Spring 5-1-2007

The Rise and Fall of Elizabethan Theatre

Erin M. McLaughlin

The Rise and Fall of Elizabethan Theatre

Erin M. McLaughlin

Candidate for B.A. Degree
in History with Honors

April 2007

APPROVED

Thesis Project Advisor: _____
Christopher Kyle

Honors Reader: _____
Dympna Callaghan

Honors Director:_____
Samuel Gorovitz

Date: _____April 26th 2007_____

Abstract

The emergence of plays and the theatre as a commercial industry in England peaked during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. However, during this time numerous laws were passed which threatened the existence of this increasingly popular form of entertainment. *The Rise and Fall of Elizabethan Theatre* brings together the social, political and economic situations of early modern England and highlights the effects each had on the emerging theatre scene.

Through evaluation of primary sources and the works of theatre historians, *The Rise and Fall of Elizabethan Theatre* attempts to chart the reasons for the mixed reception towards playgoing in Elizabethan England. Analysis of other popular media at the time such as printed matter provides evidence of a flourishing entertainment scene. Indeed, the creation of purpose built theatres as venues for drama was a physical manifestation of the rise in popularity of playgoing. However, this is contrasted with the rise of the anti-theatrical movement which also embraced print as a way to disseminate information.

Social problems such as the threat of plague, public disorder and the stigma attached to being an actor also contributed to the setbacks that affected attendances at plays. Finally, the influence of Puritan beliefs after Elizabeth's reign led to the most critical event affecting the theatre world in the seventeenth century, the total ban in 1642 on theatrical productions. This final blow to a popular form of entertainment is the nadir of the industry's rising popularity and its effects are examined by exploring what happened to the playhouses of London.

The Rise and Fall of Elizabethan Theatre

Table of Contents

Introduction

The evolution of the western theatre from a lowly traveling occupation to a lucrative, professional business occurred in the late sixteenth Century. Before the establishment of theatre companies and the building of theatres, ballad mongers and traveling players toured the country reciting tales and fables to anybody who would listen. Other common and popular forms of entertainment were biblical morality plays which warned the public of the fate that awaited them should they sin. Performances occurred wherever space was available, with the most common venues being churches, town squares, wagons and private houses. These traditions however, were dismantled over the course of the Tudor Dynasty. Political and social events connected to the rule of Henry VIII, however altered the output of entertainers; furthermore the Henrician reformation had the unintended consequence of changing the content of plays. A decline in Corpus Christi plays which had been suppressed by the monarch[1] and an increase in more secular themes began to emerge; indeed, it has been argued that, "Henry VIII was inadvertently legitimizing great national issues as subjects for plays."[2]

One of the most compelling pieces of evidence that shows theatre in the Elizabethan ages was gaining in popularity is the emergence of permanent structures to stage plays. Previously, performance space was limited and as

---

[1] Peter Thomson, 'English Renaissance Theatre' in ed. John Russell Brown, *The Oxford Illustrated History of Theatre*, (Oxford, 1995), p. 177.
[2] Labeebee Saquet, *The Evolution of Theatre*, (New York, 1968), p.105.

acting troupes were mainly traveling players, extended runs of plays were infrequent. Despite the numerous existing venues for actors to perform, such as court yards, churches and inn-houses, there was a demand from playing companies who wanted a permanent structure in which to produce their plays. This move towards permanence made little sense as the acting profession was constantly being regulated and censored on the local and national level.[3] To the actors and company directors, however, it was a great benefit to have a space which allowed them to charge for performances and limit the number of people who could watch for free. This was a vast shift from street performances which could not guarantee a good financial return. The emphasis on financial return and plays as a means of profit was a factor that was omitted in the existing venues, "Audiences at such venues [inn-yards and town halls] did not have any direct financial link with the pleasures the players gave them."[4] The building of a theatre which could bring financial advantages was also risky in terms of the expenditure for leases, building materials, and any fines that could arise from breaches of ordinances. The number of theatres that were erected during Elizabeth I's reign in and around London is a physical mark of the success that the theatre enjoyed.

The shift from the use of inns and indoor theatres to prominent outdoor spaces emphasizes the investment of funds by several key figures in London. Their dedication to this venture saw the building of outdoor theatres such as *The*

---

[3] Peter Thomson, 'English Renaissance Theatre' in ed. John Russell Brown, *The Oxford Illustrated History of Theatre*, (Oxford, 1995), p. 178.
[4] Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, (Cambridge, 2004), p. 12.

Rose, *The Swan* and *The Globe.* The rise in popularity of the theatre can be witnessed through the commercialization of the industry in the South Bank area of London. The joining of drama with other entertainments such as bearbaiting led to later condemnations that these were sites of immorality. This is one of the contributing factors to the decline in popularity and support of Elizabethan theatre.

Chapter 1 begins my analysis of the transformations in Elizabethan theatre by giving further details on a number of theatres that were established, as well as the successes and failures they encountered. The chapter will also introduce the reader to several well-known Elizabethan actors and businessmen who gained financially from the rise of drama. The relationship between the theatre's popularity and the emergence of permanent structures which housed playing companies will be explored. Chapter 2 will examine the growth in the number of playing companies and theatres with regard to the support they received from the nobility and the crown. In particular, the patronage received from Elizabeth I allowed the theatre to prosper under her protection, but when events outside her realm of power (such as plague) hit the nation, a decline in theatre support can be seen. As drama began to be recognized as a literary genre and a popular form of entertainment in the Elizabethan era it is important to look at the monarch herself and to investigate her role in the rise and eventual fall of the theatre. Her personal views will be analyzed in Chapter 2.

The broader range of play topics that were being covered, attests to the rise in popularity of the theatre, as it appealed to a wider audience. Chapter 3

will discuss the appeal of current affairs and the impact they had on those who frequently attended the theatre. Audience records are an important measure of the success of a play and are useful for historical analysis of theatre going trends.

An exploration of the use of the printing press to print plays helps measure the success of the theatre industry. Print culture provides great insight into the output of theatres and companies. Chapter 4 examines the utilization of this medium while analyzing the attitudes held towards print by prominent playwrights of the time. Finally, as the title would suggest, Elizabethan theatre had to battle many obstacles; although some are mentioned in other chapters, Chapter 5 is devoted to the omnipresent anti-theatrical movement and the eventual Parliamentary acts that were passed to suppress the performing of plays which led to the decline in popularity of the theatre. Overall, my research will emphasize the varying ways in which the theatre gained in popularity while also charting its demise due to a number of factors.

Chapter 1

The Permanent Playing Space

Theatres and Construction- Overcoming Problems and Regulations

Most playing companies in the sixteenth century traveled from town to town and used one city as their base. "Increasingly…that base was London."[5] The establishment of a theatre district in the London area, however, was a lengthy process fraught with disagreements, financial problems, and legal restraint. Nonetheless, the move towards permanence by a select number of innovators highlights the appeal and support for the performing arts and is an indicator of the increase in popularity of the theatre during the Elizabethan era.

The first man who took on the building of an outdoor theatre was James Burbage. Burbage was a carpenter by trade who became involved in acting. He was disturbed by the 1572 "Act for the punishment of Vagabondes" which stated that wandering actors or storytellers would be jailed for their occupation unless they had the patronage of "a Baron of this Realme, or any other honorable Personage of greater Degree, to be auctoryzed to play, under the Hand / and Seale of Armes of such Baron or Personage."[6] Strangers who wandered from town to town were looked upon with suspicion and fear because of the possible spread of plague and other endemic illnesses. Due to this law, Burbage and his playing company sought the approval of the Earl of Leicester and

---

[5] Peter Thomson, 'English Renaissance Theatre' in ed. John Russell Brown, *The Oxford Illustrated History of Theatre*, (Oxford, 1995), p. 177.
[6] 1572 Act for the Punishment of Vagabondes

became known as the Earl of Leicester's Men. This allowed the playing company to continue to perform plays and gave Burbage the authorization to further establish the company. The Earl of Leicester's Men were also approved by the Crown as Queen Elizabeth I issued them with a royal patent that granted them increased support and "an edge over their competitors."[7]

The emergence of patronage by the monarch and nobles is an indicator of the increased support for the theatre. The sponsorship offered to acting companies by these patrons highlights the appeal of the performing arts to those of a higher social class and will be elaborated in Chapter Two.[8] In spite of the numerous anti-theatrical laws that were passed during Elizabeth's reign, the patronage of theatre companies was unfaltering which suggests that the theatre remained both popular and profitable for the patrons involved. Patronage was also a way in which a noble could solidify his position as, "The plays and players must have proved entertaining enough to reflect the status of their sponsors."[9]

Despite the royal backing of Burbage's company, the building of the first permanent theatre structure had one more obstacle to overcome. The London City authorities decided that having mass gatherings of people to see plays and other entertainments such as bearbaiting was too dangerous. In addition to the easy spread of the plague, anti-social behavior was rife and a nuisance so in 1574 an Act of the Court of Common Council placed a ban on the building of

---

[7] Wallace MacCaffrey, *Elizabeth I*, (Edward Arnold, 1993), p. 379.
[8] See p. 19.
[9] Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London, (Cambridge, 2004),* p. 145.

theatres within the city limits.[10] This follow-up act to the 1572 Act for the Punishment of Vagabondes was the city authority's way of maintaining control over the development of the theatre industry. Despite its apparent rigidity, however, theatre developers were able to continue with their plans. In order to combat this ban, James Burbage signed a lease for a piece of land outside the jurisdiction of the City of London, on the south side of the Thames in Shoreditch. Burbage entered into the lease with his brother-in-law, John Brayne who helped financially with the building of *The Theatre*. John Brayne had previously invested in the building of *The Red Lion*, which was built in 1567 in Whitechapel. *The Red Lion* was technically an inn-yard which had "skaffoldes" erected to act as a stage.[11] Little documentation survives to indicate the type of plays that were performed there, but it is important to link Brayne's last theatrical venture with the new investment of *The Theatre.*

