Nick de Somogyi

Shakespeare's Polar Bears

This is the third in a trilogy of articles for *NTQ* addressed to the 'noises off' supplied by Shakespeare's earliest co-stars: the baited bears that competed for trade, fame, and patronage for the duration of his career as an actor-playwright. 'Shakespeare and the Three Bears' (NTQ 106, May 2011) sketched this context, exposing as a *canard*, via a mistakenly omitted comma, that there ever was a bear named Harry Hunks. 'Shakespeare and the Naming of Bears' (NTQ 135, August 2018) examined the influence of these rival entertainments on the structure and detail of *Romeo and Juliet.* 'Shakespeare's Polar Bears' now expands that investigation by seeking to offer a long view of the dramatist's association with, and attention to, such foul animal 'sports', and to supply a comprehensive context for the most famous stage direction in theatre history.

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Anyone who perceives his shadow and his light simultaneously sees himself from two sides, and thus gets in the middle.

Carl Jung[1]

OUR LAST VENTURE into the stinking pits of London's bear-baiting arenas ended with the suggestion that within the structural arc of *Romeo and Juliet* (*c.* 1594) Shakespeare found a means by which to root the savagery of the clan warfare it dramatized in the primal combats of his theatre's rival, local, and entirely contemporary theatrical spaces, further suggesting that the primal instinctive antipathy between 'A dog of the house of Montague' and the Capulets' retainer Samson (in fully current allusion to 'one great bear called Sampson') was sublimely transcended by the play's end into a conversion of 'crueltie into love'.[2] I left off saying that what began in that play as an evocation of blood-sports comes to end in the 'glooming peace' of its protagonists' monuments: 'For I will raise her statue in pure gold,' promises Romeo's father of Juliet; 'As rich shall Romeo's by his lady's lie,' counters Juliet's, of him.[3] This third instalment of research hopes to demonstrate the same structural pattern across the span of Shakespeare's career from the primal conflict of the Bear Garden to the highest art of his Play House, in the retrospective form and detail of *The Winter's Tale* (1611), where bear and statue likewise evolve into the polar opposites and structural pivots of his art and arc.

'Polar' at once for the extreme examples that his entertainment industry supplied, between what an early map of London depicts as 'The Beare howse' and 'The play howse',[4] and by which, from first to last, he found dramatic expression; but also for the animals that were not yet called 'polar bears',[5] whose presence in Jacobean London came to impinge on his imagination. In short, 'Shakespeare's Bears' bear repeated examination, not simply for the frame of imagery and stagecraft their plight, rival fame, and common patronage contributed to his craft, but also for the set of specific and abiding familarities and associations that were held in common with his first audiences. And so, as a lifelong preoccupation

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and spectacle for Shakespeare himself, we may do worse than adopt his own structure of human life in seeking to trace it.

'At first the infant . . .'

As a child, William Shakespeare would neither have hugged a teddy bear in his cot, nor known the comforts of such stories as *A Bear Called Paddington, Rupert*, or *Winnie-the-Pooh.* The many other bears he came to know, however – some by name – prompted a set of associations throughout his later creative life as a playwright, and began, as with those later illustrated books, with pictures and stories. Mostly pictures, to begin with, since in early Elizabethan Stratford it wasn't only children who relied on images to guide them. Our modern pubs are relics of this pre-literate time, when retail businesses advertised their addresses with signs. The Bear Inn on Bridge Street, a few hundred yards from his birthplace ('its owners friends of the Shakespeares'),[6] would have featured a depiction of its name; one member of a civic delegation from Stratford to London in 1590 is simply referred to as 'Barber of the Bear';[7] and even the premises of Shakespeare's later publisher Edward Blount (the literacy of whose clientele presumably went without saying) were advertised on his titlepages as lying 'at the signe of the Black Bear' in St Paul's.[8]

In Stratford, though, the image of the 'Bear and Ragged Staff' held a specific connotation as the heraldic emblem of the town's anciently local dignitaries, the Earls of Warwick, a badge inherited and adopted in Shakespeare's infancy by Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, whose country pile at Kenilworth stood twelve miles or so north.[9] A 'variation' of the same emblem (two muzzled and collared bears about a single staff)[10] appears on one of the misericords (those medieval carvings hidden beneath the hinged seats of the officiating clergy) of Holy Trinity Church, where Shakespeare was baptized in April 1564, a few months after his father John, as one of the town burgesses, had accepted payment 'for defasyng ymages' in the Guild Chapel, half a mile down the road.[11] Whether or not John also supervised the chiselled defacement of so many of these carvings (including one of the apes flanking these bears) in the name of the new Queen's Protestant dispensation, is it over-sentimental to imagine that he never showed his toddler son these hidden images, or to picture a scene of early parental peek-a-boo (Figure 1)?

Or, for that matter, 'bug-a-boo': a later form (1710) used to describe what Shakespeare himself likely understood as that 'imaginary evil spirit or creature said to devour naughty children', the 'bugbear'; which is why, via a complicated etymology, the sense of mock-fright we instil in our children by saying 'Boo!' is intrinsic with the gruff 'bogeyman' (a still later verbal evolution) that is the bear.[12] For unlike their cuddly modern descendant the 'Teddy' bear (an early twentieth-century American invention),[13] in Shakespeare's childhood, bears were proverbially the stuff of nightmares rather than dreams. As later manifest, for example, in the schlock-horror scenario of *Cox of Collumpton*, a play by John Day and William Haughton performed at the Rose in early 1600, in which two younger sons murder their eldest brother to usurp his inheritance, only to be driven to madness and suicide after 'being fronted with the sight of a bear *viz.* a sprite ap[p]e[a]ring . . . in likenes[s] of a bere'.[14]

Shakespeare, too, had meanwhile played with such fears, in the clownishly panicked patter of Dromio of Syracuse ('As from a bear a man would run for life, / So fly I from her that would be my wife'),[15] no less than in the touching self-doubt of the adolescent Helena ('No, no: I am as ugly as a bear, / For beasts that meet me run away for fear'), such proverbial rhyming meeting the security of parental reassurance when Theseus explains away a midsummer nightmare: 'Or in the night, imagining some fear, / How easy is a bush supposed a bear!'[16]

Not all parents were as comforting, the mother of Coriolanus proudly imagining the implacable advance of his primeval, elemental force, 'As children from a bear the Volsces shunning him'.[17] Then again, such grandiosely fearsome animals were never as merely imaginary as the 'dragon' to which Coriolanus is three times compared,[18] since, though not native in the wild to Shakespeare's England for centuries, bears – actual bears – still

Figure 1. 'Yea now the Ragged Staff once borne so high / Is broken and in dust the bears do lie' (Thomas Rogers, *Leicester's Ghost*, lines 2106–7): Misericord, South Side, No. 24, Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon. Photograph courtesy of Elizabeth Lowry.

lived, breathed, and continued to be imported and bred for the foul 'sport' of their baiting throughout Shakespeare's lifetime.[19] Whether in the yards of provincial inns or grander civic spaces (to which fighting bears toured as routinely in the period as acting companies),[20] or the custom-built arenas that were established on London's South Bank by the 1550s (a generation before its theatres), bears were routinely tied to a stake and set upon by dogs for the purposes of entertainment.[21] But Shakespeare's direct acquaintance with such barbaric practices may have long preceded his arrival in the capital, conceivably as a childhood eye-witness.

'Then the whining schoolboy . . .'

It is generally thought feasible that John Shakespeare, then still a respected member of neighbouring Stratford's civic authorities, was among the massed guests attending part of the Earl of Leicester's lavish entertainment of Queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth, in July 1575;[22] more of a stretch, perhaps, is to imagine him taking along his eleven-year-old son. Whether reported, witnessed, or read, however, the image of Arion (the musician of Greek myth) delivering to the Queen 'a delectabl[e] ditty of a song . . . too a melodious noiz' from astride a twenty-four-foot-long dolphin in that pageant seems to have somehow abided with William, later resurfacing in the 'dulcet and harmonious breath' Oberon remembers of 'a mermaid [*sic*] on a dolphin's back' (2.1.150–1),[23] and later in the glorious hope the shipwrecked Viola finds in the Captain's description of Sebastian's loss at sea, 'Where, like Arion on the dolphin's back, / I saw him hold acquaintance with the waves' (1.2.14–15). Whether Shakespeare 'probably witnessed' that 'late-afternoon water pageant',[24] or else 'enjoyed no more than distant glimpses' of it,[25] some modern biographers have viewed the occasion as a defining moment (or primal scene?) in the shaping of his imagination: 'art as the source both of settled calm and of deep disturbance'.[26]

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A few days earlier, Leicester had laid on another grandiose set-piece entertainment: an afternoon's baiting by dogs of thirteen bears. Evidently a gory shambles, the event was framed by Robert Langham, the author of the principal eye-witness account of the Kenilworth sojourn, as a queasily elaborate legal allegory by which such 'sharp and byting arguments a both sydes' resulted in the 'goodly releef' offered by seeing one bear 'shake his earz twyse or thryse with the blud and the slaver aboout his fiznamy [physiognomy]'.[27] 'Go shake your ears,' says Maria in *Twelfth Night* (2.3.122), a precise verbal echo (it has been argued) that sustains the bittersweet (and disturbing) cruelty of Malvolio's shaming, from witty ridicule to vicious persecution, that so darkly shadows the drama of that 'Mastiff Comedy'.[28]

Whether or not Langham's 'Letter' informed Shakespeare's plays, it certainly supplied a source for Sir Walter Scott's novel *Kenilworth* (1821), which grants him a walk-on part,[29] presumably also inspiring the 'supplication' there of Queen Elizabeth by 'Orson Pinnit, the keeper, as he qualifies himself, of our royal bears': 'that amidst the extreme delight with which men haunt the play-houses, and in especial their eager desire for seeing the exhibitions of one Will Shakspeare . . . the manly amusement of bear-baiting is falling into comparative neglect.'[30] The scene is of course preposterous: for its gross anachronism – in the shape of 'Will Shakspeare (whom, I think, my lords, we have all heard something of)', when the dramatist was still a boy; but also for the premise of his later Elizabethan theatrical art somehow challenging that older 'amusement'. In fact London's Bear Gardens and Play Houses grew in rival and collective parallel throughout the reigns of Elizabeth and James.

