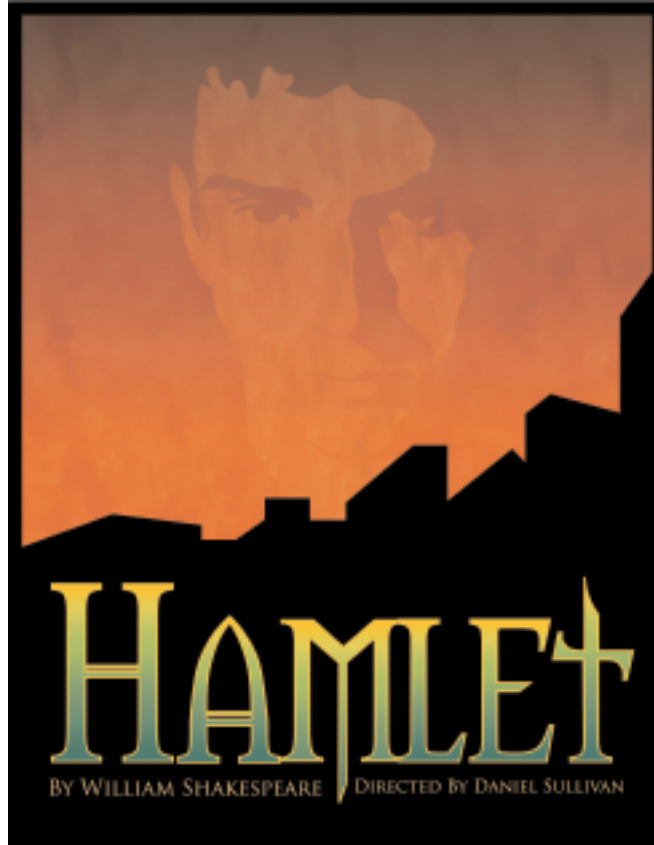




SOUTH COAST REPERTORY
presents



by William Shakespeare
directed by Daniel Sullivan

SEGERSTROM STAGE
May 25 - July 1, 2007

PLAYGOER'S GUIDE

Prepared by Linda Sullivan Baity Ph.D., Literary and Education Associate
John Glore and Dakin Matthews, Production Dramaturgs
Barbara Van Holt, Education Consultant

Dr. S.L. and Mrs. Betty Eu Huang/Huang Family Foundation
Deutsche Bank Private Wealth Management
Honorary Producers

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PART I: THE PLAY

OUT OF THE DARK AGES

BY JOHN GLORE

Unless you're well-schooled in Shakespeare's work, you may not be aware that the story of Hamlet has roots in history and legend dating back to the seventh century A.D.

The probable direct source for Shakespeare's tragedy was an earlier play from the 1580s, now referred to by scholars as the *Ur-Hamlet* (*ur* being a German prefix meaning proto- or original). Written accounts from the late sixteenth century refer to productions of this earlier play, but we know very little about it: no copy of the text has survived and even its authorship is unknown. Some scholars have suggested it was an earlier version written by Shakespeare himself. Whoever wrote the play in all likelihood found its source material in François de Belleforest's 1570 book, *Histoires tragiques*, which was in turn a translation and adaptation of a 15th-century Italian work.

But one of the earliest surviving versions of the story of Hamlet comes from a 12th-century work of Danish history by Saxo Grammaticus, which includes the saga of Amleth, son of Horwendil. As related by Saxo, Horwendil was governor of the Danish territory of Jutland during the seventh century. Upon returning from a Viking expedition during which he had slain the king of Norway, Horwendil married Gerutha, the daughter of the King of Denmark, who bore him a son, Amleth. Years later, Horwendil's jealous brother, Fengo, murdered Horwendil and convinced Gerutha to marry him, arguing that he had saved her from a husband who hated her.

Amleth, fearing for his own life, pretended to be feeble-minded, but Fengo was suspicious and enlisted a beautiful woman to ensnare Amleth and expose his pretense. Instead the woman, a childhood companion of Amleth's, helped him to escape his uncle's trap. Not to be deterred, Fengo arranged for an advisor to hide in

Gerutha's chambers and eavesdrop on a conversation between Amleth and his mother. Amleth discovered the spy and killed him. He berated his mother for her incestuous marriage to his father's murderer, and convinced her to repent.

Fengo, his suspicions sharpened by the murder of his accomplice, dispatched Amleth to England with two escorts who carried a letter enjoining the king to execute Amleth. But Amleth substituted his own letter calling for the death of the escorts, and made his way back to Denmark. He confronted Fengo with his intention to avenge his father, and then killed the usurper with his own sword. Amleth justified the killing in an oration to the people, who greeted him as their rightful ruler.

Amleth lived on to undertake a series of heroic exploits before finally being slain in battle. One of his two wives repeated Gerutha's transgression by agreeing to marry Amleth's killer.

There's no way to know how much of Saxo's account has a basis in historical fact and how much stems from oft-embellished legend. But it's useful to remember that the troubled protagonist of Shakespeare's tragedy derives from a medieval saga of murderous Vikings and feudal warlords. Amleth's world was very much of the Dark Ages: it had long since lost touch with the civilized values of antiquity and was many centuries distant from the renaissance of high culture that would characterize Shakespeare's own time.



