural influences are depicted as a source of corruption which will cause the erosion of the community. Within the context of a shrinking global society and increasing intercultural contact, English culture and identity is shown as desperately in need of quarantine.

This insecure national identity and the lack of non-national universalisms as sites of loyalty and identity formation, breeds within the theatrical imagination a sense of national particularism. This particularism emerges out of a self-conscious position of weakness. Anxieties towards both sides in the central historical struggle between Christendom and Islam for control of the global 'centre', engenders a self-perception of 'Otherness', which is used to link English audiences to on stage 'Others', who defeat the enemies of the English state. The stage was not a place fit for an English hero, there was no need for such a figure within the theatrical conception of national identity. The theatrical representation of England is not of a strong, central, or influential community; rather it is a community unremarkable except for a unique relationship with God.

The way in which the globe was represented on the Elizabethan stage does not exhibit the 'global consciousness' of the present day. The imagined globe is a highly fragmented series of spaces centred on distinct bounded cities among vast empty fields of 'wild' territory. Reading these early representations of the globe is useful for understanding the character of present day conceptualisations of global space. The fragmentation of Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Jonson's global imagination points to the centrality of the nation state to twenty-first century understandings of space, where land is consolidated into homogenously perceived units of governable space and the hinterland connects seamlessly with the city and shares a common identity with it. For these playwrights, what happens in one part of the world has little

consequence elsewhere, therefore the local rather than the global is the most important space for action and identity; plans for world domination are shown to be futile. Humanity is a similarly fragmented concept, like the land it is simplistically divided into 'civilised' and 'wild' types. Simplistic binary groups with inherent characteristics define the representation of the globe in early modern thinking.

That said, there is nonetheless an enormous interest in the globe as a subject on the stage and audiences were encouraged to imagine and relate to global spaces and characters beyond their immediate locality. The theatre does take its audiences on a virtual tour of the globe; *Doctor Faustus*, for instance encourages its audience to circumnavigate earth "from east to west… and in eight days… home again" (*Fau.*, 3. Chorus). Like the stories of adventure told by Tamburlaine and Othello, however inaccurate they may be, however fantastic, or simplistic, these stories do encourage the broadening of horizons. Foreign 'others' may be likewise stereotyped, but the likes of Caliban, Othello, and Shylock speak with beautiful poetry to describe their experience and to speak back to their persecutors. The early modern stage, though not truly global in its imagination, does provide space for important discussions of difference and identity.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Ascham, Roger. *The Schoolmaster [1570]*, in: Greenblatt, Stephen and Mike Abrams, eds., *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: Volume I*, 8th ed., New York: Norton, 2006.

Dekker, Thomas. *The Seven Deadly Sins of London [1606]*. London: Edward Arber, 1879.

Jonson, Ben. *Volpone, Or The Fox [c. 1605]*, in: Jonson, Ben. *The Alchemist and Other Plays*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Jonson, Ben. *The Alchemist [c. 1610]*, in: Jonson, Ben. *The Alchemist and Other Plays*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Jonson, Ben. *Bartholomew Fair [c. 1614]*, in: Jonson, Ben. *The Alchemist and Other Plays*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Marlowe, Christopher. *Tamburlaine the Great Part I [c. 1587]*, in: Marlowe, Christopher. *The Complete Plays*. London: Penguin Books, 2003.

Marlowe, Christopher. *Tamburlaine the Great Part II [c. 1587]*, in: Marlowe, Christopher. *The Complete Plays*. London: Penguin Books, 2003.

Marlowe, Christopher. *Doctor Faustus [c. 1588]*, in: Marlowe, Christopher. *The Complete Plays*. London: Penguin Books, 2003.

Marlowe, Christopher. *The Jew of Malta [c. 1589]*, in: Marlowe, Christopher. *The Complete Plays*. London: Penguin Books, 2003.

Shakespeare, William. *A Midsummer Night's Dream [c. 1595]*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Shakespeare, William. *Romeo and Juliet [c. 1595]*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Shakespeare, William. *The Merchant of Venice [c. 1596]*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Shakespeare, William. *As You Like It [c. 1599]*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Shakespeare, William. *Othello [c. 1603]*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Shakespeare, William. *Antony and Cleopatra [c. 1606]*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1999.

Shakespeare, William. *The Tempest [c. 1611]*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006.