Scott's sequence ends (via Walter Raleigh's recital of Shakespeare's 'celebrated vision of Oberon')[31] with the Queen throwing Pinnit's petition into the Thames, but in 1821 the wish was father to the thought. British newspapers had been agitating for the abolition of 'that unchristian, barbarous species of diversion – bear-baiting' since at least 1790,[32] which eventually it was by Act of Parliament in 1849,[33] the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals having meanwhile been founded in 1824, just three years after the novel's publication.[34] 'Bull- and bear-baiting is not encouraged by persons of rank and opulence in the present day (1800),' declared the antiquarian Joseph Strutt, approving the 'general refinement of manners and prevalency of humanity among the moderns' but deploring that 'this barbarous pastime was highly relished by the nobility in former ages . . . without exception even of the fair sex'.[35] Including, as Scott admits, Queen Elizabeth herself.[36]

'Orson Pinnit' (a 'mangled' veteran of the Irish wars)[37] may be entirely fictional, but the Mastership of the Queen's Bears, Bulls, and Mastiff Dogs was a well-paid and prized court position, held successively in her reign by John Dorrington and Ralph Bowes, and for which Philip Henslowe (the entrepreneur behind the Rose and, later, the Fortune and Hope theatres) and Edward Alleyn (his son-in-law, the actor) successfully petitioned King James.[38] At the same time, and as those later appointments show, the 'extreme delight' of London's audiences ran as habitually parallel between the shows of Southwark's playhouses and the 'pluckyng and tugging, skratt[c]ing and byting, by plain tooth and nayl' of its bear-gardens as they did during the 'entertainment' Leicester devised for his Queen that summer of 1575, and of which Shakespeare himself must have been personally aware as a boy.

That a centrepiece of Leicester's vastly expensive wooing of the Queen demonstrated the 'fors and experiens' of thirteen bears (more than the full complement of animals at the Bear Gardens fifteen years later) presumably implied a heraldic reference to the 'bear-and-staff' emblem by which this gartered knight was known – and which later came back to bite in the suppressed libels written against him. These include the prose work *Leicester's Commonwealth* (1584), circulating in his lifetime (and beyond, into Scott's novel), and a verse rendition by Thomas Rogers, *Leicester's Ghost*, in the moralized *de casibus* manner of *A Mirror for Magistrates*, following in around 1604 (but not printed until 1641).[39] 'Loe thus the *Beare* still loved to controule,' writes Rogers, of Leicester's murkily ambitious

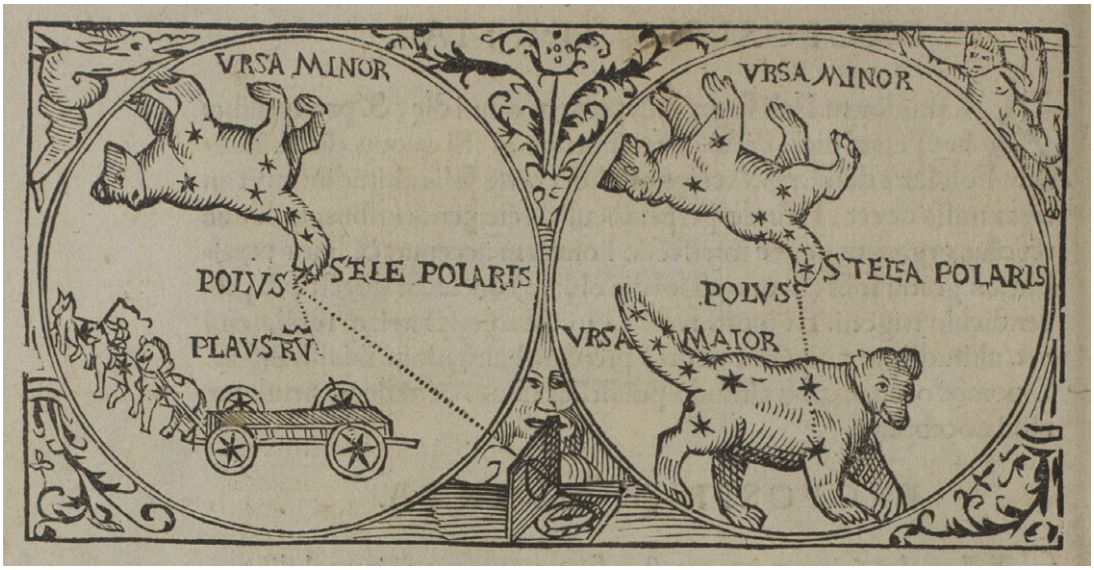

Figure 2. 'Ursa Major, that great Hunks the Bear': Peter Apian, *Cosmographicus liber Petri Apiani mathematici, studiose correctus, ac erroribus vindicatus per Gemmam Phrysium* (Antwerp 1529), [leaf] 30 (detail). Reproduction by kind permission of the Edward E. Ayer Digital Collection, Newberry Library, Illinois.

dealings, as part of the sustained analogy it makes between its subject and the symbolic range of his liveried crest:

> Since *Archas* and *Calisto* were enstald,
> In the *Celestiall* Globe, neare th' *Arctict Pole*,
> Which now the great, and lesser *Beares* are cald.
> (1212–15)

Wittily 'enstald' in the sky (at once as permanent plinth and grubby stable), and overlaying the mythological with the political (those 'Two Beares . . . the greater, and the lesse' elsewhere standing for Robert Dudley and his brother Ambrose),[40] the metaphor more broadly reflects the everyday symbolic presence of this singular animal – from pub to palace, stall to shield, sign to sky – in the minds of those children of Shakespeare's generation, whose grammar-school education taught them to understand such mytho-cosmographic references (Figure 2).

Such children as Thomas Middleton, for example, the lunatic astrologer of whose later City Comedy punningly casts an adulterous Londoner's liaison *de haut en bas*, 'going into the second house near unto Ursa Major, that great Hunks the Bear at the Bridge-foot in heaven, which shows horrible baitings in wedlock; and the Sun near ent'ring into th' Dog sets 'em all together by the' ears'.[41] Or such as John Taylor (the Water Poet), whose later encomium of this enduring 'sport', *Bull, Bear, and Horse* (1638), concluded:

> Then for the further honour of the Beares,
> They (with the stars) are mounted in their Sphears:
> There *Ursa Major* in the firmament,
> Is stellifide, a glorious ornament,
> And there, the little Beare, (a starre more finer)
> Is call'd *Artophilax*, or *Ursa Minor*,
> And who so reads the second part of *Ovid*,
> There shall they finde (what here is writ) approved.[42]

Reading Ovid is precisely what Shakespeare had been doing at school at around the time he may have witnessed the Kenilworth entertainment: 'In Ovid, and particularly the *Metamorphoses*, Shakespeare discovered an imaginative world that profoundly affected him; the great Roman poet became his favourite classical author.'[43] Specifically, here, the story of Jove's rape of the nymph Callisto, who, upon giving birth to their son

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Arcas, is transformed by Jove's aggrieved wife Juno into a bear; whom, years later, Arcas himself comes to hunt down – whereupon (in Golding's Elizabethan translation) 'God almighty held [i.e. stopped] his hand', immediately conveying the pair 'through the Ayre with whirling windes to top of all the skie, / And there did make them neighbour starres about the Pole on hie'.[44]

Mother and son 'both freeze for an instant', writes Jonathan Bate of this 'typically Ovidian encounter';[45] a frosty description that anticipates the first use of the term 'Polar Bear' in the language, where it is the constellation of Ursa Major that suggests itself as an epitome of cold.[46] What we know as the Arctic region of our planet – and therefore also its opposite, the Antarctic – gets its name from this founding, presiding bear (the 'ancient Greek *ἀρκτικός* of the Bear' informing its later Latin derivation *ursus*).[47] 'Once one has read the story,' Bate reflects, 'one cannot look at these constellations in the night without remembering Callisto.'[48] And nor, surely, could Shakespeare.

'. . . then the lover . . .'