SETTING AND PERIOD

The play takes place in and around the castle of Elsinore in eastern Denmark in pre-Viking times. Some scholars locate the story during the time of King Canute (1014-1035).

CHARACTERS

CLAUDIUS, King of Denmark, murderer and successor of Hamlet's father and husband of his victim's widow, Gertrude

HAMLET, Prince of Denmark, son of the late king, and nephew of the present king.

POLONIUS, King's minister and father of Ophelia and Laertes

HORATIO, Hamlet's friend and confidant
LAERTES, son of Polonius who seeks vengeance against Hamlet for his father's murder
VOLTEMAND and **CORNELIUS**, Ambassadors to the King of Norway from the King of Denmark
ROSENCRANTZ and **GUILDENSTERN**, courtiers who aid the King of Denmark in his plot against Hamlet
OSRIC, foppish nobleman in the court of King Claudius
A PRIEST, officiating clergyman at Ophelia's funeral
MARCELLUS and **BARNARDO**, sentries who have seen the ghost of Hamlet's father before the play opens
FRANCISCO, sentry on the walls of the castle at Elsinore
REYNALDO, servant who is sent by Polonius to spy on his son, Laertes
PLAYERS, including Player King, Player Queen, Player Lucianus, actors in "The Murder of Gonzago," a scenario closely resembling the actual murder of Hamlet's father by King Claudius
TWO CLOWNS, digger of Ophelia's grave and his companion
FORTINBRAS, hot-blooded young Prince of Norway bent on avenging his own father's death
NORWEGIAN CAPTAIN in Fortinbras's army
ENGLISH AMBASSADORS
QUEEN GERTRUDE, Hamlet's mother who married the brother of her late husband, the King of Denmark.
OPHELIA, Polonius's demure daughter and beloved of Hamlet
GHOST of Hamlet's father
 Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Sailors, Messengers, Attendants

A VERY BRIEF SYNOPSIS

Prince Hamlet returns home from school after learning that his father is dead. When he arrives at Elsinore Castle, he discovers that his uncle Claudius has married his mother Gertrude and is now King of Denmark. His best friend, Horatio, shows him a ghost who looks like his father. The Ghost tells Hamlet that he was murdered by Claudius and instructs him to seek revenge. Hamlet decides to pretend to be mad until he can figure out what to do. While feigning madness, he inadvertently kills Polonius, father of his sweetheart, Ophelia. When Claudius orders Hamlet's arrest, Hamlet leaves the country and narrowly avoids an attempt on his own life. Hamlet returns to Denmark, where the death of her father has rendered Ophelia mad, leading to her suicide by drowning. Claudius hatches a counterplot with Ophelia's brother, Laertes, to have Hamlet poisoned in a rigged fencing match. Eight characters are dead by the end of the play, including Hamlet, who manages to take his revenge against Claudius with the same sword that has sealed his own fate.

LANGUAGE

Shakespeare wrote most of his plays in blank verse, which is unrhymed iambic pentameter. (Note: his sonnets were also written in iambic pentameter, but the lines had a rhyming scheme.) To understand iambic pentameter, you first need to understand the term "iamb." An iamb is a unit of rhythm consisting of an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. The words "annoy," "fulfill," "pretend," "regard," and "serene" are all iambs because the first syllable of each word is unstressed (or unaccented) and the second syllable is stressed (or accented). Iambs can also consist of one word with a single unstressed (unaccented) syllable followed by another word with a single stressed (accented) syllable. In addition, they may consist of a final unstressed syllable of one word followed by an initial stressed syllable of the next word.

The following lines from Act I, Scene ii of *Hamlet* demonstrate the use of iambs. The stressed words or syllables are underlined:

O, that this too too solid flesh would melt
 Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!
 Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
 His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! Oh God! God!
 How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable,
 Seem to me all the uses of this world!

When a line has five iambs, it is in iambic pentameter. The prefix "pent" means "five." The suffix "meter" refers to the recurrence of a rhythmic unit (also called a "foot"). Thus, because the above lines contain iambs, they are "iambic." Because they contain five iambs (five feet) they are said to be in "iambic pentameter." Finally, because the words at the end of each line don't rhyme, the lines are said to be in "unrhymed iambic pentameter."

Blank verse was modeled after ancient Greek and Latin verse. It was first used in 1514 in Renaissance Italy by Francesco Maria Molza. In 1539, Italian Giovanni Rucellai was the first poet to label the unrhymed iambic pentameter in his poetry as blank verse (*versi sciolti* in Italian). Henry Howard, the Earl of Surrey, first used blank verse in English in his translation of Virgil's epic Latin poem, *The Aeneid*. The first English drama in blank verse was *Gorboduc*, or *Ferrex and Porrex*, by Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton, staged in 1561. Later in the same century, Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare turned blank verse into high art when they used it in their plays.