Although *The Theatre* was destined to be a purpose built venue for drama, it was not truly permanent. One clause of the lease stated that Burbage could, "take downe and Carrie awaie…all such buildinges and other thinges as should be builded erected or sett vpp…either for a Theatre of playinge place."[12] The actual physical layout of *The Theatre* was never extensively documented, but it can be surmised from extant documentation its appearance was much like that of later Elizabethan theatres. The layout is thought to have been, "a

---

[10] Peter Thomson, 'English Renaissance Theatre' in ed. John Russell Brown, *The Oxford Illustrated History of Theatre*, (Oxford, 1995), p. 180
[11] Ibid. p. 178.
[12] Herbert Berry, 'Design and Use of the First Public Playhouse' in ed. Herbert Berry, *The First Public Playhouse:The Theatre in Shoreditch,* (Montreal, 1979), p. 32.

platform jutting out into an open circus, with the sun casting its beams over the groundlings, or mayhap the rain pouring in."[13] It is known that *The Theatre* was an open air performance space in which plays were staged before sundown and that it was either polygonal or round in shape. Financial documentation show that there was a yard area, and an upper area called the "gallaries".

The financial documents reveal more than the theatre's layout, they allow the historian to reconstruct the collection of profits and the limitation of theatre profits. Money was collected at a door which led up to the galleries. The money that was made from the more affluent who went up to the galleries was given to the "Housekeepers", Burbage and Brayne[14] and the profit collected from those who stood in the yard was given to the actors. However, as James Burbage was also part of a playing company, some financial problems appeared as he was taking money both from the yard and the galleries.

Records of a "Commen box" demonstrate in particular the financial problems of the company. The common box was used for the storing of profits which had "either a lock the key to which neither Burbage or Brayne had, or two different locks, Burbage possessing one key and Brayne the other."[15] Interestingly, it is assumed that Burbage had a copy of the key which opened the box and frequently helped himself to more of the profit than he was entitled[16]. The financial documentation that details attendance and profit, solidifies the

---

[13] William J. Lawrence, *The Physical Conditions of the Elizabethan Public Playhouse*, (Cambridge, 1927), p. 3.
[14] Herbert Berry, 'Design and Use of the First Public Playhouse' in ed. Herbert Berry, *The First Public Playhouse: The Theatre in Shoreditch*, (Montreal, 1979), p. 36.
[15] Ibid. p. 37.
[16] Ibid. p. 38.

notion that the *The Theatre* was a popular venue for plays. Most of the major playing companies of the time utilized the playing space and some of Christopher Marlowe's and William Shakespeare's plays were performed at *The Theatre*[17]. Burbage's home for theatre enjoyed great success which can be most vividly seen through financial records. The success of his theatre influenced the building of later theatres in the London area. However, Burbage's intention of establishing a permanent, long lasting structure was not fulfilled as his sons Cuthbert and Richard failed to renew the lease on the site, in 1597 after Burbage's death. *The Theatre* was demolished in 1598 and the timbers were used for the building of the Globe Theatre on London's Bankside. The recycling of building materials shows the similarities between the two most notable theatres of the Elizabethan era and it is remarkable that the success of *The Theatre* is physically carried on through the building of the Globe.

However, before the Globe theatre was erected in the spring of 1599, other theatrical venues had emerged. In 1577, *The Curtain* theatre was built close to *The Theatre* at Shoreditch. This was another venture by James Burbage. The benefit of retaining ownership of two playhouses in the London area meant that he enjoyed a temporary monopoly on the increasingly popular theatre scene. *The Curtain* was named after the cluster of buildings it was located near, and despite the lack of remaining evidence regarding the playing companies and the plays that were performed, there is one account written by a Thomas Platter, a tourist from Switzerland. It is unclear what playhouse Platter

[17] Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, (Cambridge, 2004), p. 27.

specifically attended but he details the events of the play and "At the end they danced very charmingly, in the English and the Irish fashion."[18] The dancing witnessed by Platter is echoed by others who comment that the shows of fighting in addition to dancing were an aspect that made it well-known.

In addition to Burbage as a key player in the establishment of the theatres, Philip Henslowe emerged as a major investor in solidifying the status of acting companies. Unlike Burbage, Henslowe was not an actor though he had close ties to the profession through his son-in-law Edward Alleyn, a noted thespian. Together, Henslowe and Alleyn, the leader of the Lord Admiral's Men, established the *Rose Theatre* (1587). The location of the *Rose Theatre* at London's Bankside was seen as more favorable with audiences who did not want to travel to *The Theatre* or *The Curtain* during winter (see Figure I). The choice of location for the *Rose Theatre* was determined because of the less than desirable positions of alternate venues, "Burbage's audience always thought of The Theatre and The Curtain as being 'in the countrye' and found the way muddy and unpleasant in that season."[19] Henslowe believed that the theatre's location next to the river would attract crowds of people who traveled on the Thames and who crossed the London Bridge close by. Entering into competition with James Burbage was a risky move, but Henslowe had confidence in Alleyn's acting company to bring success to the *Rose Theatre*. The competition that may have arisen from the establishment of the Rose

---

[18] Platter, Thomas *Thomas Platter's Travels in England 1599*, trans. Clare Williams, (London,1937), p. 175.
[19] Christine Eccles, *The Rose Theatre*, (New York, 1990), p. 9.

Theatre is most notably seen in the 1590s between Alleyn's Lord Admiral's Men, and Richard Burbage's Chamberlain's Men, who vied for the same actors and patrons showing that the competition between the different theatres was rife.

Henslowe made numerous additions to the *Rose Theatre*, including the building of a roof over the stage area and a storage shed for props and costumes. However, these investments were overshadowed by the frequent outbreaks of plague which affected the patronage of the theatres. When plague forced the closure of the *Rose* in 1592, the acting companies were required to travel into the countryside for an audience. The Privy Council gave permission for the players to resume acting at the *Rose Theatre*, "solonge as yt shalbe free from infection of sicknes."[20] This did not last, however, and the plague returned and closed the *Rose* again in February of 1593. Although this could have affected Henslowe's financial situation, he had already reaped the benefits of the popularity of the *Rose Theatre* and had sufficient funds to begin lending money to those affected by the plague.[21]

Though the *Rose Theatre* enjoyed its share of success, it was greatly inconvenienced by plague outbreaks which forced local authorities to close down venues of mass gatherings. The *Rose Theatre* maintained its theatrical output until 1603, when Philip Henslowe refused to pay the taxes asked of him and he let the theatre sit empty for years until it was slowly erased from city records, the last mention being in 1606. In Eccles' study of the *Rose Theatre*

---

[20] Acts of the Privy Council, 1592, quoted in Christine Eccles, *The Rose Theatre*, (New York, 1990), p. 35.
[21] Christine Eccles, *The Rose Theatre*, (New York, 1990), p. 35.

she proposes that the downfall of the theatre was due in part to the death of Queen Elizabeth I and the rise of court theatre during James' reign which provided acting companies greater financial security.[22]

Another more notorious theatre of the Elizabethan era was *The Swan*, built in 1596. *The Swan* was owned by Francis Langley, a businessman who entered into a contract with the Earl of Pembroke's Men. Langley received a high proportion of the takings in return for paying for the production costs for the acting troupe. The agreement was a success until the Earl of Pembroke's Men staged "The Isle of Dogs", a play written by Thomas Nashe and Ben Jonson. Although few details remain about the content of the play, there are extensive accounts of the hostile reactions that were generated after its performance in July 1597. It was said to, "contain very seditious and slanderous matter"[23] and as a result of the content the actors were imprisoned, including Ben Jonson. Thomas Nashe sought exile outside of London and all his work was seized by the Privy Council who examined it for further evidence of slander. In addition to its personal censorship of Nashe, the Privy Council exerted their power on the theatre community by demanding as punishment the closure of all London playhouses and their demolition. The latter was never carried out but the closure had a great effect on the theatre industry in London. Langley's *Swan Theatre* never recovered from the after effects of the "Isle of

---

[22] Christine Eccles, *The Rose Theatre*, (New York, 1990), p. 80. *The correlation between the success of a profession and the reign of a monarch is integral in exploring the popularity of the theatre, Chapter 2 will elaborate on Elizabeth I's role in allowing theatre to develop in accordance with her demands*

[23] Jane Milling, 'The Development of a professional theatre, 1540-1660' in eds. Jane Milling and Peter Thomson, *The Cambridge History of British Theatre Vol.1*, (Cambridge, 2004), p.150.

Dogs" production and he was forced to use the theatre for events such as prize fights in order to stay fluid.