'So Orlando must become a poet,' cries the protagonist of Robert Greene's dramatization of (John Harington's translation of) Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, 'for I must talk in secret to the stars', as part of his deranged appeal to the implacable heavens – much as Titus Andronicus and his mutilated family, at around the same time, 'solicit heaven' by firing arrows into the zodiac, scrolled with their petitions.[49] Maddened by a love betrayed, Orlando's grievance carries a range of obscurity: mythological, literary, dramaturgical – and textual. 'Where is the Arctic bear, late baited from his pole?' he cries, though not in the play's 1594 Quarto, instead uniquely surviving in the lead-actor's fragile 'cue-script' – the scribal copy of their part from which actors learned their lines ahead of performance (Figure 3).[50]

In this case, that performance was in February 1592, as the accounts ledger known as 'Henslowe's Diary' records;[51] and took place at the Rose – the same 'play howse' that soon featured in Van den Keere's map of Bankside, hard by the 'Beare howse'. That proximity surely lent a knowing force to the analogy Greene draws between the passions of love his hero suffers, and their simultaneous location between the night sky's constellation of what he calls 'those Arcadian twins'[52] and their 'late baited' embodiment in the steaming bear-pit of Paris Garden, within earshot of where the line was first delivered.

That it was the famous actor Edward Alleyn (the first Tamburlaine, Faustus, and Barabas) who delivered this line from his cue-script adds retrospective resonance, since within a year he had married Henslowe's stepdaughter Joan (on 22 October 1592),[53] forging a lasting partnership that came to include in its portfolio the Bear Garden itself. Alleyn noted in his Memorandum Book 'What the Bear garden Cost me' (including £200 to a certain 'Mr Burnabye'), his later hand dating that transaction to December 1594, and adding that he 'held itt 16 year' before selling it to his 'father[-in-law] Hinchloe [Henslowe]' in Februarie 16[11]' (Figure 4).[54]

All of which may help sketch an impression of the busy profession to which Shakespeare was introduced following his arrival in the capital, presumably as part of a touring company at some point in the late 1580s. Just as at Kenilworth, where sumptuous pageantry included unbridled animal savagery, so the twin attractions of Bankside's commercial entertainments industry formed what Golding had termed 'neighbour starres'. For all that modern minds may flinch at such close proximity, when Shakespeare (like Orlando) had 'become a poet', and himself addressed the subject of thwarted love in *Romeo and Juliet*, the 'ancient quarrel' he dramatized between the Capulets and Montagues came to match the same 'auncient quarrell' Langham had described of that bloodbath of a bear-baiting at Kenilworth.[55] As, later, it may have informed the close texture of *Twelfth Night* (*c.* 1602), in the first few minutes of which its lovelorn Duke describes his 'desires' as 'fell and cruel hounds [that] E'er since pursue me' (1.1.21–2). That Duke, of course, is called Orsino, a detail immediately repeated by Viola when she asks 'What is his name?'

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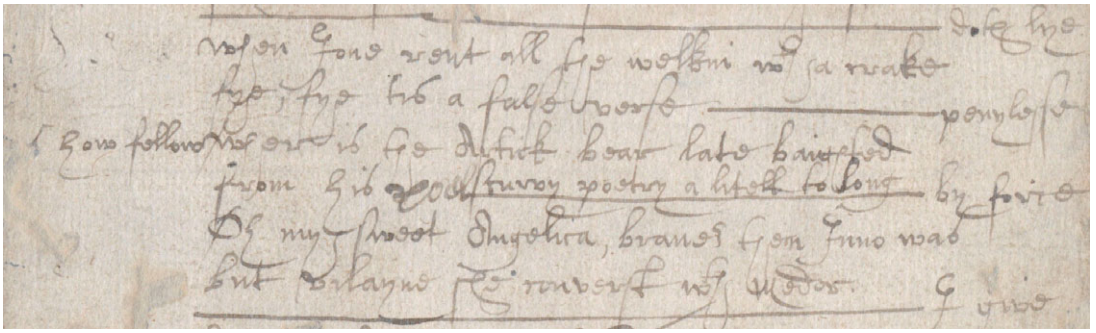

Figure 3. 'Where is the Arctic bear, late baited from his pole?': Edward Alleyn's part-script of Robert Greene, *Orlando Furioso* (1592), MS I, f. 265r (detail). Image © David Cooper. With kind permission of the Governors of Dulwich College.

(1.2.24–5), which emphasis presumably draws attention to the fact that it means (appropriately to his earlier lines) 'little bear'.[56] If Orsino stands as forebear to Walter Scott's 'keeper of our royal bears' Orson Pinnitt, so he does (no less clunkingly) to John Urson 'the bear-ward' – and publican of the Three Dancing Bears – in Ben Jonson's *Masque of Augurs*, who claims to have ferried 'three very Beares' across from Paris Garden to Whitehall for its court performance on another Twelfth Night, in 1622, and sings a ballad with them.[57]

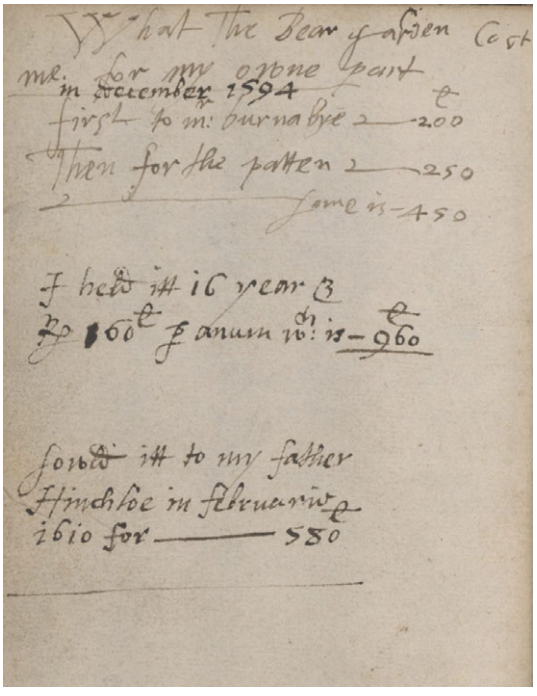

Figure 4. 'What The Bear garden Cost me': Edward Alleyn's Memorandum Book, MS VIII, f. 5v. Image © David Cooper. With kind permission of the Governors of Dulwich College.

But if the Globe's suddenly renewed proximity to these Bankside bear-pits (following its emergence there from the timbers of the Theater in 1599) prompted in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* such a thorough contemplation of these newly twinned arenas, he had long cast a beady and capacious eye on the opposition. David Wiles may be right to assert that such sharp 'polarities' (as between 'art' and 'philistinism', 'cultural values' and 'barbarity', 'high' and 'low') were for Shakespeare and his audiences 'homologous'.[58] His earlier comedy of love, *Much Ado About Nothing* (*c.* 1598), certainly includes an admittedly minor instance to suggest that he felt a kinship (or contrast) between the characters he was creating and the rival heroes that were simultaneously drawing audiences' attention in the bear-pit. For it is surely appropriate that when Hero contrives to trick Beatrice into realizing that Benedick loves her (ahead of his friends doing the same to him), her co-conspirator is the lady-in-waiting suddenly announced and introduced in Act Three as Ursula:[59] another suitably ursine name for a bearherd (or bearward) – that petty functionary of the Bear Garden who, armed with a whip or stave (as Beatrice herself has jested) might be paid sixpence to 'lead his apes into hell' (2.1.35). ''Tis even so,'

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says Claudio; 'Hero and Margaret[60] have by this played their parts with Beatrice, and then the two bears will not bite one another when they meet' (3.2.69–71). At which high pitch of comic expectation the play suddenly darkens with the arrival of the villainous Don John, and his fabricated news of Hero's infidelity. (Is it a coincidence that 'Don John' is the third of the nineteen '*Beares* at the *Beare-Garden*' named in John Taylor's *Bull, Beare, and Horse* forty years later?)[61]

Whatever the case, the comic steering of these formidable opposites, Benedick and Beatrice, tweaks the proverbial wisdom[62] that 'One bear will not bite another' – a line that rears its ugly head within the vicious mind of Thersites, towards the end *Troilus and Cressida* (*c.* 1602), sneeringly reducing the climax of the Trojan War to a seamy commentary on the stinking bloodbath of Bankside's parallel attraction: 'The cuckold and the cuckold-maker are at it. Now, bull! now, dog! 'Loo, Paris, 'loo! . . . The bull has the game: 'ware horns, ho!' (5.8.1–11).

Such snarls cover a multitude of original reference that now requires an informed nudge. That *bulls* were, along with bears, customarily baited by *dogs* in *Paris* Garden, for example; or that *horns* were the uncomfortable crest of a cuckold (Menelaus being a 'double-horned Spartan');[63] or that 'bull beef' was then imagined to be 'utterly unwholesome' unless 'baited to death by dogs', to 'make their flesh softer in digestion'.[64] All of which supplies contextual support to one recently published account of the play that discerns its reduction of the supposed heroics of the Trojan War, as well as 'the whole business of love', to a grotesque, 'strangely mixed grill'.[65]

Famously defiant of theatrical category, *Troilus and Cressida* was later marketed as a comedy.[66] But if it was Shakespeare's last Elizabethan Comedy of love, it was certainly also a bleak coda, with its parade of 'blood and death' (5.9.4), to the genre of History he had by then pioneered, repeatedly imagining the theatre of war as a parallel form to the theatre of blood with which it had continued to compete for audiences.