From "Blank Verse" by Michael Cummings
<http://sites.microlink.net/zekscrab/facts.html#Blank%20Verse>
 Iambic Pentameter Lesson Plan
<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/content/3755/>

CRITICS ON HAMLET

Hamlet is part of Shakespeare's revenge upon revenge tragedy, and is of no genre. Of all poems, it is the most unlimited. As a meditation upon human fragility in confrontation with death, it competes only with the world's scriptures. [...] *The Tragical Historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke* stands apart among Shakespeare's thirty-eight plays, quite aside from its universal fame. Its length and variety are matched by its experimentalism. After four centuries, *Hamlet* remains our world's most advanced drama, imitated but scarcely transcended by Ibsen, Chekhov, Pirandello, and Beckett. You cannot get beyond *Hamlet*, which establishes the limits of theatricality, just as Hamlet himself is a frontier of consciousness yet to be passed. I think it wise to confront both the play and the prince with awe and wonder, because they know more than we do.

Hamlet: Poem Unlimited by Harold Bloom



Hamlet is like a sponge. Unless it is produced in a stylized or antiquarian fashion, it immediately absorbs all the problems of our time.

Shakespeare Our Contemporary by Jan Kott



Hamlet's world is pre-eminently in the interrogative mood. It reverberates with questions, anguished, meditative, alarmed. There are questions that in this play, to an extent I think unparalleled in any other, mark the phases and even the nuances of the action, helping to establish its peculiar baffled tone. There are other questions whose interrogations, innocent at first glance, are subsequently seen to have reached beyond their contexts and to point towards some pervasive inscrutability in Hamlet's world as a whole. Such is that tense series of challenges with which the tragedy begins: ... "Who's there?" ... "Who is there?" ... "What art thou ...?" And then there are the famous questions. In them the interrogations seem to point not only beyond the context but beyond the play, out of Hamlet's predicaments into everyone's: "What a piece of work is a man! ... And yet to me what is this quintessence of dust?" "To be or not to be, that is the question." "Get thee to a nunnery. Why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners?" "I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven?" [...] Further, Hamlet's world is a world of riddles. The hero's own language is often riddling, as the critics have pointed out. [...] Even his madness itself is riddling: How much is

real? How much is feigned? What does it mean? Sane or mad, Hamlet's mind plays restlessly about his world, turning up one riddle upon another. [...] Thus the mysteriousness of Hamlet's world is of a piece. It is not simply a matter of missing motivations, to be expunged if only we could find the perfect clue. It is built in. It is evidently an important part of what the play wishes to say to us.

"The World of Hamlet" by Maynard Mack



Of the leading Renaissance English playwrights, it is only Shakespeare who fully participates in the popular vogue for presenting ghosts onstage. Indeed, "participates" is an inadequate term: Shakespeare's celebrated ghost scenes — easily the greatest in all of English drama — are signs of a deep interest that continues through virtually his entire career. He saw that he could draw upon a range of traditions, including not only the classical Hades and the popular Hell but also the banished realm of Catholic Purgatory. He saw, too, that uncertainty — including perhaps his own uncertainty — about the very possibility of ghosts was itself valuable theatrical capital. More than anyone of his age, Shakespeare grasped that there were powerful links between his art and the haunting of spirits. [...] The richest and most complex exploitation of the theatrical capital Shakespeare found in ghosts is in *Hamlet*. [...] With the doctrine of Purgatory and the elaborate practices that grew up around it, the church had provided a powerful method of negotiating with the dead, or, rather, with those who were at once dead and yet, since they could still speak, appeal, and appall, not completely dead. The Protestant attack on the "middle state of souls" and the middle place those souls inhabited destroyed this method for most people in England, but it did not destroy the longings and fears that Catholic doctrine had focused and exploited. Instead [...] the space of Purgatory becomes the space of the stage where old Hamlet's Ghost is doomed for a certain term to walk the night.

Hamlet in Purgatory by Stephen Greenblatt



The essential subject of *Hamlet*, suggested by and focused in the old story of a son's revenge, is, then, as I see it, the intermingling of good and evil in all life. The world to which the hero's human destiny commits him is one in which Hyperion [the sun god, identified with Hamlet's father] and the satyr [half-human, half beast, identified with Claudius] are brothers, sprung from the same stock, which also lives in him. Seeing the satyr apparently triumphant, he is possessed by a sense of the all too fertile viciousness of life in which his own life shares. It is a life in which he must yet be reluctant to participate. He longs for death, refuses marriage and procreation, his nature resistant to what nature wills. This, I think, is the fundamental conflict the play exhibits in Hamlet; and it is

a conflict which accords with his neglect to perform his destined task. [...]

In the last act, however, there comes a change. We find Hamlet in the churchyard meditating on death. But death is not now something to be longed for as a release from the ills of the flesh, nor something to be shunned from the dread of what comes after. ... For he now perceives in the universe, embracing all its apparent good and evil, a supreme if mysterious design.

Introduction to the Arden edition of *Hamlet* by
Harold Jenkins

HAMLET ON TRIAL

Dateline: Washington, DC, March 9, 2007

With just days to go before the trial, the opposing counsels were already squaring off.

“We have an incredibly strong case,” said Miles Ehrlich, the prosecutor. “It is hard to find anyone in history who had a better proven appreciation for the nature of his actions.”