Secondary Sources

Books

Barbour, Richmond. *Before Orientalism: London's Theatre of 'the East', 1576-1626*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Bloom, Harold. *Ruin the Sacred Truths: Poetry and Belief from the Bible to the Present*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991.

Braudel, Fernand. *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II: Vol. I*. New York: Harper & Row, 1972.

Braudel, Fernand. *Civilization and Capitalism, Vol. III: The Perspective of the World*. London: Collins, 1984.

Eisenstein, Elizabeth. *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early-Modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

Elton, Geoffrey R. *England Under the Tudors*. 3. ed. London: Routledge, 1999.

Farley-Hills, David. *Shakespeare and the Rival Playwrights, 1600-1606*. London: Routledge, 1990.

Friedman, Thomas. *The World Is Flat 3.0: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Picador, 2007.

Gillies, John. *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Harrison, G.B. *Introducing Shakespeare*. 3rd ed., Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1966.

Helgerson, Richard. *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.

Hopkins, Anthony G., ed., *Globalization in World History*. London: Pimlico, 2002.

Hulme, Peter. *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797*. London: Methuen, 1986.

Knapp, Jeffrey. *An Empire Nowhere: England, America, and Literature from Utopia to the Tempest*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.

Leggatt, Alexander. *Jacobean Public Theatre*. London: Routledge, 1992.

Logan, Robert. *Shakespeare's Marlowe: The Influence of Christopher Marlowe on Shakespeare's Artistry*. London: Ashgate, 2007.

Loomba, Ania. *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. London: Routledge, 1998.

Mason Vaughan, Virginia. *Othello: A Contextual History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Mason Vaughan, Virginia. *Performing Blackness on English Stages, 1500-1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Montrose, Louis. *The Purpose of Playing: Shakespeare and the Cultural Politics of the Elizabethan Theatre*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Ogborn, Miles. *Global Lives: Britain and the World, 1550 - 1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Robertson, Roland. *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture Theory, Culture & Society*. London: Sage, 1992.

Shuger, Debra. *Political Theologies in Shakespeare's England: The Sacred and the State in Measure for Measure*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001.

Smith, D.K. *The Cartographic Imagination in Early Modern England*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008.

Steger, Manfred. *The Rise of the Global Imaginary: Political Ideologies from the French Revolution to the Global War on Terror*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Steger, Manfred. *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Stout, Michael. *Volpone by Ben Jonson: Macmillan Master Guides*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988.

Wojciehowski, Hannah Chapelle. *Group Identity in the Renaissance World.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Chapters in edited volumes

Andrea, Bernadette. "Persia, Tartaria, and Pamphilia: Ideas of Asia in Mary Wroth's *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania, Part II*." in: Johanyak, Debra and Walter S. Lim, eds., *The English Renaissance, Orientalism, and the Idea of Asia*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Bartolovich, Crystal. "Baseless Fabric: London as a World City." in: Hulme, Peter & William Sherman, eds., *The Tempest and Its Travels*. London: Reaktion, 2000.

Bayly, Christopher. "Archaic and Modern Globalization in the Eurasian and African Arena, c. 1750-1850." in: Hopkins, Anthony, ed., *Globalization in World History*. London: Pimlico, 2002.

Conley, Tom. "Early Modern Literature and Cartography: An Overview." in: Woodward, David., ed., *The History of Cartography, Volume 3: Cartography in the European Renaissance*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Evans, Ifor. "Shakespeare's World." in: Sutherland, James and Joel Hurstfield, *Shakespeare's World*, London: Edward Arnold, 1964.

Gillies, John. "Elizabethan Drama and the Cartographizations of Space." in: Gillies, John and Virginia Mason Vaughan, eds., *Playing the Globe: Genre and Geography in English Renaissance Drama*. New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1998

Hattaway, Michael. "The Shakespearean History Play." in: Hattaway, Michael, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's History Plays*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Hollings, Marion. "Romancing the Turk: Trade, Race, and Nation in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*." in: Johanyak, Debra and Walter S. Lim, eds., *The English Renaissance, Orientalism, and the Idea of Asia*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Hopkins, Anthony. "Globalization: An Agenda for Historians." in: Hopkins, Anthony, ed., *Globalization in World History*. London: Pimlico, 2002.

Hopkins, Anthony. ""The History of Globalization and the Globalization of History." in: in: Hopkins, Anthony, ed., *Globalization in World History*. London: Pimlico, 2002.