'. . . then a soldier . . .'

Langham's description of the massed bear-baiting at Kenilworth had imagined the savagery of the contest as a legal dispute; Scott's antiquarian travesty has the Earl of Sussex recast that description as 'the bravest image of war that can be shown in peace': for 'What are half a dozen knaves, with rusty foils and tattered targets, making but a mere mockery of a stout fight, to compare to the royal game of bear-baiting?'[67] Conflating Shakespeare's own self-deprecation at the 'brawl ridiculous' of his account of Agincourt ('With four or five most vile and ragged foils') with Jonson's later choric parody by which 'three rusty swords' represent 'York and Lancaster's long jars',[68] Scott's fanciful scene has the Queen join the debate by opining that, 'touching this Shakspeare, we think there is that in his plays that is worth twenty Bear-gardens; and that this new undertaking of his Chronicles, as he calls them, may entertain . . . even the generation which may succeed to us'.[69]

Ostensibly absurd, the novel nevertheless shrewdly touches on a mutually porous entertainments industry that constantly impinged on Shakespeare's theatrical imagination – and not least in the cycle of chronicle plays he pioneered. For it was to the sheer violence of London's animal pits (along with an evidently wide range of specific military knowledge)[70] that he repeatedly turned in fashioning the grand sweep of what the compilers of the First Folio later grouped together as his 'Histories'. So while Shakespeare may have inherited from his anonymous source play the anachronism by which, in the first of that later sequence, *King John*, the early thirteenth-century siege of Angiers deploys 'artillery' (2.1.403), the 'industrious scenes and acts of death' its Bastard views there – 'As in a theatre' (375–6) – conjures an arena of blood as much as a theatre of war in the way the French King seeks to establish terms:

> And then our arms, like to a muzzled bear
> Save in aspect, hath all offence sealed up.
> Our cannons' malice vainly shall be spent
> Against th' invulnerable clouds of heaven . . .
> (249–52)[71]

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Figure 5. 'And then our arms, like to a muzzled bear': Detail of the Bayeux Tapestry (Panel II): eleventh century. By kind permission of the Musée de la Tapisserie Bayeux, City of Bayeux, Normandy.

No cannon back in 1206, but that 'muzzled bear', Shakespeare's own addition to the action, at once anticipates (that other bastard) Thersites' bleak view of war; reflects the circumstances against which this new vogue for chronicle history played out in the 1590s; and mirrors the frequent medieval association between baiting and battle.

A detail of the Bayeux Tapestry, for example (*c.* 1070) features an armed knight menacing another muzzled bear,[72] as an embroidered footnote to William's embassy ('NUNTII: WILIELMI') to – the implicitly barbarian? – King Harold (Figure 5). *The Lay of Havelok the Dane* (*c.* 1290) later imagined its outnumbered hero's ambush in comparable terms:

> Þey drowen ut swerdes, ful god won [*in great numbers*],
> And shoten on [*assailed*] him, so don on bere
> Dogges [*as dogs assail a bear*], þat wolden him to-tere
> Þannę [*When*] men doth þe bere beyte.[73]

It has been noted that the 'bear-baiting scene' that accompanies Psalm 88 in the Luttrell Psalter (*c.* 1330–45), while illustrating what the Geneva Bible later glossed as 'The faithful afflicted',[74] 'may symbolize Scottish attacks on Berwick-on-Tweed (punning on its name)'.[75] The theatre of war, in other words, had overlapped with the baiting-pit long before the advent of any custom-built playhouses, and contemporary to the Psalter is the setting of the partly Shakespearean chronicle play *Edward III* (*c.* 1593).

'Here stood a battle of ten thousand horse,' comes Salisbury's report there of the Battle of Poitiers (1356), surrounding the Black Prince's army, 'beset with too much odds', where:

> as a bear fast chained unto a stake,
> Stood famous Edward, still expecting when
> Those dogs of France would fasten on his flesh.
> Anon the death procuring knell begins:
> Off go the cannons . . .
>
> (5.1.136–46)

Here stands 'famous Edward', that grand English soldier, fast against heroic odds: embodying the inspirational military leadership ('our forefathers valiant acts') by which Thomas Nashe was even then framing his '*defence of Playes*'.[76] But in addition to those 'moste famous kings' such plays were even then depicting ('*Edward* ye first, *Edward* the third, *Edward* the blacke Prince, *Henry* the fifth'),[77] there was another 'famous Edward' with whom the play's audiences would have been immediately familiar, and whom it is once again Nashe who namechecks: 'hee meanes shortly to set foorth a booke cald his Paraphrase upon Paris Garden,' reads the sarcastic snarl of his war of words with the pompously censorious Gabriel Harvey in early 1593, 'wherein hee will . . . betouse [*tear at*] Harry of Tame and great Ned.'[78]

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One 'greate beare called harry of Tame' and 'one yonge he bear Called whitinge' both feature in an inventory drawn up by Thomas Burnaby 'of all the Bulls Beares horses and apes' at the Bear Garden in December 1590 (the same 'Mr Burnaby' to whom Alleyn later paid £200 to buy it); 'great Ned' is likely to have been the same 'Ned Whiting' later nostalgically remembered by Ben Jonson.[79] So while modern editors of *Edward III* usefully point to how this image of 'a bear fast chained unto a stake' was lent 'immediacy' by the baiting arenas that neighboured Bankside's theatres,[80] the figure of 'famous Edward' himself was even then defying the odds against actual 'dogs' as an epitome of valour: in common with a recognizable roster of such names.

Harry of Thame shared a star name and near-top billing with Harry of Warwick in Burnaby's 1590 inventory (at £8 apiece), young [Ned] Whiting bringing up the rear (at £3), with 'one old she-bear called Nan' (at thirty bob); 'Little Bess of Bromley' was later singled out for praise in a letter to Alleyn from his 'deputy bearward' in 1610.[81] Harry, Nan, Ned, and Bess; Henry VIII, Anne Boleyn, Edward VI, Elizabeth I. The formidable strength and authority of these heroic animals – both male and female – naturally found a familiar consonant identity in the Tudor propaganda of the national dynasty whose origins were even then being dramatized on stage.

Such political associations endured. In the 1850s, for example, William 'Grizzly' Adams's touring menagerie included two bears he had named Ben Franklin and George Washington, as well as another – Samson – whose name he unwittingly shared with a forebear from that same list of Burnaby's over two hundred years earlier.[82] They were also ancient. An early manuscript of the Matter of Britain includes a marginal gloss on the Latin translation of its presiding hero (*Arthur* deriving from *arctūrus*): '*Artur . . . sonat ursum terribilem* [Arthur . . . denotes a fearsome bear]';[83] and Lydgate's *Troy Book* (*c.* 1425) likewise refers to the constellation Ursa Major as 'Arthouris Plowe'.[84] What one recent French scholar of the bear called the 'History of a Fallen King' inflects the sequence of this ancestral heroism in Shakespeare's Histories, in which (as the Black Prince's son puts it) 'sad stories of the death of kings' persistently imagined England's civil wars by reference to their yowling antagonists having to 'fight like compelled bears'.[85]

'How would it have joyed brave *Talbot*,' wrote Nashe, 'to thinke . . . he should triumphe againe on the Stage,' receiving mass applause from audiences 'who, in the Tragedian that represents his person, imagine they behold him fresh bleeding.'[86] That play was probably Shakespeare's *Henry VI, Part One*; that tragedian was probably Alleyn; his rôle as Talbot – the patriotic martyr of those wars – is threaded through the depiction of the Black Prince in *Edward III*; and a she-bear called Nan Talbot was another later resident of the Bear Garden.[87] 'Fresh bleeding' indeed, such names, albeit within a parallel pedigree, were 'Familiar . . . as household words': not 'Harry the King, Bedford, and Exeter, / Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury, and Gloucester', but Harry of Warwick, Ned of Canterbury, George of Cambridge, and Nan Talbot.[88]

'Call hither to the stake my two brave bears,' cries York on the climactic battlefield of one of the earliest of Shakespeare's takes on chronicle history:

> That with the very shaking of their chains
> They may astonish these fell-lurking curs.
> Bid Salisbury and Warwick come to me.[89]

Warwick the Kingmaker, that is, whose familiar 'household badge' – 'The rampant bear chained to the ragged staff' (5.1.201–2), as Shakespeare cannot resist reminding us – Lord Clifford later vows to obliterate, and whose entrance he now denounces (148–50):

> Are these thy bears? We'll bait thy bears to death
> And manacle the bearherd in their chains,
> If thou dar'st bring them to the baiting-place.