The defense lawyer, Abbe D. Lowell, was equally confident. “The cry for justice, as sincere as it is, should not have us try those with mental illness as serious criminals,” he said. “There are an abundance of demonstrations of the actuality and sincerity of my client’s mental disorder.”

The defendant, who has — for centuries — declined to comment, is none other than Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, possessed avenger of his father’s death, murderer of Polonius.

The prince’s criminal responsibility — whether he was sane at the time of that killing — is the central question of “The Trial of Hamlet,” to be heard here on Thursday at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The mock trial is a Washington wonk’s dream, stacked with Shakespeare-loving luminaries. Justice Anthony M. Kennedy of the United States Supreme Court, an enthusiastic Shakespeare aficionado who conceived of the idea, will preside over the trial.

“What you realize is that you know Hamlet better than you know some real people, because he tells you exactly what he is thinking,” said Justice Kennedy in a telephone interview. “The trial provides a fascinating, oblique way in which to examine Hamlet, the legal process and the intellect of Shakespeare, who continues to speak to us in our own time.”

[...] Each side has one expert witness. The defense will

call on Dr. Jeffrey A. Lieberman, chairman of psychiatry at Columbia University’s medical school and director of the New York State Psychiatric Institute; the prosecution will counter with Dr. Alan A. Stone, a professor of law and psychiatry at Harvard.

The jury is made up of three high school students, three college students and a collection of local arts patrons. Hamlet, played by Joshua Drew, a local actor, will not testify and is expected to sit silently throughout the proceedings.

Justice Kennedy first created “The Trial of Hamlet” in 1994 as an event for fellow Shakespeare lovers; it was held in a conference room at the Supreme Court, and fellow Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg served as a juror. He has since taken the trial to groups in Boston and Chicago. Mr. Ehrlich, who was a clerk for Justice Kennedy in 1994, acted as bailiff in the first trial. Mr. Lowell defended Hamlet. And lost.

“When he asked me to try it again, given my previous incompetence, I felt compelled to accept,” Mr. Lowell said. “This time I have spent hours and hours on the text and the case, at least 20 hours so far. I will take what I know the prosecutors view as their strength and show it for weakness.”

From his office in Berkeley, Mr. Ehrlich (who said he had spent roughly 50 hours preparing his case) scoffed at Mr. Lowell’s pronouncements.

“I hear Lowell is trash-talking already,” he said. “My advice to him is read the play again. Hamlet had a habit of talking to himself. It is almost an insult to suggest that someone of his insight was so impaired by mental disease that he could not comprehend or control his actions.”

The play, of course, presents a major hurdle to the trial’s credibility. Hamlet, after all, dies — along with nearly every other major character, except for Horatio. Justice Kennedy found a way around that little glitch. The program for the evening opens with a newspaper clipping from the fictitious *Elsinore Times*.

The article, written by the justice, explains that the citizens of Denmark are still reeling from the deaths of King Claudius, Queen Gertrude and Laertes, who were all stabbed or poisoned during a fencing contest. In a shocking development, it continues, “Prince Hamlet, who himself had appeared to succumb to some lethal dose, recovered consciousness,” allowing him to be charged in the earlier death of Polonius, counselor to King Claudius and father to Laertes and Ophelia.

There is no rehearsal for the trial, and no hint to what

the jury may decide. That is what keeps it interesting, those involved said.

“It is clear to me that Shakespeare meant for this to be a puzzle,” Justice Kennedy said. “Each time I hear this trial, I see something new in the play and gain new insight into the way the law of criminal responsibility works.”

Excerpted from “Was the Dane’s Madness Just Method? Jury to Decide” by Lynette Clemetson, *New York Times*, March 10, 2007

Online News Hour: Supreme Court Justice Puts Hamlet on Trial
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/entertainment/jan-june07/hamlet_03-29.html

Write Your Own Closing Arguments
<http://www.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/score/ham/hamsg5.html>

PART II: THE PLAYWRIGHT

BIOGRAPHY

William Shakespeare was born and educated at Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, the eldest son of a prosperous glover who had married into the local gentry. Little is known (though much is conjectured) about Shakespeare’s early life. In 1582 he married Anne Hathaway and possibly supported her and their children, Susanna (born 1583), and the twins Hamnet and Judith (born 1585), by working as a schoolmaster. At some unknown date, maybe in the late 1580s, Shakespeare moved to London. The erotic poems *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594), with dedications to Lord Southampton, were Shakespeare’s first published works, but he had already had several plays produced (the three parts of *Henry VI*, *Richard III*, and the *Plautine Comedy of Errors*). He was also probably writing sonnets, about which speculation has continued to rage since their

publication in 1609. From 1594 Shakespeare’s theatrical company was the Lord Chamberlain’s Men, for whom in the next five years he wrote the plays of his early maturity, among them *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *As You Like It*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and the history plays *Richard II*, *1* and *2*, *Henry IV*, and *Henry V*. In 1596 his father acquired a grant of arms and the following year Shakespeare purchased New Place at Stratford, both evidence of the family’s standing and prosperity.