Howard, Jean. "Shakespeare, Geography, and the Work of Genre on the Early Modern Stage." in: Cohen, Stephen, ed., *Shakespeare and Historical Formalism*. Abington: Ashgate, 2007.

Gillis, John. "Islands in the Making of an Atlantic Oceania, 1500 – 1800." in: Bentley, Jerry, Renate Bridenthal, and Karen Wigen, eds., *Seascapes: Maritime Histories, Littoral Cultures, and Transoceanic Exchanges*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007.

Golinelli, Gilberta. "In Dialogue with the New: Theorizations on the New World in Titus Andronicus." in: Del Sapio Garbero, Maria, ed., *Identity, Otherness, and Empire in Shakespeare's Rome*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2009.

Johanyak, Debra.'"Turning Turk': Early Modern English Orientalisms, and Shakespeare's *Othello*." in: Johanyak, Debra and Walter S. Lim, eds., *The English Renaissance, Orientalism, and the Idea of Asia*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Malieckal, Bindu. "As Good as Gold: India, Akbar the Great, and Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* Plays." in: Johanyak, Debra and Walter S. Lim, eds., *The English Renaissance, Orientalism, and the Idea of Asia*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Mayer, David. "Towards a Definition of the Popular." in: Mayer, David & Kenneth Richards, eds., *Western Popular Theatre*. London: Methuen, 1977.

O'Byrne, Darren. "Working Class Culture: Local Community and Global Conditions." in: Eade, John, ed., *Living the Global City: Globalization as Local Process*. London: Routledge, 1996.

Pagetti, Carlo. "Shakespeare's Tales of Two Cities: London and Rome." in: Del Sapio Garbero, Maria, ed., *Identity, Otherness, and Empire in Shakespeare's Rome*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2009.

Stone, James. "Indian and Amazon: The Oriental Feminine in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*." in: Johanyak, Debra and Walter S. Lim, eds., *The English Renaissance, Orientalism, and the Idea of Asia*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Turner, Henry S. "Literature and Mapping in Early Modern England, 1520–1688." in: Woodward, David., ed., *The History of Cartography, Volume 3: Cartography in the European Renaissance*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Woodward, David. "Cartography and the Renaissance: Continuity and Change." in: Woodward, David., ed., *The History of Cartography, Volume 3: Cartography in the European Renaissance*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Journal Articles

Aune, M. G. "Early Modern European Travel Writing After Orientalism." *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2005., pp. 120-138.

Brenner, Neil. "Global Cities, Glocal States: Global City Formation and State Territorial Restructuring in Contemporary Europe." *Review of International Political Economy*, vol. 5, no. 1, 1998., pp. 1-37

Helms, Stephen. "English Superiority in Roanoke Propaganda." *The Alexandrian*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2014, pp. 17-39.

Clark, Jonathan C.D. "Protestantism, Nationalism, and National Identity, 1660-1832." *The Historical Journal*, vol. 43, no. 1, 2000., pp. 249-276.

Cooper, Frederick. "What is the Concept of Globalization Good For? An African Historian's Perspective." *African Affairs*, vol. 100, 2001., pp. 189-213.

Flynn, Dennis O., and Arturo Giráldez. "Path Dependence, Time Lags and the Birth of Globalisation: A Critique of O'Rourke and Williamson." *European Review of Economic History*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2004., pp. 81–108.

Helgerson, Richard. "The Land Speaks: Cartography, Chorography, and Subversion in Renaissance England." *Representations*, vol. 16, 1986., pp. 51-85.

Steinberg, Philip. "Insularity, Sovereignty and Statehood: The Representation of Islands on Portolan Charts and the Construction of the Territorial State." *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, vol. 87, no. 4, 2005., pp. 253-265.

Hopkins, Anthony. "The Historiography of Globalization and the Globalization of Regionalism." *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, vol. 53, no. 1, 2010., pp. 19-36.

Robertson, Roland. "Global Connectivity and Global Consciousness." *American Behavioral Scientist*, vol. 55, no. 10, 2011., pp. 1336-1345.

Ryan, Michael. "Assimilating New Worlds in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 23, no. 4, 1981., pp. 519-538.

Vidal-Naquet, Pierre, and Janet Lloyd. "Atlantis and the Nations." *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 18, no. 2, 1992., pp. 300-326.