The Swan's effect on the popularity of the theatre was great. After the "Isle of Dogs" incident only the two Crown-approved playing companies were allowed to perform. However, the controversy surrounding the *Swan Theatre* did not end with the "Isle of Dogs" production. The theatre was the host to a notorious character who highlighted that in 1602 the *Swan* still had great appeal to the masses. Richard Vennar, a failed lawyer who turned to literature, printed and distributed a playbill detailing the plotline of a play called *England's Joy.* Vennar boasted that the production contained "actors of good birth", "fireworkes" and the appearance of "Heaven"[24] and so the anticipated extravagance of the performance allowed him to sell hundreds of tickets in advance. In addition, Vennar's play was to break with tradition because it advertised that women were to perform. Elizabethan theatre companies solely used males for all parts as the stage was not thought to be a place for women to display themselves. Vennar's boast that "gentlemen and gentlewomen"[25] would be performing the play would have been a new experience for playgoers as it threatened theatrical conventions of the time and no doubt this new aspect of theatre sold more tickets. However, on the day of performance, Vennar appeared on stage and "delivered six lines of the prologue, but then bailiffs

---

[24] Douglas Bruster, 'Birth of an Industry' in eds. Jane Milling and Peter Thomson, *The Cambridge History of English Theatre Vol I.,* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 228.
[25] David Mann, *The Elizabethan Player: Contemporary Stage Represenation,* (Routledge, 1991), p. 246.

arrested him for debt"[26]. He left for jail with the audience's money and was never indicted for his transgression. The playgoers who had gathered in the *Swan Theatre* to see *England's Joy* were angered that Vennar had taken their money and vandalized the interior of the theatre[27]. In addition to ruining his own reputation in the theatre world, the status of the *Swan Theatre* was also endangered.

The theatre's popularity can be charted finally through the famous *Globe Theatre*. Constructed in 1599 from the timber of the *Theatre* on London's Bankside, the venue was created as a performance space for the Lord Chamberlain's Men, as their original plan to perform at the *Blackfriars Theatre* had not transpired. The *Globe's* proximity to the famous *Bear Garden* which featured bearbaiting entertainment meant that there was already a ready audience in the area. The *Bear Garden* was eventually transformed into the *Hope Theatre* which offered patrons both bearbaiting and theatrical performances[28] in competition with the *Globe*.

The *Globe* was a three storey high, circular building with a small thatched roof that covered part of the structure. It is estimated that the theatre could hold almost three thousand playgoers.[29] It was in this theatre that the partnership between the Lord Chamberlain's Men and William Shakespeare flourished. The troupe performed some of Shakespeare's most notable plays

---

[26] Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Richard Vennar <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28190>
[27] Douglas Bruster, 'Birth of an Industry' in eds. Jane Milling and Peter Thomson, *The Cambridge History of English Theatre Vol I.,* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 228.
[28] Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, (Cambridge, 2004), p. 37.
[29] Ibid. p.24.

such as *Romeo and Juliet, Richard II, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth, Taming of the Shrew, The Winter's Tail* and *Henry VIII*. However, in 1613 during a performance of Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*, a cannon was fired which set fire to the thatched roof. This resulted in the total destruction of the *Globe Theatre* which was rebuilt with funding from the Crown and rich patrons in 1613 on the same plot of land. Although no new Shakespeare plays were performed in the reincarnated *Globe Theatre,* reruns of his plays enjoyed great successes. As the main venue for Shakespeare's plays, the *Globe* is integral to understanding the increase in support for the theatre. Having a prolific playwright work with an esteemed acting group contributed to the success of the *Globe.* Despite the destruction of the original building, the *Globe* maintained its position as a popular venue for performances. This success was halted only in 1642 by the *Ordinance of the Lords and Commons Concerning Stage-Plays* which closed the theatre and expedited its demolition in 1644.[30]

The aspect of rivalry between theatre companies can also be seen in the establishment of the *Fortune Theatre.* Built by Peter Street, the same builder of the *Globe Theatre* in 1600, the *Fortune* was located outside London city's jurisdiction in the Liberty of Finsbury. This location in an "up-and-coming area"[31] was across the Thames from Bankside and it was hoped to appeal to an alternative clientele. The original building contract exists and gives details of the dimensions of the theatre which are similar to the *Globe*, most likely because

[30] See Chapter 5 p. 49
[31] Martin White, 'London Professional Playhouses and Performances', in eds. Jane Milling and Peter Thomson, *The Cambridge History of British Theatre, Vol. I,* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 320.

of Street's influence. When the Privy Council in 1600 limited the number of acting companies to two, Edward Alleyn took his Lord Admiral's Men to the *Fortune*[32] and enjoyed success for many years due to the theatre company duopoly. However, like the *Globe*, the *Fortune* met a fiery end in 1621 but was reconstructed in 1623. This building remained standing until 1662, and "plays were performed surreptitiously"[33] despite the 1642 Ordinance which affected many of the other prominent theatres. The *Fortune* was partially demolished by soldiers in 1649 in what is described as a "sweeping assault on those theatres still in operation."[34] With this attack on the *Fortune's* structure, it is not surprising that this setback led to its demise as a home for theatre.

The *Fortune* is an important theatre in the charting of the theatre industry's popularity as it was, "the last purpose built amphitheatre devoted solely to presenting plays."[35] As no amphitheatres were built after 1600, it is apparent that in the future, companies would make a shift towards indoor playhouses to allow for year-round productions which improved the financial viability of the acting companies. Most notably after the 1642 Ordinance was implemented and plays could not be performed in public playhouses, impromptu performance spaces had to be created. By staging plays in private houses, actors could continue their trade "underground"[36]. Very few records remain of the

---

[32] Ibid. p. 322.
[33] Janet Clare, 'Theatre and Commonwealth', in eds. Jane Milling and Peter Thomson, *The Cambridge History of British Theatre, Vol. I,* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 459.
[34] Ibid. p. 461.
[35] Martin White, 'London Professional Playhouses and Performances', in eds. Jane Milling and Peter Thomson, *The Cambridge History of British Theatre, Vol. I,* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 322.
[36] Janet Clarke, 'Theatre and Commonwealth', in eds. Jane Milling and Peter Thomson, *The Cambridge History of British Theatre, Vol. I,* (Cambridge, 2004), p.462.

types of performances that occurred after 1642, but it is clear that the year marked a nadir in the popularity of the theatre.

Overall, the investment placed in theatre companies and the building of structures by several key figures led to the establishment of a thriving industry. The number of theatres that were constructed during Elizabeth's reign not only signifies a growth in popularity of the performing arts but an increase in support from both nobles and the crown. The support given to the new business ventures and acting troupes was however, marred by events outside of their control. As plague gripped the country, it is understandable that for the safety of the nation, plans had to be implemented to limit public gatherings. Nonetheless, the later 1642 Ordinance was the most damaging act which brought the theatre's popularity, which had been garnered throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth century, to a dramatic low point.

Chapter 2

Elizabeth I's View of Theatre

During her forty-five year reign, Elizabeth I battled many problems facing her nation. Religious intolerance, threat of foreign invasion and plague were all omnipresent, but in the face of these concerns, Elizabeth tried to improve conditions in England and led the country through an age of prosperity. Elizabeth was a very educated monarch, with a deep respect for Greek and Latin texts in addition to being able to speak French, Italian and Spanish.[37] She was also tutored in the art of public speaking which was a useful tool later in her rule. As a princess she was exposed to court performances by scholars from Oxford and Cambridge. Indeed, it is said, "Her learning and her tastes ensured that the English court would be a centre of intellectual sophistication where the high literary culture of the age could flourish."[38] Elizabeth's level of education is indicative of a wider trend regarding literacy rates. In London, it is noted that the city had "markedly higher"[39] literacy rates than the rest of England. Although most women did not receive as thorough an education as Elizabeth, she served as a role model for bringing educational equality to women. Being a role model allowed Elizabeth the chance to not only govern over her subjects, but to inspire them to get involved in the emerging forms of entertainment. This

[37] Wallace MacCaffrey, *Elizabeth I,* (London. 1993), p. 6.
[38] Ibid. p. 7.
[39] Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London,* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 64.

chapter will show that through Elizabeth's support of the arts, the acting profession was legitimized, more so than with any other monarch.

The popularity of plays had steadily been on the increase during the early years of Elizabeth's reign. The move towards the establishment of permanent homes for theatre is indicative of this. Therefore, Elizabeth's involvement in the performing arts was not as much a way to encourage people to attend but more a means of supporting and advocating the theatre industry as a profession and literary genre. One way in which support was given was through the patronage of a theatre company. Patronage was granted by a nobleman or family who wanted to support the arts, "such patrons ensuring by their prestige the acceptance of the new art form as part of the social and cultural fabric."[40] In addition to providing the acting company with financial resources, being a patron also allowed the nobleman to gain favors with the Queen because they were both supporting the same cause and the troupes were used in court entertainment. This vying of the Queen's attention led to "rival displays of ostentatious nobility"[41] and it was due in part to this element of competition that Queen Elizabeth intervened and created her own company of actors.

The Queen's Men

The Queen's Men was a company of 12 actors who were brought together in 1583 by Sir Francis Walsingham, one of Elizabeth's espionage

[40] Wallace MacCaffrey, *Elizabeth I,* (London. 1993), p. 379.
[41] Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London, (Cambridge, 2004),* p. 145.

specialists. It has been argued that the Queen's patronage of an acting group was in part to, "make a broad cultural assertion about England's position in a European world"[42] and to "prove that England had a literature and drama that could stand among those of the continental nations."[43] In addition to Elizabeth's policies regarding international relations and the strength of her military it is apparent that portraying England as a culturally rich power to other nations was also important to Elizabeth.