The Globe Theatre at Bankside, south of the Thames in London, was opened in 1599, and for it Shakespeare wrote his seven great tragedies (*Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Coriolanus*). Apart from *Twelfth Night*, his comedies of the period 1599-1608 (*Measure for Measure*, *All’s Well that Ends Well*, and *Troilus and Cressida*) are more sombre and ambiguous than those of the 1590s. In 1608 Shakespeare’s company, known since 1603 as the King’s Men, took over the indoor Blackfriars Theatre, for which Shakespeare wrote the romantic comedies *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter’s Tale* and *The Tempest*; the last, probably written in 1611, is generally read as the playwright’s farewell to the stage. Shakespeare retired to Stratford, where he died. In 1623 his old friends and colleagues in the theatre, John Heminge and Henry Condell, published the first collected edition of Shakespeare’s works, known as the *First Folio*; it contained thirty-six plays, of which only nineteen had been printed during the playwright’s lifetime.

Encyclopaedia of the Renaissance
<http://www.xrefer.com/entry/253079>

Encyclopedia Britannica article
<http://www.britannica.com/shakespeare/macro/5009/50.html>

Shakespeare & Elizabethan England
www.webenglishteacher.com/shakesgen.html

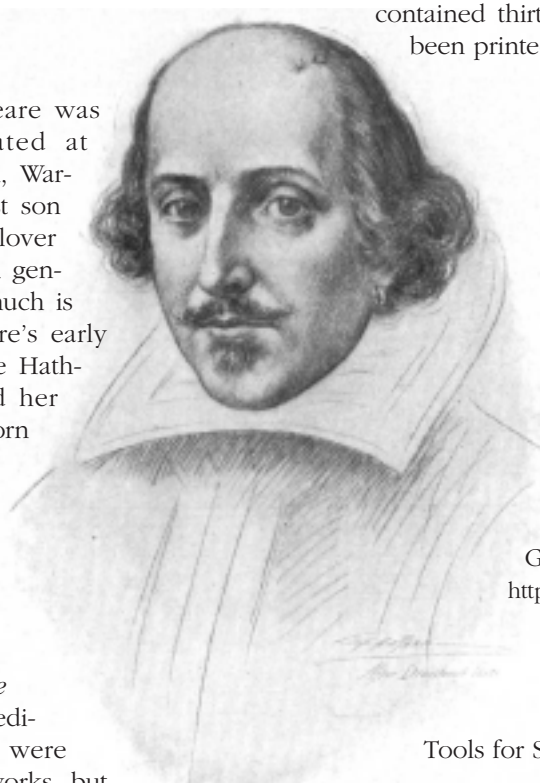
Shakespeare Birthplace Trust
<http://www.shakespeare.org.uk/>

Shakes Sphere: A Comprehensive Study Guide to the World of William Shakespeare
<http://sites.microlink.net/zekscrab/index.html#top>

Talking to Shakespeare
<http://www.talkingto.co.uk/ttws/index.asp>

Tools for Studying Shakespeare and Contemporaries
<http://fteague.myweb.uga.edu/wordcrun.html>

What Did Shakespeare Look Like?
<http://www.shakespeare.org.uk/main/1/16>



IS SHAKESPEARE DEAD? BY MARK TWAIN

How curious and interesting is the parallel — as far as poverty of biographical details is concerned — between Satan and Shakespeare. It is wonderful, it is unique, it stands alone, there is nothing resembling it in history, nothing resembling it in romance, nothing approaching it even in tradition. How sublime is their position, and how overtopping, how sky-reaching, how supreme — the two Great Unknowns, the two Illustrious Conjecturabilities! They are the best-known unknown persons that have ever drawn breath upon the planet. For the instruction of the ignorant I will make a list, now, of those details of Shakespeare's history which are FACTS — verified facts, established facts, undisputed facts."

Following his opening paragraph, Mark Twain delineates via a series of bullet points the known factual information about William Shakespeare, ending his essay with this summary:

- SO FAR AS ANYBODY ACTUALLY KNOWS AND CAN PROVE, Shakespeare of Stratford-on-Avon never wrote a play in his life.
- SO FAR AS ANY ONE KNOWS, HE RECEIVED ONLY ONE LETTER DURING HIS LIFE.
- So far as any one KNOWS AND CAN PROVE, Shakespeare of Stratford wrote only one poem during his life. This one is authentic. He did write that one — a fact which stands undisputed; he wrote the whole of it; he wrote the whole of it out of his own head. He commanded that this work of art be engraved upon his tomb, and he was obeyed. There it abides to this day. This is it:

Good friend for Iesus sake forbear
To digg the dust enclosed heare:
Blest be ye man yt spares thes stones
And curst be he yt moves my bones.