York champions his heraldic bear; only for Clifford to cast this kingmaker as a proverbially base bearward, later repeating the insult to Warwick himself; whose riposte ('An if thou dost not hide thee from the bear', 5.2.2) challenges 'Old' Clifford's manly valour by

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accusing him of childish fears. Shakespeare may have invented the location of Temple Gardens to so vividly dramatize the origins of the Wars of the Roses in *Henry VI, Part One* (2.4),[90] but it was Paris Garden (south-east across the river) in which their escalating violence here had first been traced.

And then there is Richard of Gloucester, a clue to whose character as the future Richard III is perhaps lodged by the informed relish with which he both immediately repudiates Clifford's taunt here (*You likened yourself to a dog: exactly!*), and later recapitulates the action (and image) in the sequel, resurrecting or anticipating the heroic stance of 'Famous Edward':

> Oft have I seen a hot o'erweening cur
> Run back and bite, because he was withheld;
> Who, being suffered with the bear's fell paw,
> Hath clapped his tail between his legs and cried.[91]

> Or as a bear encompassed round with dogs,
> Who having pinched a few and made them cry,
> The rest stand all aloof, and bark at him.[92]

'Oft have I seen': most editors note the immediate currency of the reference; none, to my knowledge, notes the additional precision by which Richard ends each speech. 'And such a piece of service will you do,' he says in the first, 'If you oppose yourselves to match Lord Warwick' (5.1.155–6); and in the second, 'Methinks 'tis prize enough to be his son' (2.1.21). A 'match' was exactly how such baiting competitions were then described, whether in Arthur Brooke's prefatory poem to his *Romeus and Juliet* (1562), likening his tentative translation to a beleaguered bear ('I offer to the stake . . . to meete and match in fight / with slaunders whelpes'); or (see above) how Little Bess of Bromley and her fellows would later be praised ('The bears have with great victory performed all their masters' matches').[93] And as for Richard's sardonic 'prize', he might as well be rehearsing the piety he later feigns by echoing John Field's sermon of *Godly Exhortation*, following the ominous collapse in 1583 of the scaffolding of Paris Garden, 'though every dog hath a coller, & every Beare a prize, and every cracke bring a great adventure'.[94]

But the great venture of Richard's own primal force further derives here from the earliest-written play's subsequent rebuke by Old Clifford: 'Hence, heap of wrath, foul indigested lump' (5.1.157) – an image that erupts into Richard's extraordinary announcement in the middle of the sequel, bemoaning his 'disproportion . . . Like to a chaos or an unlicked bear whelp' (3.2.160–1). Drawing on the traditional belief, as Edward Topsell later wrote, 'that the whelpes of beares at their first littering are without al forme and fashion, and nothing but a congealed blood like a lumpe of flesh, which afterwarde the old one frameth with her tongue', the monstrous career of Richard's subsequent self-fashioning proves Topsell's conclusion true: 'yet is the truth . . . otherwise.'[95]

If Richard III comes to embody a bugbear of murderous tyranny, the Bear Garden lent additional detail to other of Shakespeare's histories. In Falstaff's lugubrious self-pity in his first play, for example (''Sblood, I am as melancholy as a gib cat or a lugged bear'), or his adoption of Old Clifford's aristocratic disdain in his second: 'Virtue is of so little regard in these coster-mongers' times that true valour is turned bearherd.'[96] ('It is better to be a Beareherd th[a]n to be bayted dayly w[i]th great exclamations for small deptes,' reads an exactly contemporary letter from another cash-poor gentleman, vainly petitioning for the sinecure of the Mastership of the Bears.)[97] Or, later, in the 'unmatchable [*sic*] courage' by which the French knights arrogantly dismiss their opponents at Agincourt as 'Foolish curs, that run winking into the mouth of a Russian bear and have their heads crushed like rotten apples'.[98] But Orléans gets it the wrong way round. English mastiff dogs may have been famously ferocious, but as Fluellen has 'read in the chronicles' – and his first audiences had seen on stage – King Henry's 'great-uncle Edward the Plack Prince of Wales . . . fought a most prave pattle here in France' in which, likewise outnumbered, 'Famous Edward' had triumphed over those 'dogs of France'. As some of Shakespeare's later tragedies reflect, however, and as King James's relish for the sport soon demonstrated, sometimes the bear it was that died.

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'. . . and then the justice . . .'

'Thus having shew'd of *Beares* their sundry breeding / Their formes, their admirable sparing feeding,' writes John Taylor in his celebration of London's Bear Gardens: before listing the qualities that spectators valued in the named bears they saw baited: 'Their patience, courage, temperance, fortitude, / And many vertues that have them endu'd.'[99] Are these the classic virtues of Pastoureau's 'fallen king' – or a knowingly specific allusion to 'the king-becoming graces' that Malcolm lists in *Macbeth* (1606): 'As justice, verity, temperance, stableness . . . Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude' (4.3.91–4)? Macbeth's progress through his play includes his stark defiance against the dark nightmare he sees – 'What man dare, I dare. / Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear . . . and my firm nerves / Shall never tremble' (3.4.97–101), but ends, in a miniature strand of the play's vertiginous doubling, with what he becomes: 'They have tied me to a stake; I cannot fly, / But bear-like I must fight the course' (5.7.1–2).

'As justice': of all Shakespeare's Jacobean tragedies, the merciless universe of *King Lear* (1605) traces the fullest suite of glances at the 'patience, courage, [and] fortitude' on show in the Globe's vicinity that binds the fate of its principal victims to a thread of escalating imagery. 'My nativity was under Ursa Major,' Edmund sarcastically announces in his scornful dismissal of astrology (1.2.129–30); misinformed of Edgar's treachery, Gloucester pledges a reward for anyone 'bringing the murderous caitiff to the stake' (2.1.62), before vainly seeking to prevent the disguised Kent from being set in the stocks. 'Horses are tied by the heads,' comments the Fool, 'dogs and bears by the neck, monkeys by the loins, and men by the legs' (2.2.198–200) – a parade of horses, dogs, bears, and apes comprising an afternoon's entertainment in Paris Garden. By the end of the scene, Lear has stormed out into the tempestuous 'night, wherein the cub-drawn bear would couch' (3.1.12) – so stormy, that is, as to abate even the 'rage' of a she-bear suckling or separated from her cubs.[100]

Among the brags of Shakespeare's Prince of Morocco, in *The Merchant of Venice* (1596–7), was his vaunted willingness to 'Pluck the young sucking cubs from the she-bear' (2.1.29), and the same epitome of terror ('Thou'dst shun a bear . . .') soon occurs to the demented Lear in his contemplation of the degrees of suffering: 'But if thy flight lay toward the raging sea, / Thou'dst meet the bear i'the mouth' (3.4.9–11). Such is the 'gracious aged man', in Albany's later characteristically naive account, 'Whose reverence even the head-lugged bear would lick' (4.2.43). And meanwhile, of course, Gloucester has endured his grotesque interrogation and torture. 'I am tied to the stake and I must stand the course,' he manages (3.7.53), in ironic echo of the 'stake' he had promised for his innocent son. There seems to have been a sucession of blind bears in the neighbouring premises, whose damnable torment included the disgusting 'whip-broth' of their ritual scourging.[101] Impossibly to imagine, Gloucester's treatment here ('Because I would not see / Thy cruel nails pluck out his poor old eyes . . .', 3.7.55–6) raises the stakes of human depravity still further: bears that had been blinded during their bouts were whipped around the circuit; Gloucester is deliberately blinded on stage. 'As flies to wanton boys –' or bears to a paying public – 'are we to the gods, / They kill us for their sport' (4.1.38–40).

'. . . their exits and their entrances . . .'

'Is that horse *real*?' So Anne Barton records of a bemused audience member during a production of *Richard II* at the RSC in 1964 (it was);[102] 'You will believe they are real horses,'[103] reads a review of the puppeteering genius behind Nick Stafford's *War Horse* (2007) – the stark fact of animal actuality and the skilled ingenuity of human impersonation each by turns eliciting stunned wonder. Such are also the terms that have long polarized scholarly discussion of Shakespeare's most enigmatic stage direction, midway through *The Winter's Tale*. Was that bear *real*? My closing sequence here is concerned less with any resolution to that question, and more with the context – the first ten years of Jacobean London – against which

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this passing detail of stagecraft gained its enduring moment.