Elizabeth also planned for her acting troupe to travel extensively around the country in order to expand "the cultural influence reaching into the countryside from the court."[44] By using the medium of drama to spread propaganda, Elizabeth and her advisors were more easily able to disseminate information to those outside of the main towns such as London and Norwich. This is an important part of a nation's centralization and aided in the assertion of the monarch's power. At this time, other nation-states in Early Modern Europe were also aiming to centralize their power through the same means. Indeed, when other acting companies were looking to assert their position in a permanent playing house the Queen's Men were in fact more of a touring company. In 1583 it is noted that, "The first tour by the Queen's Men had lasted for some four or five months with no sign of London performances during that time."[45] By performing plays around the country with the patronage of the

---

[42] Scott McMillin, Sally-Beth MacLean, *The Queen's Men and their Plays*, (Cambridge, 1998), p. 35.
[43] Ibid. p. 35.
[44] Ibid. p. 24.
[45] Ibid. p. 46.

Queen, the actors were, "making more money than touring companies had done before."[46] The financial return that the company accrued is a great indication of their popularity throughout England. Although they differed from the emerging theatre companies who were trying to get established in and around London, the Queen's Men are important in measuring the popularity of the theatre to a more national audience.

The use of acting as a political tool also granted those chosen to be one of the Queen's Men, security in a profession that was constantly under fire. The choice of the twelve actors that made up the Queen's Men was done by harvesting from the already established theatre companies such as the Earl of Leicester's Men. By monopolizing the best actors that were available, Queen Elizabeth had the ability to protect her players from the various restrictions that were implemented by London city authorities to curb theatrical performances. Having twelve adult actors, which was an increase from the more common six or eight, also provided the troupe with the ability to perform plays that had been written with more characters. This increase in size also benefited playwrights who were given, "better scope for plays that called for a bigger number of players."[47] The Queen's Men were also privileged to be the main court entertainers and in addition to their extensive touring commitments as in the 1580s, "they gave no fewer than twenty-one performances at court...where royal patronage gave them an edge over their competitors."[48]

---

[46] Ibid. p. 46.
[47] Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London, (Cambridge, 2004),* p. 146.
[48] Wallace MacCaffrey, *Elizabeth I,* (London. 1993), p. 379.

Elizabeth's personal interest in theatre and court entertainment is evident through the number of plays that were performed in her court and also, her willingness to lend her countenance – and the modest wages of twelve men."[49] It is clear that Elizabeth was a great contributor to the theatre industry and through her support of twelve actors, she approved of the company's development despite the later attacks that threatened its existence.

Court Theatre

In addition to Elizabeth's support of theatre for the masses, the popularity of plays performed at the indoor private theatres and attended by the royal court was also strengthened during her reign. The opportunity to impress those in attendance with magnificent displays of wealth and sophistication was a key factor in the staging of a play at court. The benefits of performing at one of the palaces for acting companies were numerous. Most importantly was the increased "favour and prominence"[50] that the company received. Recognition from the crown was something to boast about and in printed editions of the plays performed, the title pages usually detailed their royal seal of approval[51]. The financial rewards of performing at the Court was also a great benefit as the court paid for the performers, and unlike the other playhouses admission was not charged. Admission was reserved for those who were privileged and had close

[49] Ibid. p. 380.
[50] John H. Astington, *English Court Theatre 1558-1642*, (Cambridge, 1999), p. 6.
[51] Ibid. p. 6.

connections to the court. As plays were a way to demonstrate cultural and political superiority, foreign ambassadors and distinguished foreign visitors were also invited to the social events with the hope that they would be impressed by the entertainment. One notable guest that graced a court theatre performance in January 1617, during King James I's reign, was Pocahontas, who watched a play called *The Vision of Delight*[52].

As plays were performed in royal palaces the playing spaces are still in existence in some form today. By using royal residences as venues, permanence was guaranteed and was a stark contrast to the theatre entrepreneurs trying to establish playhouses for the masses. In addition, as the palaces were multi-function venues they were not subject to the various anti-theatrical laws and were not specifically targeted and attacked in the same way as other play houses such as the *Fortune Theatre*[53].

During Elizabeth's reign most court performances were scheduled for, "the festive seasons of Christmas and Shrovetide"[54]. By limiting the time of year that plays were performed the court could plan in advance to make the performances as grand as possible for the invited audience. As the playing halls varied in size, so too did the audiences. Records suggest that the performances were "undoubtedly packed"[55], which indicates their popularity amongst the upper echelons of society.

---

[52] Ibid. p. 165.
[53] See p. 16.
[54] John H. Astington, *English Court Theatre 1558-1642*, (Cambridge, 1999), p. 165.
[55] Ibid. p. 172.

There are extensive records of the plays being performed in the English court due to the literate population that was planning and watching the entertainment. Thomas Dekker's *The Shoemakers' Holiday* and *Old Fortunatus* were performed by the Admiral's Men at Richmond Palace and were among the plays performed towards the end of Elizabeth's reign. During James' reign more complete records remain which show many of Shakespeare's plays being performed such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Comedy of Errors* and *Henry V*.[56]

The court's use of playing companies and playwrights that had been successful in the public theatre realm highlights that the plays had universal appeal. This appeal was a key factor in their continued popularity both with the royals and with their subjects.

Elizabeth's Laws and their Impact

Although Elizabeth's patronage of an acting company did in some way legitimize the profession, the numerous acts that were passed while she was in power created many obstacles for those that were in the trying to increase their popularity and reputation in the business. One of the major problems that Elizabeth tried to tackle during her reign was poverty. By implementing a series of Poor Laws to combat the increasing number of subjects who had moved from the country to the towns, Elizabeth was trying to make the state more

[56] Ibid. p. 238.

responsible for the individual. It was from these Poor Laws that the 1572 "Act for the punishment of Vagabondes" was passed. This law had a great impact on the acting profession as it required acting companies to seek the patronage of a noble in order for them to continue performing without fear of disruption.

Actors and traveling players were frequently targeted as possible carriers of plague and blamed for immorality[57] their status in society was constantly changing. However, by being part of a sponsored acting company, actors were granted a sense of stability in a profession that was constantly in jeopardy. By taking the sponsorship of a nobleman, theatre companies were afforded opportunities for growth and development which in turn provided the public with entertainment and thus contributed to the continuing popularity of the performing arts.

[57] See Chapter 5 p. 46.

Chapter 3

A Typical Audience?

With the increase in theatre companies, playwrights and buildings dedicated to the performance of plays, an investigation into those who frequented the theatre must be carried out. Records including financial documentation, pamphlets and official city reports provide an insight to the members of the public that attended plays. Written accounts by theatre-goers such as Thomas Platter are also very useful in gauging the involvement and reactions of the public. Despite the available evidence it is clear that without a large, paying audience the growth of the theatre industry would have been extremely stunted.

There are several key features of a play which attracted an audience made up of every social class. The first is the requirement that the audience members suspend their disbelief for the duration of a performance. By submitting to the words and actions of the playwright and being willing to place themselves in different locations around the world, the audiences were playing "the theatrical game"[58]. It has been argued that England's fascination with warfare, courthouse debate and competitive sports fuelled the popularity of drama as it was an extension of everyday life[59]. Mass gatherings to watch bearbaiting and traveling plays were popular before the Elizabethan era but the establishment of permanent homes for plays aided the increased popularity of

[58] Ronald Harwood, *All The World's A Stage*, (Boston, 1984), p. 106.
[59] Ibid. p.106.

the theatre. Initially most playwrights focused on the poetry of their work and the delivery of lines was the most important aspect of the performance. However, some writers such as Shakespeare realized that audiences were also attracted to plays by the use of spectacle, scenery and costume[60]. This has already been seen in the case of Richard Vennar's, *England's Joy*, whose promise of pyrotechnics and other world scenery produced a packed playing house.[61]

The physical locations of the new theatres that were being built during the Elizabethan era posed many challenges. For example, the Bankside area of London, where the *Swan* and the *Globe* were situated, was notorious for prostitution and pick pocketing, or cutpursing, was rife at all theatres. One such example of cutpursing is mentioned in a pamphlet called "The Art of Living in London" (1642) and occurred when a wife of a business man attended the theatre with only an attendant. The wife had been warned to look after her purse which she did by placing it "Vnder my peticote. between that and my smocke"[62]. However, during the course of the play she felt someone groping her but did not suspect that she was being robbed until she later discovered her money had gone. The fact that this incident was being published in a pamphlet aimed to help men adjust to city life, highlights that theft was common and being alert while watching a play was important. Despite the threat of

---

[60] Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London,* (Cambridge, 2004), p.111.
[61] See Chapter 1, p.13.
[62] Henry Peacham, *The Art of Living in London,* (Holborne, 1642)

cutpursing and other actions that could disturb the peace, theatres remained a popular meeting place for all social classes.

It is clear that all social classes attended plays and one of the most compelling pieces of evidence in support of this is the layout of the theatre buildings. Each theatre had different areas which varied in price. Generally, the open-air courtyard housed the lower priced theatre goers, known as "groundlings" and the sheltered balconies (which had some seating) were for those who paid a higher admission price.

In addition to describing the physical locations of the audience members in the theatre, their physical actions and behavior also play a big part in uncovering what a typical audience in the Elizabethan era was like. "Showts and Claps at ev'ry little pause"[63] are reported and this energetic response undoubtedly interfered with the progression of the onstage action. To try to combat the rambunctious interruptions, "Shakespeare, Marston, Dekker and many other poets used epilogues to appeal for applause at the end of their plays."[64] It is clear that the entertainment provided by the plays was well received and appreciated through the audience's verbal and physical reactions. It is also apparent that if the audience was not enjoying the performance they would not refrain from vocalizing their disdain with hisses. Also, if the play started late or was not to the audience's liking, missiles such as food would be thrown onto the playing area.

---

[63] Michael Drayton, *Idea,* Sonnet 47 (1600)
[64] Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London,* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 52.