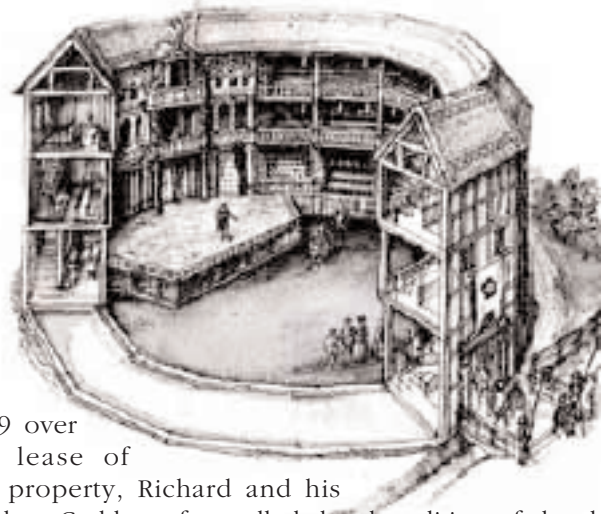
In the list as above set down will be found EVERY POSITIVELY KNOWN fact of Shakespeare's life, lean and meager as the invoice is. Beyond these details we know NOT A THING about him. All the rest of his vast history, as furnished by the biographers, is built up, course upon course, of guesses, inferences, theories, conjectures — an Eiffel Tower of artificialities rising sky-high from a very flat and very thin foundation of inconsequential facts."

Read the entire essay
<http://users.telarama.com/~joseph/shake.html>

SHAKESPEARE AND THE GLOBE

The Globe Theatre has come to be known as the most famous London playhouse in Elizabethan times largely through its close association with the plays of William Shakespeare. Though its exact site was disputed for centuries, we know that the Globe was situated on the south bank of the River Thames in the area known as Bankside, which was outside the jurisdiction of the City of London but easily accessible by bridge and by boat. Other well known playhouses such as the Rose and the Swan were also on Bankside, as well as the Bear Garden, an amphitheater for bull and bear baiting.

London's first professional playhouse, known as the Theatre, had been built in 1576 by the father of one of Shakespeare's fellow actors, Richard Burbage, near the northern gate to the city. When difficulties arose in



1599 over the lease of the property, Richard and his brother, Cuthbert, forestalled the demolition of the theatre by their landlord by pulling down the building and transporting all the materials to the south side of the Thames. The new theatre they built was called the Globe, with a portion of the construction cost being met by Shakespeare and other share holders.

The exact design and equipment of the Globe have been the subject of much speculation and considerable difference of opinion. But one fact is certain — the roof above the stage was thatched. It was the igniting of this roof during a performance of *Henry VIII* in 1613 that resulted in the Globe burning to the ground in less than an hour. The structure was rebuilt in 1614 and remained an integral feature of the London entertainment scene until it was demolished in 1644.

In 1997, London's new Globe Theatre opened its doors with a performance of Shakespeare's *Henry V*. Situated near the south bank of the Thames, the new Globe is near the site of the original Elizabethan Globe.

Great Buildings: The Globe Theatre
http://www.greatbuildings.com/buildings/Globe_Theater.html

Shakespeare and the Globe Theatre by Andrew Gurr
<http://www.britannica.com/shakespeare/esa/660005.html>

Shakespeare's Globe Online Reference Library
<http://www.shakespearesglobe.org/navigation/frameset.htm>

Shakespeare's Globe Research Data Base
<http://www.rdg.ac.uk/globe/home.htm>

by fire and war. Experts have devoted their energies to deciphering the mysteries of *Mad Meg*, but none has ever succeeded in thoroughly explaining the painting. Many focus on the symbolism of the large woman in the foreground, with her suit of armor, sword, cutlery and money-box. She has been variously interpreted as a symbol of heresy or violence, the personification of human evil, and an allegory of stability. Recently it has been proposed that she symbolizes madness, a vice taken in the 16th century to include insanity, rage, gluttony, lust, avarice and ambition, and that the giant figure in the center of the painting is an allegory of Folly. The additional scenes surrounding the two central figures illustrate the causes and repercussions of these two human failings.

PART III: THE PRODUCTION

CAST AND ARTISTIC COMPANY

Print the program at <http://www.scr.org/season/06-07season/programs/hamleteprog.pdf>

A FEAST FOR THE EYES

Scene Designer Ralph Funicello and Costume Designer Ilona Somogyi based their design concepts for SCR's production of *Hamlet* upon a classic Renaissance painting by Flemish artist Pieter Bruegel the Elder entitled *Dulle Griet*, or *Mad Meg*. Audiences will see a gigantic reproduction of *Mad Meg* comprising the entire back wall of the set. Generally considered the greatest Flemish painter of the 16th century, Bruegel painted highly detailed landscapes and scenes of peasant life that stress the absurd and vulgar and expose human follies. His unbridled imagination and use of fascinating colors show the clear influence of Hieronymus Bosch, although Bruegel's "demonological" work is intended as a recognition of the existence of evil in the world, as opposed to Bosch's moral sermonizing against depravity.

Bruegel's 1562 masterpiece *Mad Meg* depicts a rampaging female soldier charging the mouth of Hell, which is personified as a scaly, leviathan face mutating out of a hill, its toothy jaws crammed with sinners and the monstrous landscape around her consumed

Playwright Bertolt Brecht praised "the great war painting *Dulle Griet* ... The Fury defending her pathetic household goods with the sword. The world at the end of its tether." Brecht's *Mother Courage* presents his version of a modern-day *Mad Meg*, making her living in a world wrecked by war. *Dulle Griet* is also a character in Caryl Churchill's 1982 play *Top Girls*.

Dulle Griet hangs today in the Museum Mayer van den Bergh in Antwerp, Belgium.