Walter Scott's Queen Bess may have considered Shakespeare's chronicle plays 'worth twenty Bear-gardens', but the accession of the real James I in 1603 immediately promised a different impetus. In the same sweep of legislation that saw the Chamberlain's Men promoted to the King's Men, Edward Alleyn, 'late servant to the Lord Admiral', was 'now sworn the Prince's Man', and he and Henslowe purchased the joint Mastership of the King's Bears, Bulls, and Mastiff Dogs in November 1604, eventually being granted their long-petitioned Letters Patent to the office in 1608.[104] Alleyn's credentials had meanwhile been boosted by his stage-management for King James in March 1604 of an experimental baiting between 'three of the fellest dogs in the [Bear]garden' and a lion from the Royal Menagerie in the Tower of London, the King's peculiar curiosity later issuing, in June 1609, into another encounter at the Tower, between 'a great fierce Beare, which had kild a child that was negligently left in the beare-house', and a lioness and its two newly whelped cubs. Unlike the opening dumb-show of *Locrine*, however (perhaps one of Shakespeare's earliest gigs as a revising 'script-doctor'), which directs *'a lion running after a bear'* to demonstrate the strength of King Brutus (who 'drave the the silly beasts before his face'),[105] these three royal lions all scurried back 'into their den'.[106]

Such royal patronage sponsored an unprecedented expansion in the public sector of the bear-baiting industry. Having purchased the lease on Burnaby's Bear Gardens in 1594 (hence the surviving Inventory), and achieving the monopoly on the 'sport' in November 1604, Alleyn and Henslowe commisioned an extension of the old premises from Peter Street (the architect of the Globe) in June 1606, despite (or because of?) the costly carnage being made to their stock by the King's patronage – at Whitehall,[107] Greenwich,[108] and later at that refurbished Beargarden itself[109] – to which various archives testify. Alleyn's own includes the petition to King James regarding the loss of their 'goodly bear called George Stone' in 1606 (in the same theatrical season as Macbeth likely first contemplated his own 'bearlike . . . course'), as well as another recent match in which 'were killed iiij of our best bears which in your kingdom are not the like to be had'.[110] 'How many dogs do you think I'd upon me?' brags George Pieboard, of his escape from the clutches of his prison warders, in Thomas Middleton's *The Puritan Widow* the following summer: 'Almost as many as George Stone the bear: three at once, three at once!'[111] For that bleak joke to have worked for London's theatregoers, bears must have been 'in the air' at the time – and so they were.

Vividly so, a couple of years later, following what must have been the talk of Bankside in July 1609, when that child-killing bear, following the failure of the King's lions to dispatch him, was eventually 'bayted to death upon a stage', with a portion of the proceeds 'which the people gave to see the Beare kild' going the boy's mother.[112] And later that same summer (as Barbara Ravelhofer has definitively charted),[113] those two lion whelps at the Tower were joined in London by two new arrivals at Paris Garden, in the shape of two polar-bear cubs (*'Two young white Beares brought into England'*), captured off 'Cherry Island', on the latest of Captain Jonas Poole's many Arctic expeditions that spring.[114]

As an increasing literature has documented, those two young polar bears may have grown up to inspire – may even have appeared in – Ben Jonson's *Masque of Oberon* at court on New Year's Day 1611, in which Prince Henry (Alleyn's theatrical patron) enters as the Fairy King, '*in a chariot, which to a lowd triumphant musique began to move forward, drawne by two white beares, and on either side guarded by three* Sylvanes *with one going in front*.'[115] 'Bringing in the New [calendar] Year', that grand entrance perhaps elides the European 'Candlemas Bear' of folklore, whose appearance (like that of his American cultural descendant the groundhog) prognosticates 'the end of winter weather', with the 'annuall vowes' made by its prince.[116]

The learned, emblematic, mythological, and theatrical form of Jonson's masque at the royal court presumably inherited some of the talk of the town he had meanwhile channelled into *Epicoene*, the latest of his City

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Comedies, that had first been performed the previous winter of 1609–10. Subtitled *The Silent Woman*, the absurdity of its storyline (whereby an old man, hyper-sensitive to noise,[117] is gulled into marrying a disguised boy) matches the eccentricity of its subplot, in which Tom Otter, 'a great man at the Bear Garden in his time', now faces the same fate as the animals he once helped to bait, in the punishing form of his domineering wife.[118] The socially superior Mrs Otter, understandably fatigued by her husband's continued obsession with his former job at Paris Garden, transforms their marital home into a domestic bear-pit: 'Let's go stave her off him,' says an uncomfortable guest (as of a dog a bear); 'She'll worry him, if we help not in time' (3.1.46–50). Their dispute comes to focus on the drinking bouts he hosts, using a set of expensive 'carousing cups' which, by 'witty denomination . . . he calls his bull, another his bear, another his horse' (2.6.58–60). 'Is a bear a fit beast, or a bull, to mix in society with great ladies?' she exclaims (3.1.15–16), despite his protestations that 'these things I am known to the courtiers by' (3.1.10–11).

Jonson promotes (the amphibious) Tom Otter, this former bearward, from an Elizabethan by-word for lowly servility into an emblem of the sport's social elevation under King James, reflecting in the expensive 'zoomorphic' silverware he parades the upwardly mobile sheen of its newly respectable relish.[119] In borrowing the 'structuring device',[120] and specific vocabulary, of *Twelfth Night*'s 'Mastiff Comedy', *Epicoene* aligns the testing of its comedic transgressions (of gender, hierarchy, class) with its material embodiment on the baser parallel stage to which it alludes from the private Whitefriars theatre where it premiered. Otter's silverware, along with the Madingley Hall mural of a fanciful bear hunt

Figure 6. 'And my desires, like fell and cruel hounds, / E'er since pursue me': Mural, Madingley Hall, Cambridge (*c*. 1610). Photograph courtesy of Dan Burnstone.

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that Sir Edward Hynde commissioned for his country house in Cambridge at around the same time,[121] variously represented the fashionable resurgence of this bloody 'sport' (Figure 6).

Which is presumably at least partly why the King's Men caught the scent of a trend early in James's reign, and again in early 1610, by twice reviving for him the mouldy old play *Mucedorus* (*c.* 1590), which, as someone must have remembered, begins with a pursuit by a polar bear. 'Thou talkest of wonders,' says the cowardly villain Segasto in the original play, 'to tell me of white bears'; twenty years later, however, such wonders were Bankside's newest attraction, one of many court records noting payment to Henslowe and Alleyn, 'Masters of the Game at Paris Garden . . . for keeping two white bears' in March 1611.[122]

'Amplified with new additions', this second revival supplied a new Epilogue addressed to the King for its performance at Whitehall in February 1610, and gingered up the comic action by supplementing its retrospectively startling stage direction ('*Enter Segasto . . . being pursued with a bear*') with a new preamble for Mouse the Clown. 'A bear?' he asks us. 'Nay, sure, it cannot be a bear, but some devil in a bear's doublet: for a bear could never have had that agility to have frighted me' – followed by the direction of some new Buster Keaton-style business: '*As he goes backwards, the bear comes in, and he tumbles over her, and runs away*'.[123] A publishing sensation, the revised *Mucedorus* went through eight Jacobean Quarto editions; and Mouse's words – conceivably written by Shakespeare himself – have since sponsored a series of commentaries on their possible implications for the staging of *The Winter's Tale*, by the same company, early the following year, in which the action is divided in both space and time by the 'savage clamour' of a bear hunt, and delivers the immortal dispatch of Antigonus in a clear echo of that recently 'gratuitous piece of buffoonery':[124] '*Exit, pursued by a bear*' (4.1.55–7).

'The antics of the bear in *Mucedorus* indicate quite clearly that an actor impersonated the beast'; 'in the first performance of *The Winter's Tale* the bear was real':[125] neither of these fertile representative assertions has been (or can be) proved.[126] Depending on how biddable or risky such animals were, the playful devilry in Mouse's words would have been equally applicable to whichever staging was decided upon. After all, whether in comic ignorance at a real bear or in knowing complicity at its impersonation, the same gag ('Nay, sure, it cannot be a bear') would have raised a laugh; as also, perhaps, a contemplation of the extent to which we can truly believe our eyes: a 'bear's doublet' indeed.

'Still bears, and nothing else but bears!' exclaims the dastardly Segasto in *Mucedorus*, but the renewed relevance of his words to this fad was further confirmed later that year. For if real bears *had* somehow been marshalled onto the stage of James's royal court or the Globe of the King's Men, it feels somehow inevitable that, in late 1611, someone should have had the not very bright idea of dressing up as a bear and being baited for real. The episode of this 'two-legged bear', which took place on the stage of the Fortune theatre,[127] remains obscure, but was evidently a sensation, going the Jacobean equivalent of 'viral' – doubtless assisted by the age-old oddity of the animal's humanoid ability to walk, 'plantigrade', on the soles of its hindfeet (Figure 7).[128] It had snagged Jonson's attention in *Love Restored*, his Twelfth Night masque of 1612 ('They ask'd me if I were the fighting beare of last yeere,' jokes the puckish Robin Goodfellow there);[129] and a ballad called '*The men* [*sic*] *bayted in a beares skynn &c.*' was entered for publication later that January.[130] Though lost, the spectacle it celebrated of this 'man-Bear baiting' was still fresh in Londoners' memory in 1615,[131] meanwhile featuring as emblematic of the 'ill lucke' suffered by all such 'counterfaiting shapes' by the satirist Samuel Rowlands:

> And now of late, but bad successe I heare,
> To an unfortunate two-legged *Beare*,
> Who though indeede he did deserve no ill,
> Some Butchers (playing Dogs) did well-nye kill:
> Belike they did revenge upon him take,
> For *Hunckes* and *Stone*, and *Paris-gardens* sake,
> With all the kindred of their friend old *Harry*:

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Figure 7. 'To see how the bear tore out his shoulder-bone': J. Aspin, *Cosmorama; a View of the Costumes and Peculiarities of All Nations* (J. Harris, 1827), Plate 2 (detail). Author's collection.