The audience's involvement with the acting company and their production is important in charting the popularity of the theatre. As the audience was not scared to show emotion, playwrights and acting troupes would have to take a risk with their play content because they knew that if it was not liked, their reputation would be ruined. This reciprocal relationship of good works being rewarded with large, appreciative audiences fuelled the success of the theatre in late sixteenth century and only faltered when outside influences, such as city authorities, clamped down on mass gatherings.

Current Affairs and the Audience

It is evident that the London theatres were a popular meeting place for the public. The theatre world embraced this popularity and used it as an arena for the dissemination for opinions on current events. Plays also allowed the audience to experience lives that were different to their own and this voyeurism was a common feature in newspapers. By expanding on the matters that the public were most interested in, playwrights could engage their audience in ways that the classic Greek and Roman plays could not. The most notable case was Thomas Middleton's, *A Game at Chess* (1624), which was a commentary on the political relationship between England and Spain. The popularity of the play's content can be seen in the nine day run it enjoyed and, "the enthusiasm of London audiences for this kind of journalistic news and topical comment"[65].

[65] Ibid. p. 176.

Personal diary entries are the most substantive evidence of the reactions of playgoers to play content. John Holles attended *A Game of Chess* and thought of it as "a facetious comedy" with "extraordinary applause"[66]. His diary entry goes onto describe the action of the play and the crowd reactions highlight an understanding of the topics covered.

The importance of the theatre as a tool to educate the public on current events cannot be underestimated as the illiteracy rates in Elizabethan England were extremely high. This meant that those who were of a lower social class and could not afford newspapers, books and pamphlets were at a loss for written information. As the action was acted out on stage, literacy was not a major concern as through the actors' delivery they could understand the main themes and points of a play. In addition, the shift from religious to secular plays appealed to a greater number of people. Playgoers now paid for their entertainment and there was a demand for topics that they would not get taught at church. This shift towards commercialization of what was previously a free form of entertainment is another indication of the appeal of plays. As people were willing to pay to attend plays on a frequent basis, the audiences played a key role in shaping theatre as an industry at this time.

[66] Ibid. p. 134.

Chapter 4

Print culture as a measure of popularity

The popularity of the theatre can be examined through the use of the printing press. For the most part, the number of plays that emerged in print shows the ability of the theatre to transcend from a traditionally oral medium to a scribal one. Indeed, businessmen including stationers and some playwrights embraced the printing press whereas other shunned it. The link between printing and plays can also be seen through questions of authorship, the physical publication of play texts and the various techniques used to transform a work from the stage to the bookshelf.

The popularity of the theatre in England during the early modern era highlights an increasing use of plays to disseminate information. Research has been conducted to understand who was attending the theatre and analysis of those who frequented the theatre[67] has allowed for tentative conclusions to be made about the type of person who watched plays. The sample of playgoers highlights that a broad spectrum of social classes visited the London playhouses. Although it seems impossible to predict accurately, Gurr also tries to examine the psyche of the patrons of the playhouses. It is evident that playgoers of this era had the mental capacity to remember and recall lines from plays. Indeed, it is clear that, some such as Ben Jonson, "had a formidable memory for poetry

[67] Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, (Cambridge, 2004), Appendix 1.

and drama"[68] The aspect of reciting words that the playgoers heard on stage indicates that plays were seen as something to be talked about and recalled rather than read in book form. Playwright Francis Beaumont described the "printed text of a play a 'second publication' after the first on stage"[69] As purchasing books was an expensive undertaking and for the most part only the upper echelons of society could read, the stage was looked to by many as their main source of information. The high cost of books and schooling contributes to the fact that it was "not just illiterate housewives who went to plays because they could hear stage fictions more easily than they could read them"[70], it was a form of entertainment for many who could not afford the luxury of reading.

The use of plays to disseminate information about current affairs can be found by comparing productions of the various theatre companies. Acting troupes and playwrights also gauged the success of plays staged by rival companies and used the information to create a play of the same genre with the hopes of capturing the public's support.

The impact that print culture had on society was monumental, despite the fact that literacy rates in Europe were low. As it is commonly referred to as the "printing revolution", it is important to analyze the aspects which make the use of the printing press revolutionary. It is said that even in today's society "we still know very little about how access to printed materials affects human

[68] Ibid. p. 97.
[69] Ibid. p. 3.
[70] Ibid. p. 97.

behavior,"[71] inferring that it is difficult to comprehend how much of an effect the introduction of the printing press had on the learning and thought processes of people in early modern England. Printing played an integral role in the standardization of language and helped to eliminate alterations to text as pages were printed from identical blocks. The printing press therefore allowed scholars to repair classic texts and reprint them in their original form, removing the comments and additions that had accumulated over the years. The use of printing to quickly correct texts was characteristic and important in the development of printing of plays.

The printing of plays was in some ways a gamble for publishers. Compared to the printing of library-worthy classical books that were sought after and featured prominently at book fairs, printing a play which had been popular on stage was a risky step for many publishers to take. Indeed, the approximation that, "in the 1630s, booksellers sold something like twenty times as many religious books (sermons, catechisms, bibles, and theological works) as they did plays."[72] It was hard to determine if a play's popularity would continue into the literary realm. Printers put a lot at stake financially when publishing a play; however, this was counterbalanced by the fact that they could acquire the text for a fairly low price, which meant the opportunity for profit was great. The majority of plays in early modern England were published without the original author being aware and as there was a lack of copyright laws very little action

---

[71] Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe,* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 6.
[72] David Scott Kastan, *Committing Shakespeare to Print* (2001), <http://www.fathom.com/course/21701737>

could be taken against publishers. However, some playwrights harassed printers into printing corrected versions of the plays. In the 1600s "most dramatists appear to have affiliated themselves primarily with one company at a time"[73] allowing playwrights to adapt their work to the cast members that they knew would be available to them. It can therefore be concluded that the printing of plays was not done to allow a staged reproduction by other theatre companies.

There were numerous ways in which the original actor's script (penned by the playwright), was transformed into a marketable book. The final version of the text generally depended on the attitude of the playwright. It was common for plays to be written as a collaborative effort. During the rehearsal process, plays would be edited by actors, other writers, and producers to fit time constraints and plays were altered to abide by the various censorship rules. Shakespeare's *Richard II*, was censored many times by the court appointed Master of Revels, as it dramatized the overthrow of a king. The censorship was implemented because the play would be seen as rebellious and could encourage others to act in a similar manner.[74]

Collaboration raises issues of authorship and led to the republishing of several plays which the original author took great lengths to edit back to its original form. One such example of this is Ben Jonson's *Every Man Out of His Humor*, published in 1600. The title page states "as it was first composed by the

---

[73] Roslyn L. Knutson, 'Working Playwrights, 1580-1642' in eds. Jane Milling and Peter Thomson, *The Cambridge History of British Theatre Vol.1,* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 347.
[74] Ruth Underhill, *Stage and State: The Censorship of Richard II,* <http://www.engl.uvic.ca/Faculty/MBHomePage/ISShakespeare/Resources/Essex>

author B.I. Containing more than hath been publikely spoken or acted"[75] It is clear that Ben Jonson put great emphasis on the publishing of his plays as he had originally written them and not as they had been staged. The desire for publishing a text as the author intended arose from the various practices employed by the printers. Looking for some extra money, actors would go to print shops and recall the lines of the play. The act of memorial reconstruction led to discrepancies in the text due to the failure of the actor's memory. Memorial reconstruction is believed to have caused the major differences in the first and second quartos of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Quarto 1, is significantly shorter than the later released quartos, and tends to have lines which do not follow the same meter as later editions. Indeed, the scenes which contain Romeo, Paris and Mercutio in quarto 1 are closest in accuracy to the other quartos, leading to the hypothesis that the actors playing these three characters went to the printers and 'recalled' the play[76].

There is also evidence of the implementation of shorthand writing or stenography being used by audience members or printers to document the lines of the play which would then be turned into a printed work.[77] Again, inconsistencies appear due to the nature of the actor's memory and the mistakes of the stenographers. It is known that theatre rivals would hire stenographers to attend opening night of their opponent and a 'bad' quarto would be published. As with all businesses, payment was an important aspect of the printing of plays.

---

[75] Ben Jonson, *Every Man Out of His Humo*r, 1660, (Early English Books Online -STC / 441:08)
[76] David Scott Kastan, *Shakespeare and the Book*, (Cambridge, 2001), p. 47.
[77] Roger Chartier, *Publishing Drama in Early Modern Europe*, British Library Lecture 1998.

Many theatre companies sold their scripts to the printers and as the script was classed as the property of the company, the money from sales benefited the acting troupe. As there was no notion at that time of royalties being paid, playwrights rarely made money from the publishing of their scripts but earned money from the sale of their works to the company.[78] There are also records of writers selling their plays directly to stationers, and thereby receiving compensation.[79] By selling their work to theatre companies, playwrights could expect to earn around £5-6 per play. Indeed, "It is true that, although the price per play or contribution to writing was always healthy, the vagaries of playing, plague and prohibition meant that few dramatists managed to live within their means, or to subsist entirely on income from playwriting."[80] This statement confirms that the practice of printing plays has a strong link to the popularity of the stage production. As the theatre decreased in popularity, mainly due to extraneous factors such as city ordinances and the outbreak of plague, the output of plays by the printers was also affected. The loss of printed plays made many printers look to other literary genres for manuscripts to publish.