Bruegel, Pieter the Elder from WebMuseum, Paris
www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/bruegel

Dulle Griet (Mad Meg) http://gallery.euroweb.hu/html/b/bruegel/pieter_e/painting/mad_meg.html

Mad Meg by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, 1561-62
museum.antwerpen.be/mayervandenbergh/collectie_2_eng.html

Pieter Brughel <http://breughel.8m.net>



PART IV: EDUCATION STATION

BEFORE THE PLAY

1. Imagine this: your teacher walks into the classroom one day holding tickets to a production of a Shakespeare play — not *Hamlet* but one you've never even heard of. What is your initial reaction? You know you're going to have to go, so think about the sorts of things you'll be thinking about as you sit in the theatre waiting for the lights to go down. Make a list of your concerns and feelings. Share your list with your classmates and see if others share your attitude. Save your list and see if you feel the same way after seeing the performance.
2. Make a list of character names, town names, emotions, basic plot devices, etc. from *Hamlet*. Put this list on the board and have students write a story or scene using a specified number of these pre-selected elements. Do not provide any extra information about the play. Students should use only the given elements. When students read their versions aloud, comment on how many possibilities an author has, i.e., tone, symbols, characters, etc. Save the pieces to discuss more fully after seeing the performance, comparing and contrasting their stories with Shakespeare's original.
3. One complaint that students have about Shakespeare is that his work has nothing to do with their real lives. *Hamlet* focuses on revenge, decay, appearance vs. reality, sanity vs. madness. Find a contemporary short story or poem that deals with one or more of these same themes. Read and work through this text with the students to illustrate the universality and timelessness of Shakespeare's themes and characters.
4. Choose any scene from *Hamlet* and imagine that you are the director. Your task is to add written stage directions to Shakespeare's text, which might include significant movements, pauses in the action, changes in tone, use of props, music, or special effects. The revised scene should be accompanied by a short rationale explaining your choices. As you watch the SCR performance, compare Daniel Sullivan's directorial decisions to those you made.
5. Ask two highly skilled student actors (and/or teachers) to prepare the first five minutes of Act III, Scene 4. Memorization and costumes — including a sword — are a must! Students from the class are then asked to

“direct” the actors playing Hamlet and Gertrude by explaining how they perceive the relationship between the two characters. The actors then perform the excerpt according to the way they've been “directed” by the English students, who will be surprised to see how many different ways there are to interpret this — or any — scene. (This exercise is most suitable for advanced level students.)

WRITING PROJECTS

1. “Frailty, thy name is woman.” Research the position of women in Elizabethan times — when a woman was Queen! — and develop a timeline showing the progress of women's suffrage since 1600. (Remember that women were not allowed to vote in California until 1911, so your timeline won't show much change during the 300+ years after the play was written.) Write a brief explanation as to why you think it took women so long to achieve even partial equality.
2. Corporate America has shocked us recently with its illegal (not to mention immoral) activities, and newspapers are full of reports about irresponsible behavior. Write about whether or not, in light of current events, we can rightly feel superior to the characters in *Hamlet*.
3. Lawrence Kohlberg's research suggests that there are 6 Stages of Moral Development. Explain Kohlberg's theory to students. Then look up Emmanuel Kant's “categorical imperative” (the same as Kohlberg's Stage 6), which like the Golden Rule in Judeo-Christian theology, is considered the highest moral law. Describe how Hamlet and Horatio fit into these hierarchies and defend your position.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kohlberg's_stages_of_moral_development
4. This play pits the younger generation — Hamlet, Horatio, Laertes, Ophelia, Fortinbras — against their parents — Claudius, Gertrude, Polonius, the Ghost. What similarities do you see between your own life and the lives of the young characters in *Hamlet*? Are there certain universal characteristics of youth that are unrelated to time and place? Using two characters from this play (one must be Hamlet), develop a thesis comparing or contrasting the young people Shakespeare writes about in this play with you and your friends.
5. Pretend that you are telling the story of *Hamlet* to a friend who has not read the play. You have followed Shakespeare's plot faithfully until you come to the end of Act IV. As you pause to take a breath before beginning Act V, you suddenly realize that you can tell your friend anything you'd like from this point on. So...

rewrite the ending of Shakespeare's play. Naturally you needn't use blank verse, but you must remain faithful to the characters and resolve the dramatic situation in a way that is personally satisfying. Even if you prefer Shakespeare's ending, try to imagine other ways of arriving at the same conclusion.