> But should the *Fortune-Beare*, by death misse-carry,
> I cannot see, but (by the Lawes consent)
> The Butchers would at Tyburne keepe their lent.[132]

Complicated though it is to interpret 400-year-old jokes, the lines seem to allude to a fully human simulacrum on the stage of the Fortune, by which an impersonated bear was attacked by impersonated dogs, and so gravely injured as to earn his assailants their imminent execution by hanging (Lent beginning on 26 February in 1612) should his wounds prove fatal, as well as confirming the memory of those three (by now late) authentic celebrity bears, Tom Hunks, George Stone, and Harry of Thame.[133]

Whatever strange spectacle it was that played out at the Fortune, however, memories of it were still fresh by the time Ben Jonson came to write *Bartholomew Fair* ('He was the first, sir, that ever baited the fellow i'the bear's skin,' snipes a stallholder of a hostile neighbour, 'no dog ever came near him since'),[134] which played at the new Hope playhouse in October 1614. Henslowe had commissioned that theatre, in the chase for trade, following the burning down of the Globe the previous June, and the enterprise of the Hope represented a culmination of Jacobean London's renewed enthusiasm for bear-baiting. Far from rivalling the public theatres, it was reasoned, the business model of its new complex of buildings was to supply some sort of 'dual-purpose' venue,[135] 'fit and convenient', via a removable stage, 'both for players to play in and for the game of bears and bulls to be baited in the same'.[136] Hence the grand jest of Jonson's site-specific Induction, in which the back-stage staff refer to the mess of 'broken apples for the bears' elsewhere kept within the 'stinking' premises of 'the Hope on Bankside' (lines 61–2, 185, 76–7).

The names of most of London's early playhouses are readily explicable. The Theater (1576) was the learned generic term, while the Red Lion (1567), Boar's Head (1598), and Red Bull (1606) inherited the signs of their original premises, and those of the Curtain (1577) and the Rose (1587) from the land on which they were built. The Swan (1595) 'was the first playhouse with what might be termed an idiosyncratic name', whether in reference to the local birdlife or a pre-existing tenement;[137] the Globe (1599) boldly advertised its principal dramatist's premise that all the world's a stage. There followed a pitch into abstraction with the Fortune (1600), emblematic of the human vicissitudes played out on its boards; and then 'Apres fortune espoir' (as a contemporary motto had it):[138] after the Fortune, the Hope (1613).

As it happens, though, Henslowe's new complex of buildings, including the 'house for the white beares and the playhouse called the hope',[139] wasn't the only thing to be so named that year. For it was Hope Island (now Hopen), the long, thin island a hundred miles south-east of the Svalbard archipelago (formerly Spitsbergen), that the maverick

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English mariner Sir Thomas Marmaduke of Hull evidently discovered, and named after his command, the *Hopewell*, in early 1613.[140] Jonas Poole had briefly renamed Bear Island 'Cherry Island' after his patron, and brought two polar bears back to Southwark in its honour in 1609. Did Henslowe reverse the compliment when it came to his new playhouse, naming it after another island in the same archipelago, then, as now, hosting 'the largest concentration of polar bears anywhere in the world'?[141]

Such is the specifically Jacobean context of bear-baiting (between princely exhibitions in the Tower of London and the full-blooded public expansion of the industry at the Hope) against which Shakespeare composed *The Winter's Tale* in late 1610, for performance in early 1611 – Simon Forman seeing it at the Globe on 15 May, and compiling so accurate a 'synopsis of the plot' that it might serve for a modern theatre programme.[142] Except, that is, for that detail of what has become the most famous stage direction in theatre history, recorded in the play's unique 1623 Folio text as: '*Exit pursued by a Beare.*' Over in seconds, you can blink and miss the action – which is presumably what Forman did; as he also omitted to mention (still more negligently) the climactic action of Hermione's 'statue' coming to life, which takes place over a far longer sequence in Act Five. Having adumbrated Hero's false denunciation and supposed death in *Much Ado*, her shadowy maid Ursula's final speech in the play explains how 'mightily abused' she and Claudio have been (5.2.89), before being specifically cued to attend the wedding ceremony during which Hero unveils to rise from her metaphorical 'monument' (5.3.1): 'One Hero died defiled, but I do live' (5.4.63). Likewise cruelly slandered, likewise believed dead, Hermione's later parallel resurrection in *The Winter's Tale* is more literal: here, she is her *own* monument. And so is the bear that predicts it. Whether or not each frosted with a dusting of white powder or make-up,[143] the momentary stage business of the play's bear presages the enduring miracle of its statue's reanimation. 'Is that bear *real*?' – but then, again, 'Is that *statue* real?': the same 'double-take' that Andrew Gurr so shrewdly identifies as unifying these 'precisely matching counterparts in the two halves of *The Winter's Tale*'.[144]

'Not marble . . . shall outlive this powerful rhyme,' reads Shakespeare's Sonnet 55, so when 'statues overturn . . . Shall you pace forth . . . in the eyes of all posterity.' No coincidence, surely, that Ibsen's 'Dramatic Epilogue', *When We Dead Awaken* (1899), so closely adheres to these primal opposites in contriving the encounter between Rubek, its sculptor protagonist, and the bear-slayer Ulfheim, who compares the 'hard materials' of their respective aims: 'I expect he wrestles with his blocks of marble, and I wrestle with the tense, quivering sinews of my bears. And we both get the better of our material in the end – we subdue and master it.'[145] Bestriding the stage between 'plays' and 'games', the 'high' drama and 'low' sport of the competing houses he had to negotiate,[146] Shakespeare had assigned nominal walk-on parts to bears (Warwick, Samson, Ursula, Orsino) long before he directed one to punctuate the pace of *The Winter's Tale.* And that most famous stage direction of all comprehended and distilled a lifelong association with these singular animals.

As a bug-a-boo of primal fears, then so lately and sadly confirmed in that 'child . . . negligently left in the beare-house' (and 'presaged by Mamillius's teddy bear' in some modern productions).[147] As an astronomical augury of seasonal metamorphosis, its zoological hibernation an ancient miracle of rebirth and a change of climate.[148] As a sign of the uncontrollable savageries of love. As an emblematic badge of royal, dynastic, or tyrannical power (sometimes signalled in productions by the 'augmentation of the fur on Leontes's costume').[149] As a projection of insecure rivalry – another theme of the Sonnets – 'in the guise of a hostile neighbour' (as Jung defined the Shadow).[150] As a symbol of 'propitiatory' tragic sacrifice.[151] As a figure – later literally – of Hope. As, finally, a paradoxically enduring embodiment of the fleetingly live illusion of theatre itself.

Perhaps more truly valedictory (or at least retrospective) than Prospero's increasingly ragged staff in *The Tempest*, the entrance and exit of Shakespeare's bear cue the Chorus of

Time to 'slide / O'er sixteen years' to the redemption of the 'second "hour" of the play':[152] the same sixteen years, more or less, since Shakespeare first joined the Lord Chamberlain's (now the King's) Men;[153] and the same period ('I held itt 16 year') after which Alleyn sold the Bear Garden (later redeveloped as the Hope) to Henslowe in February 1611, a few months before Forman saw *The Winter's Tale* at the Globe. That anonymous bear also first entered and exited midway between two different sorts of list.

In 1590, Thomas Burnaby had drawn up his inventory of goods to include the various prices of the named bears in his stable; in 1638, John Taylor included a numbered list of 'the Names of the . . . Beares' as an appendix to his encomium of *Bull, Beare, and Horse* (D4r–D4v). Do the intervening years between these documents trace the difference, as Gary Taylor notes of the many textual hierarchical 'tables' of Jacobethan culture,[154] between 'lists of contents' and 'lists of persons'? Do the names 'Harry of Warwick' (1590) or 'Ned of Cambridge' (1638), in other words, belong to a Dramatis Personae or a Cast List? Are they *parts* or *actors*? As Taylor concludes, 'that very distinction may be clearer to us than to early modern readers'. Or perhaps not; perhaps, in our days of 'reality television', whose mounting casualties, if unintentional, are at least accepted as occupational hazards, and when arguments have been mounted to reverse the ruling that an orangutan in a sitcom should be barred from an Emmy nomination,[155] it is Gary Taylor's term for fictional characters that perhaps best defines such celebrity animals – Shakespeare's true rivals – as 'virtual persons'.[156]

'Last scene of all . . .'

According to Alan Bennett, 'All theatre is theatre of blood': the noise of the National Theatre audience, relayed and amplified backstage before curtain-up, he says, 'sounded like the crowd at the Colosseum waiting for the massacre to begin', before describing the approach of 'two sabre-toothed pensioners': 'It had better be good,' said one of them; 'We're big fans of yours.'[157] It was once put to Harold Pinter that his parallel career as a working actor must have influenced his work. His reply included a detailed account of the 'healthy dislike of the audience' his training in rep had instilled: 'I still feel it's a contest,' he said.