The theatre company's claim to the script highlights the reason why title pages printed at this time advertise the company who originally performed the plays (i.e. Chamberlain's Men or Admiral's Men). Some dramatists sold their plays to stationers and as it was their work, they got a share of the profits,

---

[78] Roslyn L. Knutson, 'Working Playwrights, 1580-1642' in eds. Jane Milling and Peter Thomson, *The Cambridge History of British Theatre Vol.1,* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 352.
[79] Ibid. p. 353.
[80] Jane Milling, 'The Development of a professional theatre, 1540-1660' in eds. Jane Milling and Peter Thomson, *The Cambridge History of British Theatre Vol.1,* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 157.

however it is important to remember that in the main "success was thus unlikely to benefit the author directly."[81] The printer Thomas Thorpe printed four of Ben Jonson's works (*Sejanus* 1605, *Hymenaei* 1606, *Volpone* 1607 and *The Masques of Blackness and Beauty* 1608) and displayed Jonson's name on the title page, thus attributing authorship to him[82].

Playwrights and their view of printing

It is apparent that William Shakespeare was uninterested in the publishing of his plays, "Somewhat less than half of his dramatic output ever appeared in print while he lived, and of the plays that were published none is marked by any effort on his part to insure that the printed play accurately reflected what he had written."[83] Indeed, Shakespeare was more concerned with the production aspect of the theatre. While he was alive, only eighteen of his thirty seven plays were published and "with ten reprinted one or more times, at least forty-two separate editions reached print before he died."[84] The number of Shakespeare's plays that were printed and re-printed, indicates that they were popular in pamphlet form as well as on the stage. As this was the case, why then does Shakespeare differ from other playwrights who embraced the publishing of their works in the way they intended? In order to answer this

[81] Julia Briggs, *This Stage Play World,* (Oxford, 1983), p. 116.
[82] Roslyn L. Knutson, 'Working Playwrights, 1580-1642', in eds. Jane Milling and Peter Thomson, *The Cambridge History of British Theatre Vol.1,* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 353.
[83] David Scott Kastan, *Committing Shakespeare to Print,* (2001), <http://www.fathom.com/course/21701737>
[84] Ibid.

question, we must take a look at another prominent dramatist of the time, Ben Jonson.

As a writer of both comedic and tragic plays, Jonson is best known for his most famous tragedy, *Sejanus.* Jonson used ancient texts such as Tacitus' *Annals* to tell the story of Aelius Sejanus. Published in 1605, *Sejanus* is noted for its attack on censorship rules,[85] an act that occurred frequently in early modern English printing. *Sejanus,* when performed, was not successful with audiences, and riots occurred in the playhouses due to its unpopularity. The play was perceived by audiences at the time, and scholars today, to be rebellious and related to the treason trials of Sir Walter Raleigh, and the Earl of Essex. *Sejanus* is a good example of Jonson using his plays as a way of relating an historical event to a current event for his audience. By writing about popular culture in a disguised form, Jonson is increasing the popularity of the theatre by creating plays that the audience can understand.

In his printed version of *Sejanus,* Jonson (as he did in the printed version of *Every Man Out of His Humour),* states that this edition of the play is not what was presented on stage. Jonson also admits that another person had a great deal of influence in the editing of his text in book form. His honesty regarding the authorship of the written version of his play is admirable as it warns the reader that the printed play is an alteration of the stage performance and may not be as they remember it.

---

[85] Douglas A. Brooks, *From Playhouse to Printing House,* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 22.

> I would inform you that this book, in all numbers, is not the same with that which was acted on the public stage, wherein a second pen had good share[86]

Another important play which is part of Ben Jonson's printed repertoire is *The Alchemist.* The play is recorded in the Stationer's Register in 1610 and was first published in 1612.[87] *The Alchemist* is generally regarded as Jonson's best play in which he combined the unities of time, place and action, a key component of drama at this time. During his career as a playwright, Jonson published twelve of his plays in quarto format and in 1616, released his *Workes* folio. The collection of his works marks a shift in the way that authorship was perceived in this era. The title page of Jonson's *Workes* folio features Ben Jonson's name in the style of a signature and also features his portrait. By using this font, Jonson is authenticating his works and certifying that they are his.[88] Collaboration was a popular way of improving a play but this led to difficulties regarding a play's authorship. It is claimed that the printing of Jonson's folio is Jonson's way of making "the printing house as the chief mode of his authorial self-expression because the king has replaced performance with print as the chief mode of royal self-representation."[89] Here Brooks makes connections between Jonson and King James, who also published a folio of his works in 1616. By linking Jonson's increased interest in printing his works to the attitude

---

[86] Ben Jonson, *Sejanus,* ed. Phillip Ayres, (Manchester, 1990), lines 38-40.
[87] Douglas A. Brooks, *From Playhouse to Printing House,* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 52.
[88] Ben Jonson, *The Workes,* (London, 1616)
[89] Douglas A. Brooks, *From Playhouse to Printing House,* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 133.

of royalty is an excellent example of the way playwrights came to embrace what previously was viewed as a medium of high culture.

In order to further examine Shakespeare's indifference to the accurate publishing of his works, it is vital that a comparative analysis of the works that were posthumously printed is undertaken. One of the most significant publications of collected works of a single author was Shakespeare's *First Folio* which was published in 1623. The initiative to issue some of Shakespeare's previously unpublished plays was taken by two actors from his playing company, The Lord Chamberlain's Men. John Heminge and Henry Condell collected thirty six of Shakespeare's plays and published the volume. It went on sale for £1 and the initial print run was approximately seven hundred and fifty.[90]

Shakespeare's *First Folio* is important in several ways. As Shakespeare's previous plays had been printed as quartos, the release of many versions by various publishers caused discrepancies. Therefore, the standardization of the plays contained in the Folio provided more accurate texts for many of his plays. It also provides evidence for comparison with Jonson's earlier folio. As Jonson only included nine of his plays in his folio (in addition to other works such as poems), it seems that he was not relying solely on the profession of playwriting to sell the book, but was appearing as a "general" author. Heminge and Condell, on the other hand, marketed Shakespeare's folio from the standpoint that, "a man might be an "author" on the basis of his plays alone, and remarkably, on the basis of plays written exclusively for the

[90] David Scott Kastan, *Shakespeare and the Book*, (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 50-78.

professional stage."[91] Also important is that Shakespeare's folio contained "all his Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies"[92] and that they are "published according to the True Originall Copies". This is revolutionary for the theatre and printing world as never before had the complete works of a playwright been published.

Today, it is clear that Shakespeare's folio was an important investment, with regards to the immortalization of his greatest plays. However, as was the case in many examples of the printing of plays, the publisher of the folio – Edward Blount, believed that he and his partners had "undertaken an expensive publishing project with no certainty of recovering their considerable investment."[93]

There is some debate over the idea that collaboration was an inferior way to compose plays. The differing opinions on collaboration are summated as follows,

> Extending G.E Bentley's perspective in *The Profession of Dramatist in Shakespeare's Time* that collaboration was a sign of professionalism, Jeffrey Masten in *Textual Intercourse* emphasizes the collaborative nature of the theatrical enterprise itself, artistically and economically. In a description of the work habits of early modern English dramatists, Neil Carson explains in *A Companion to Henslowe's Diary* that collaboration was good for dramatists and companies.[94]

---

[91] David Scott Kastan, *Shakespeare and the Book*,(Cambridge, 2001) p. 64.
[92] Mr. VVilliam Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies <eebo.chadwyck.com>
[93] David Scott Kastan, *Shakespeare and the Book*,(Cambridge, 2001) p. 78.
[94] Roslyn L. Knutson, 'Working Playwrights, 1580-1642', in eds. Jane Milling and Peter Thomson, *The Cambridge History of British Theatre Vol.1,* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 342.

The alteration of play texts was also seen as a form of collaboration. Alterations were usually made when a play was being revived for a new performance and this led to new editions of previously released plays.

Another attitude towards the printing of plays was taken by Thomas Heywood. In addition to being an actor in the Lord Admiral's playing company, Heywood also had the ability to write play after play. Indeed, in the preface to *The English Traveller* (1633), Heywood states that the play is "amongst two hundred and twenty, in which I have had either an entire hand, or at least a maine finger [in]."[95] Of the two hundred and twenty works that Heywood mentions that he wrote or co-wrote, only twenty-three survive. The small percentage of remaining texts highlights the nature of his works. Heywood mainly wrote for acting companies and, "although nearly forty percent of known plays produced between 1575 and 1642 were published, no more than ten percent of the plays written for companies, ever made it to the press."[96] This output of texts establishes Heywood as a prolific writer and collaborator of stage plays at this time, but there is evidence to support the view that initially Heywood was reluctant to publish his plays. For example, in *The English Traveller* Heywood explains that his play could have passed as a "bastard without a Father to acknowledge it"[97] and that the play came "accidentally to the press" in order to reaffirm his position as author.

---

[95] Thomas Heywood, *The English Traueller*, (1633), A3.
[96] Douglas A. Brooks, *From Playhouse to Printing House*, (Cambridge, 2000), p.194.
[97] Thomas Heywood, *The English Traueller*, (1633), A3.

During his career as a playwright, Heywood's attitude to the printing press varied. An important reason which fuelled the shift from stage to page was to establish his authorial control over a text. This is reminiscent of Jonson's motivation for having his works printed. Near the end of his career Heywood emerged as a supporter of printed plays and encourages his readers to "reade freely, and censure favourably."[98] Heywood was however, unenthusiastic about publishing his works in volume form but mentioned in *The Iron Age (Part 2)*, that he would be reprinting his works collectively. The play collection never appeared in print form but highlights how important the printing of volumes was to playwrights at the time.