GROUP ACTIVITIES

1. Ask the students to consider which aspects of contemporary society they believe may be looked back on with horror by our descendants in 1000 years. Then either divide students into groups of four and ask them to come up with other aspects of Medieval society that appall us today or use the computer and/or library for research into Dark Ages sociology.
 2. In small discussion groups, have students specifically map out strategies to do one of two things: rewrite the end of the play so that goodness wins and bad behavior is punished; OR figure out how to direct the play as written to uphold moral rectitude.
 3. One way to introduce iambic pentameter is to make it visual. Call 10 volunteers to the front of the room and arrange themselves into a line of iambic pentameter. Next tell each one to say "Boom" as he would in his position in the line. Practice "Boom-boom" until it can be done smoothly. Ask them what the sound reminds them of, leading them to the answer of "heartbeat." Then talk about the natural rhythm of English speech and try the same thing with lines from the play.
 4. In Act IV, Scene 5, Ophelia sings her famous song but the original music for it has apparently been lost and can only be conjectured. Compose music for this song and sing it.
 5. Tom Stoppard's play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* tells the story of *Hamlet* from the perspective of two minor characters. Pick another minor character from the play and tell *Hamlet's* story from his or her viewpoint.
- archy and how you made this determination.
3. You've probably sung in the shower before, but have you ever tried reading Shakespeare in the shower? Probably not. When you go home tonight, find yourself a place where you can speak aloud and not be heard or disturbed. Then find a long speech from *Hamlet* and try reading it aloud. Is it easier to read aloud? Are some lines easier to speak than others? Does your pace vary from line to line? What kind of person would talk like this? Try speaking the same passage very loudly and then very softly. Record your experience in your journal.

DISCUSSION & STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What is this play about? What is your own attitude toward revenge?
2. At what point does Hamlet decide to take action, and why?
3. What kind of a King is Claudius? What kind of King might Hamlet have become?
4. Is Hamlet really mad, or is he "acting" mad?
5. Describe the acting styles in this production and discuss their effect on the story.
6. How do the scenery and costumes based on the Bruegel painting relate to the play?
7. How does Shakespeare use verbal imagery to guide and develop the action?
8. What are the instances of spying and how are they significant?
9. What is relationship between Hamlet and Gertrude? Hamlet and Ophelia?
10. How does Hamlet's character change over the course of the action?

JOURNAL EXERCISES

1. Write a journal entry as Hamlet or Ophelia toward the end of the play. Now write about your feelings as if you were in that same situation today, then write an entry imagining yourself in that situation at the age of 21. Have you grown morally? Are you more mature at 21 than 13?
2. Monitor your behavior for a day and isolate at least 3 moral decisions you make during this time. Write down what level they are in terms of Kohlberg's hier-

PART V: RESOURCES

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WEB LINKS

Are You Shakespearied?

<http://www.smsu.edu/English/eirc/shpag.html>

Definitions of Vocabulary Words in *Hamlet*

<http://www.apstrategies.org/download/vocab/novels/Hamlet.pdf>

Electronic Shakespeare: Resources for Researchers

<http://www.wfu.edu/~tedforrl/shakespeare/>

Folger Shakespeare Library: Shakespeare for Kids

www.folger.edu/template.cfm?cid=588

Hamlet CyberGuide: *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*

www.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/score/ham/hamtg.html

Hamlet Haven: An Online Annotated Bibliography

www.hamlethaven.com

Hamlet Online

www.tk421.net/hamlet.hamlet.html

Hamlet Study Guide from the Court Theatre

<http://www.courttheatre.org/home/plays/0102/hamlet/SGHamlet.pdf>

Hamlet Study Guide from the National Arts Centre English Theatre

http://www.artsalive.ca/pdf/eth/activities/hamlet_guide.pdf

Hamlet Summary and Essays

<http://www.enotes.com/hamlet>

Insights from the Utah Shakespeare Festival

<http://www.bard.org/SectionEducate/EdResources.html>

Introductory Lecture on Shakespeare's *Hamlet*

www.mala.bc.ca/~johnstoi/eng366/lectures/hamlet.htm

Mr. William Shakespeare and the Internet

<http://shakespeare.palomar.edu/>

Pink Monkey Study Guide for *Hamlet*

<http://pinkmonkey.com/booknotes/monkeynotes/pmTwoGentlemen02.asp>

Royal Shakespeare Company: Exploring *Hamlet*

www.rsc.org.uk/learning/hamletandmacbeth/teachers/forteachershamlet.htm

Shakespeare: Chill With Will

<http://library.advanced.org/19539/front.htm>

Shakespeare in Education

<http://shakespeare.palomar.edu/educational.htm>

Shakespeare in the Classroom

<http://www.unibas.ch/shine/linkseducationwf.htm>

Shakespeare Resource Center

<http://www.bardweb.net/>

Short Course on Shakespeare's *Hamlet*

www.netcomuk.co.uk/~iandel/links.html

Sites About *Hamlet*

www.ipl.org/div/litcrit/bin/litcrit.out.pl?ti=ham-102

SparkNotes Study Guide

<http://www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/twogentlemen/>

Stratford for Students: An Educational Guide for Teachers and Students

http://www.stratfordfestival.ca/education/pdf/Spring_2000.pdf

Stratford-upon-Avon: Shakespeare Country

<http://www.stratford-upon-avon.co.uk/>

Studying *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*

<http://www.universaltteacher.org.uk/shakespeare/hamlet.htm>

Surfing with the Bard

<http://www.ulen.com/shakespeare/>

Teaching Literature

www.teachingliterature.org

Theatre for a New Audience's Teaching Shakespeare Links

www.tfana.org

The Collected Works of William Shakespeare: Internet Resources

<http://www.dlhoffman.com/publiclibrary/Shakespeare/other.html>

Using the Internet to Teach *Hamlet*

<http://web.archive.org/web/20041121055723/www.shakespearemag.com/fall96/hamlet.asp>