> The play collection represents a decisive innovation in the publishing of plays, one that incorporated the printed play—an ephemeral text, and the record of an even more ephemeral performance—into high culture by presenting it according to the material, typographical conventions of serious literature.[99]

Certainly, in the examples of Shakespeare's and Jonson's folios, they exude the notion of sole authorship and perfection which in turn elevate their position as published playwrights. Heywood honestly stated that it, "neuer was any great ambition in me, to bee in this kind Volumniously read"[100] thus asserting his reluctance in having his plays printed for the literary world but highlights that he was a popular, published playwright.

---

[98] Thomas Heywood, *The Iron Age, (Part 2).*
[99] Benedict Scott Robinson, 'Thomas Heywood and the Cultural Politics of Play Collections', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*,vol. 43, no. 3, (2002), pp. 361-380.
[100] Thomas Heywood, *The English Traueller,* (1633), A3r.

Popularity is not always positive

A Game at Chess by Thomas Middleton (1624) is hailed to be the most successful play of the early modern era. It was performed at the *Globe Theatre* and unlike other plays of the time, which were generally performed for one day, ran for nine days to packed audiences of "all sorts of people old and young, rich and poor, masters and servants, papists and puritans…"[101]. *A Game at Chess* highlights the popularity and appeal of stage plays and is also of interest because six manuscripts survive from 1624. In addition to its large audiences and long run, the play is also notable regarding print culture as it was "the first single play to be printed with engraved title plates."[102] This allowed elaborate illustrations to be printed and was used frequently in the printing of books after *A Game at Chess.*

The political content of the play created a lot of debate and discussion, and embroiled the acting company, the King's Men, in a debate with the King and the Privy Council.[103] The play is a commentary on the "recent relations between England and Spain, about the Counter-Reformation ambitions of the Catholic church, and about the supposed involvement of Spain in the machinations of the most zealous of Catholic orders, the Jesuits."[104] The

---

[101] Margot Heinemann, *Puritanism and Theatre: Thomas Middleton and Opposition Drama under the Early Stuarts*, (Cambridge, 1980), p. 151.
[102]Gary Taylor, 'Middleton, Thomas (*bap.* 1580, *d.* 1627)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, Sept 2004) online edn., May 2006 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18682, accessed 25 May 2006]
[103] Richard Dutton, 'Thomas Middleton's A Game at Chess: a case study', in eds. Jane Milling and Peter Thomson *The Cambridge History of British Theatre Vol.1*, (Cambridge, 2004), p. 427.
[104] Ibid. p. 426.

majority of the audience consisted of "merchants, shopkeepers, seamen and apprentices of London, who in general were strongly anti-Spanish and anti-Catholic."[105] The play's content was deemed appropriate by the Master of Revels, Sir Henry Herbert, before the performance but once on stage, King James (who took offence to the play's content) ordered the Privy Council to take action. In addition to getting the embroiling the King's Men in scandal, *A Game at Chess* also prompted Middleton to go into hiding and it was claimed he was imprisoned for his work[106]. Despite the negative outcome of the staging of *A Game at Chess*, it must be stressed that Middleton's play highlights the dedication of playwrights and playing companies to making a show a success and as current as possible. There has been a suggestion that, "during the weeks while the players waited their opportunity to put it [*A Game at Chess*] on it was apparently rewritten to make it still more topical."[107] The number of manuscripts that survive is also a testament to the popularity of the play as its print run would have been short due to the restrictions that were put in place. Much like the play *Isle of Dogs,* theatre was being used as an arena to discuss controversial current events and this led to their prohibition.

---

[105] Margot Heinemann, *Puritanism and Theatre: Thomas Middleton and Opposition Drama under the Early Stuarts*, (Cambridge, 1980), p.152.
[106] Richard Dutton, 'Thomas Middleton's A Game at Chess: a case study', in eds. Jane Milling and Peter Thomson *The Cambridge History of British Theatre Vol.1*, (Cambridge, 2004), p. 428.
[107] Margot Heinemann, *Puritanism and Theatre: Thomas Middleton and Opposition Drama under the Early Stuarts*, (Cambridge, 1980), p. 159.

Chapter 5

Theatre's Downfall – the Influence of Puritans and the Law

One of the most influential events in early modern English theatre was the rise of the anti-theatrical movement. The success of the theatre in the Elizabethan age, witnessed through the building of permanent structures, crown and noble patronage, introduction of secular themes and the increased use of the printing press were all fraught with various threats which jeopardized the continuing popularity of the theatre. For years people objected to the unlawful behavior surrounding the theatre. Several disturbances took place during performances and objections were constantly made about plays being performed on Sundays. Concerns were also made about the number of strolling players who went from town to town providing entertainment. It was believed by the government that this kind of activity encouraged rebellious behavior. In addition, these strolling players were seen to be the group that could be easily blamed for the spread of plague from town to town.[108]

In 1580 there were requests to city magistrates for the expulsion of actors and the destruction of playhouses. The argument posed was that theatre was sacrilegious and in order to appease her followers Elizabeth allowed the suppression of playhouses in central London. After Elizabeth's death, licensing and censorship of plays became the duty of the crown (previously it lay in the

[108] Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London,* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 10.

hands of the nobles) and actors were seen to be supporters of the crown. The degree of protection offered to the profession by royal licensing explains the rise in political and religious commentary featured in plays in the seventeenth century. However, the "apparatus of state censorship and the occasional imprisonment of dramatists and actors for sedition indicate how state power could be brought to bear on theatrical products and the producers of them."[109] With an increasing number of references to the Puritans and their beliefs, plays began to hit the nerves of many, "Under King Charles, most critics agree, it becomes more appropriate to speak of an 'oppositional' drama, and theatre becomes an increasingly important forum for the representation of controversial issues."[110] There is no doubt that due to the increasing political content of plays that some people would be offended. However, finding common ground between an acting troupe's artistic independence and the political motives of their patrons was difficult and in order to receive funding, actors and playwrights would go along with the views of their sponsors.

The supporters of the anti-theatrical movement embraced the popularity of the printing press to more easily disseminate their views on stage-plays and other entertainments. Pamphlets and petitions were issued to educate society on the wickedness and lavishness of the theatre.[111] The actions of the anti-theatrical movement must have angered the theatre industry who was trying to

---

[109] Jean Howard, *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England*, (London, 1994), p. 14.
[110] Janette Dillon, 'Theatre and Controversy' in eds. Jane Milling and Peter Thomson, *The Cambridge History of British Theatre, Vol. I*, (Cambridge, 2004), p. 377.
[111] Julia Briggs, *This Stage Play World*, (Oxford, 1983), p. 66.

utilize the printing press for their own promotions (playbills, playbooks). The differing motives for using printed materials created tension between the two groups. Church leaders preached regularly against the theatre. Thomas Beard, who later became Oliver Cromwell's tutor, describes the death of playwright Christopher Marlowe as a "manifest sign of God's judgment."[112] By stating that God had a plan in place for playwrights and those involved in the theatre, Beard is publicly voicing his opposition to the theatre. Complaints were also voiced regarding the spread of the plague in the playhouse and this was again brought up after 1630 when outbreaks were rife. The religious beliefs of the Puritans, affected every aspect of English life. Their attempt to "purify" the Protestant church, led them to criticize many of the behaviors that were taking place in everyday life. One of the most prominent and vocal Puritans was William Prynne.

William Prynne, a lawyer and Puritan, released his argument against stage plays in 1633, other non-religious spectacles and the use of cross dressing on the stage. At over a thousand pages, *Histrio-Mastix*, is a verbose document which highlights Prynne's view of the theatre. In addition to his anti-theatrical venting, Prynne also commented on the antics of King Charles and his wife, Henrietta Maria, who was known to dance in court masques. In his attack on stage plays Prynne writes,

> Stage plays are thus odious, unseemly, pernicious and unlawful unto Christians in the precedent respects… we shall discover them, to be either scurrilous, amorous, and obscene; or barbarous, bloody and tyrannical; or heathenish and profane or fabulous and fictitious, or

[112] Julia Briggs, *This Stage Play World,* (Oxford, 1983), p. 77.

> impious and blasphemous; or satirical and invective; or at the best frothy, vain and frivolous… [so] The plays themselves must needs be evil, unseemly, and unlawful unto Christians[113].

Although Prynne's *Histrio-Mastix* is an excellent example of the anti-theatrical movement in print, it did not further Prynne's cause as he was imprisoned and had his ears cut off. This highlights how strictly an attack on the monarchy was punished. Prynne's book gives great insight to the puritanical feelings that were rife at this time in history. The controversy that the book aroused is surprising as the book had been licensed by one of the King's licensers who had "disproved only one page, which was then reprinted"[114]. The cost of the printing of *Histrio-Masrix* was over three hundred pounds and did not sell well. The book's entry in the Stationers Company record has been crossed out and a note reads, "crost out by order of Court the first December 1634"[115]. Although Prynne's *Histrio-Mastix* did not reach as many people as he had intended his work highlights the imminent downfall of the theatre in early modern England.

The Turning Point of 1642

It was not until 1642 that Puritan demands on Parliament came to fruition with the "1642 Ordinance of the Lords and Commons concerning Stage-plays". However, it can be argued that the circumstances surrounding the

---

[113] William Prynne *Histrio Mastix, (1633)* Norton Anthology of English Literature Online
[114] Leo Kirschbaum, *Shakespeare and the Stationers*, (Columbus, 1955), p. 54.
[115] Ibid. p. 54.

issuance of this order were not purely related to Puritanism but "in fact, with the notable exception of William Prynne, neither English Calvinism nor Puritanism had much to do with principled antitheatricalism before 1643."[116]

> Ordinance of the Lords and Commons concerning Stage-plays.[117]
>
> Whereas the distressed estate of Ireland, steeped in her own blood, and the distracted estate of England, threatened with a cloud of blood by a civil war, call for all possible means to appease and avert the wrath of God appearing in these judgments: amongst which fasting and prayer, having been often tried to be very effectual, have been lately and are still enjoined: and whereas public sports do not agree with public calamities, nor public stage-plays with seasons of humiliation, this being an exercise of sad a pious solemnity, and with the other being spectacles of pleasure, too commonly expressing lascivious mirth and levity: it is therefore thought fit by the Lords and Commons in this Parliament assembled, that while these sad causes and set-times of humiliation do continue, public stage-plays shall cease and be forborne. Instead of which are recommended to the people of this land the profitable and seasonable considerations of repentance, reconciliation and peace with God, which probably will produce outward peace and prosperity, and bring again times of joy and gladness to the nations.

Companies found ways around this ordinance and plays were still performed, mainly in taverns and private houses but there was always the threat of military raids. However, there is no record of the publication of any

---

[116] Christopher Hodgkins, 'Plays out of Season: Puritanism, Antitheatricalism, and Parliament's 1642 Closing of the Theatres' in *Centered on the Word* eds. Daniel W. Doerksen and Christopher Hodgkins, (Newark, 2004), p. 299.
[117] Ibid. p. 299.

significant work by a playwright during 1642, highlighting the effect that the ordinance had on the link between the theatre and the publishing industry. There is however, evidence to show that "penny pamphlets" were written and this gave playwrights a meager income after the ordinance was issued.[118]

The reasons for this ordinance being imposed are purely political and, "The decision to suppress performances there too may have been aimed not only at players and dramatists – most of them Royalist, though not all – but also at the danger of a new popular theatre emerging, appealing to the political and religious radicalism of the lower orders."[119]

The ordinance of 1642 was not warmly received by actors and acting companies. In 1643, "The Actors Remonstrance or Complaint: for the silencing of their profession, and banishment from their severall Play houses," was published in response to the previous order. This document highlights the inequalities brought about by the ordinance, namely that only prestigious playhouses were disbanded and that other gatherings which promote anti-social behavior (bear baiting for instance) were allowed to continue unchecked. The actors also promised to reform some of their practices to appease those in power

[118] Janet Clare, 'Theatre and Commonwealth', in eds. Jane Milling and Peter Thomson, *The Cambridge History of British Theatre Vol.1*, (Cambridge, 2004), p. 464.
[119] Margot Heinemann, *Puritanism and Theatre: Thomas Middleton and Opposition Drama under the Early Stuarts*, (Cambridge, 1980), p. 236.

and get their play houses reinstated. The ideas they proposed included not allowing unaccompanied women and "those unwholesome"[120] into the theatre.

This ordinance was followed up in 1647 by a stricter order which gave permission for the suppression of "stage plays, interludes and common plays and commit the actors to the gaol, to be tried at the next sessions"[121] The extent to which Parliament was curbing the acting world is mirrored in the dearth of printed plays and highlights the effect that the political climate had on print culture and the theatre at this time.

Socially, the plague was another contributing factor to the fall in popularity of theatre. The government and London city officials had to act when the threat of plague was present. By closing down theatre buildings and other places of entertainment they hoped to curb the spread of the disease, but despite their best attempts the plague gripped London in several outbreaks. The fact that theatres were specifically targeted as likely sites for the passing of plague indicates the popularity of stage-plays. Unfortunately, during the outbreaks the output of playing companies was significantly less, and while it was not the main reason for the reduction in popularity, the volatility of the theatre and its audience is apparent. Through financial documentation and James Burbage's obvious greed it can be surmised that profit had become the main incentive to the company owners and they in turn invested in plays which provided the

[120] Actors Remonstrance 1643
[121] House of Lords: Journal Office: Main Papers 1509-1700, ref. HL/PO/JO/10/1/242 16 Oct 1647

greatest income. The relationship between financial motivation and popularity is a key factor in charting the rise of Elizabethan theatre, and not surprisingly when profit records detail a fall in takings the theatres' popularity had diminished due to the aforementioned extraneous factors.

Between 1642 and the 1660 (when Charles II was restored to the throne) there is little to suggest that the London theatre world was a profitable business. This dearth in performances, playing companies and printed plays is a result of the parliamentary acts and the political events occurring in England. The correlation of important national events to the demise of the theatre's output in this short period is significant, as it highlights how the theatre world mirrors society.

Conclusion

The ban on theatre in 1642 was the most alarming and comprehensive attack on the performing industry. However, throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the establishment of a capitalistic theatre world became an important part of everyday life. The audiences that were reached by traveling playing companies or who frequented one of the many new theatres were exposed to poetry, singing, dancing and current affairs. The accessibility of this new form of entertainment was made possible through the support of nobles and the monarchy, an important factor when the politics of the state were becoming more involved with the common people. Combined with the increasingly popular printing press, published plays and folios emerged as a secondary form of the entertainment and drama evolved into its own literary genre under the reign of Elizabeth. All of these factors contributed to the heightened popularity of the industry but were sporadically marred by laws and ordinances to protect the public and the rise of Puritanism.

The popularity that the theatre gained throughout this period was monumental in ensuring that despite the anti-theatrical movement, the industry would once again revive. By being able to analyze the moments of theatrical glory and contrast them with the problems that stemmed from social or political issues, it is clear that the theatre industry, like most emerging genres, had to struggle to assert its place in society. However, the emergence of playwrights, actors and theatre entrepreneurs that are still admired today stands testament to

the notion that under Elizabeth's reign, culture and the arts were of great importance.

Bibliography

Actors Remonstrance Pub. Edward Nickson 1643. <www.eebo.chadwyck.com>

Astington, John H. English Court Theatre 1558-1642, Cambridge: University Press, 1999.

Berry, Herbert. 'Vennar , Richard (*bap.* 1564, *d.* 1615)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28190, accessed 11 Feb. 2007]

Briggs, Julia. This Stage-Play World. Oxford: University Press, 1983

Brooks, Douglas A. From Playhouse to Printing House. Cambridge: University Press, 2000

Bruster, Douglas. Birth of an Industry: The Cambridge History of English Theatre Vol 1. eds. Jane Milling and Peter Thomson. Cambridge: University Press, 2004

Chartier, Roger. Lecture: Publishing Drama in Early Modern Europe, British Library, (1998)

Clare, Janet. "Theatre and Commonwealth." The Cambridge History of British Theatre Vol.1 Ed. Jane Milling and Peter Thomson. Cambridge: University Press, 2004

Dillon, Janette. "Theatre and Controversy, 1603-1642" The Cambridge History of British Theatre Vol.1 eds. Jane Milling and Peter Thomson. Cambridge: University Press, 2004

Drayton, Michael. Ideas, Sonnet 42, c.1600.

Dutton, Richard. "Thomas Middleton's A Game at Chess: a case study", The Cambridge History of British Theatre Vol.1 Ed. Jane Milling and Peter Thomson. Cambridge: University Press, 2004

Gurr, Andrew. Playgoing in Shakespeare's London. Cambridge: University Press, 2004

Harwood, Ronald, All The World's A Stage Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1984

Heinemann, Margot Puritanism and Theatre: Thomas Middleton and Opposition Drama under the Early Stuarts Cambridge: University Press, 1980

Heywood, Thomas, The English Traueller, 1633, <www.eebo.chadwyck.com>

Heywood, Thomas. The Iron Age (Part 2), 1633, <www.eebo.chadwyck.com>

House of Lords: Journal Office: Main Papers 1509-1700, ref. HL/PO/JO/10/1/242 London 16 Oct 1647

Hodgkins, Christopher. "Plays out of Season: Puritanism, Antitheatricalism, and Parliament's 1642 Closing of the Theatres", Centered on the Word: Literature, Scripture and the Tudor-Stuart Middle Way eds. Christopher Hodgkins and Daniel Doerksen, Newark: University of Delaware, 2004

Howard, Jean E. The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England New York: Routledge, 1994

Jonson, Ben. The Workes (1616) <www.eebo.chadwyck.com>

Kastan, David Scott. Shakespeare and the Book. Cambridge: University Press, 2001

Kastan, David Scott Committing Shakespeare to Print (2001) <http://www.fathom.com/course/21701737>

Kirschbaum, Leo. Shakespeare and the Stationers Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1955

Mann, David. The Elizabethan Player: Contemporary Stage Representations New York: Routledge, 1991

Milling, Jane. "The Development of a professional theatre, 1540-1660", The Cambridge History of British Theatre Vol.1 eds. Jane Milling and Peter Thomson. Cambridge: University Press, 2004

Platter, Thomas. Thomas Platter's Travels in England 1599, trans. Clare Williams, London: Jonathan Cape, 1937

Prynne,William. "Histrio-Mastix", *(1633)* Norton Anthology of English Literature Online <www.wwnorton.com/nto>

Robinson, Benedict Scott. "Thomas Heywood and the Cultural Politics of Play Collections," Studies in English Literature 1500-1900 (Spring, 2002)

Saquet, Labeebee. The Evolution of the Theatre New York: Carlton Press, 1968

Taylor, Gary, 'Middleton, Thomas (*bap.* 1580, *d.* 1627)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, 25 May 2006 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18682>

Underhill, Ruth. Stage and State: The Censorship of Richard II <www.engl.uvic.ca/Faculty/MBHomePage/ISShakespeare/Resources/Essex>

Appendix A - Map of Shakespeare's London

www.williamshakespeare.info