> It's a battleground, the theatre, in many, many ways; and there's only one body of people who, in my view, must win, and that is the actors, that is the play. In other words, I think it's one's obligation not to give the audience what they want, but insist that they take what we give them.[158]

From 'the weasel under the cocktail cabinet'[159] to 'sabre-toothed pensioners' in a single theatrical generation. Or, still earlier, the ironing-board, from where Jimmy Porter finally emerges to confess to being a 'scruffy sort of a bear': 'There are cruel steel traps lying about everywhere, just waiting for rather mad, slightly satanic, and very timid little animals.' 'Poor bears!' laughs Alison, '*very softly*' adding, 'Oh poor, poor bears!'[160]

To say nothing of the dog; which is to say nothing of Spoof: the electronic 'emergency dog' by whose off-stage barks Alan Ayckbourn (that other veteran of rep) synchronized performances of his double-play *House & Garden* at the National Theatre in 2000 – 'two plays,' as its Author's Note instructs, with quiet malice, 'intended to be performed simultaneously by the same cast in two adjacent auditoria'.[161] So when a character exited through the French windows on the set of *House* in the Lyttelton, their entrance onto the fake-grass scenery of *Garden* next door at the Olivier was facilitated by the precise mechanics of this emergency soundtrack. The 'two sides' of this double-play were called at the time a 'nightmare of synchronization',[162] but in truth that was what Shakespeare's Playhouse and Beargarden had always been. For the company of actors Shakespeare joined had likewise always had to struggle to make their voices heard above the competing claims of adjacent auditoria. 'Why do your dogs bark so?' asks Abraham Slender of Mistress Anne (a provincial Perseus in reverse, chain in hand, to his damsel's Andromeda) in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*: 'Be there bears i'th' town?' – a question at which Bennett, Pinter, and Ayckbourn might well have pricked up their ears. 'I think there

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Figure 8. *'A polar bear walks onstage'*: Moira Buffini, Matt Charman, Penelope Skinner, and Jack Thorne, *Greenland* (National Theatre, 2011). Director: Bijan Sheibani. Designer: Bunny Christie. Photograph © Helen Warner.

are, sir,' replies Anne; 'I heard them talked of.'[163] 'Offstage barking noises,' comments the Arden editor here, 'are optional for the director': but 'optional' they were variously not – and 'talked of' they frequently were – for most of Shakespeare's working life.

From the opening stage direction of *Locrine* (perhaps the earliest play he 'script-doctored'), via the dynastic growls of his co-authored chronicle Histories, and the off-stage undercurrent of his Comedies, to the often bestial violence of his Tragedies, Shakespeare had long and variously contemplated the porous distinction that now endlessly animates the miracle of *The Winter's Tale*: 'What fine chisel / Could ever yet cut breath?' asks Leontes (5.3.78–9), aghast, at this new manifestation of 'crueltie into love'.

With one foot in the sand and blood of the South Bank, and another on the prestigious stage of successive Royal Courts, the actor-playwrights of Shakespeare's generation could never stop looking over, towards, across, and back (in anger or otherwise) at the primal scene of their art. 'The bears shouldn't be here,' says (yet another) Harry in the collaborative play *Greenland* (2011), which premiered at the National Theatre in

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February 2011, exactly four hundred years after *The Winter's Tale* – to whose first audiences something of the same perplexity must have occurred (Figure 8). Perhaps that anniversary consciously informed its co-author's own laconic stage direction, at the same point in the action as Shakespeare's most famous one in his (but here presaging 'the end of winter weather' for our own 'Anthropocene' age):[164] '*A polar bear walks onstage*,' it reads. '*Both men are petrified.*'[165]

Notes and References

This article is variously indebted to Craig Baxter, Dan Burnstone, Trevor Jameson, Elizabeth Lowry, Jan Piggott, Maria Shevtsova, Tim Underhill, and Mary Wilmer. It is dedicated to the memory of Simon Trussler (1942–2019).

1. C. G. Jung, 'Good and Evil in Analytical Psychology' (1959), in *Collected Works*, ed. Herbert Read, Michael Fordham, and Gerhard Adler, vol. 10, trans. R. F. C. Hull, second edition (Routledge, 1970), p. 456–68 (para. 872).
2. Nick de Somogyi, 'Shakespeare and the Naming of Bears', *New Theatre Quarterly*, XXXIV, No. 3 (August 2018) [NTQ 135], p. 216–34 (p. 231).
3. *Romeo and Juliet*, ed. René Weis (London: Bloomsbury, Methuen Drama [Arden 3], 2012), 5.3.299–305. Unless otherwise stated, all quotations of Shakespeare's plays are from their 'Arden 3' text; all places of publication are London; and all non-dramatic contemporary sources retain their original spelling.
4. Pieter van den Keere, 'London' (1593), in Jeremy Black, *Mapping Shakespeare: An Exploration of Shakespeare's World through Maps* (Conway, 2018), p. 108–9.
5. The first citation in *OED* to mean the 'large white bear of the Arctic regions' dates from 1769, probably in a figurative sense, with Ursus Maritimus being defined in such zoological terms sixty years later.
6. René Weis, *Shakespeare Revealed: A Biography* (John Murray, 2007), p. 41.
7. Ibid., p. 86.
8. Peter W. M. Blayney, *The Bookshops in Paul's Cross Churchyard* (Bibliographical Society, 1990), p. 26. For a partial list of mostly seventeenth-century London premises, see Bryant Lillywhite, *London Signs: A Reference Book of London Signs from Earliest Times to about the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (George Allen and Unwin, 1972), p. 27–9.
9. Chris J. Smith, 'The Bear and the Ragged Staff', *The Amateur Historian*, III, No. 5 (Autumn 1957), p. 216–19.
10. Madeleine Hammond, *The Misericords of Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon* (C. J. Hammond, 2013), p. 27.
11. *Minutes and Accounts of the Stratford-upon-Avon Corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon and other Records 1553–1620: Vol. 1. 1553–1566*, ed. Richard Savage (Oxford: Dugdale Society, 1921), p. 128. I am grateful to Islam Issa for this reference.
12. *OED*, **bugaboo**, *n.*, 1.a. ('People terrify their Children with the tremendous Names of Bugaboo' [1710]); **bugbear**, *n.*, 1. ('to make us afraied of shadowes and buggeberes' [1552]). See also *The Winter's Tale*, ed. John Pitcher (Arden, 2010), p. 30.
13. Robert E. Bieder, *Bear* (Reaktion, 2005), p. 122–9.
14. The play is lost, but Day and Haughton's payments for it are recorded in November 1599 (*Henslowe's Diary*, ed. R. A. Foakes, second edition (Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 64, 125–6), and the astrologer-physician Simon Forman wrote up a synopsis after seeing it on 9 March: see S. P. Cerasano, 'Philip Henslowe, Simon Forman, and the Theatrical Community of the 1590s', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, XLIV (1993), p. 145–58 (p. 158).
15. *The Comedy of Errors*, 3.2.159–60.
16. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 2.2.98–9; 5.1.21–2.
17. *Coriolanus*, 1.3.33.
18. Ibid., 4.1.30; 4.7.23; 5.4.13. For an extended account of the play in this context, see Andreas Höfele, *Stage, Stake, and Scaffold: Humans and Animals in Shakespeare's Theatre* (Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 92–114.
19. The Victorian archaeologist W. Boyd Dawkins's view that the 'brown bear, inhabiting Britain during the time of the Roman occupation, was extirpated probably before the tenth century' remains the consensus – though quite how long before remains uncertain (*Cave Hunting: Researches into the Evidence of Caves* (Macmillan, 1874), p. 75).
20. Amidst a host of parallels, see for example the successive payments of ten shillings at Coventry in 1578 to 'the Earle of darbies Playerz' and 'the Earle of darbies Bearward' (*Records of Early English Drama: Coventry*, ed. R. W. Ingram (University of Toronto Press, 1981), p. 286); and, later, the discrete but simultaneous accounts for June 1607 recording expenses 'For the Beares . . . meate at Dover' and for payment for a visit to the same town by the King's Men: see *Henslowe Papers: Being Documents Supplementary to Henslowe's Diary*, ed. Walter W. Greg (A. H. Bullen, 1907), p. 103; and David Grote, *The Best Actors in the World: Shakespeare and His Acting Company* (Greenwood Press, 2002), p. 157.
21. Still pertinent is C. L. Kingsford, 'Paris Garden and the Bear-Baiting', *Archaeologia*, LXX (1920), p. 155–78.
22. Weis, *Shakespeare Revealed*, p. 26–7; Stephen Greenblatt, *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare* (Pimlico, 2005), p. 43.
23. *Robert Langham: A Letter*, ed. R. J. P. Kuin (Leiden: Brill, 1983), p. 57; the parallel is considered in Peter Holland's edition of the *Dream* (Oxford, 1994), but dismissed as far-fetched by Sukanta Chaudhuri in hers (Arden, 2017).
24. Katherine Duncan-Jones, *Shakespeare: Upstart Crow to Sweet Swan 1592–1623* (Methuen, 2011), p. 205.
25. Katherine Duncan-Jones, *Shakespeare: An Ungentle Life* (2001; Methuen, 2010), p. 14.
26. Greenblatt, *Will in the World*, p. 48.
27. *Robert Langham*, p. 47–8.
28. Stephen Dickey, 'Shakespeare's Mastiff Comedy', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, XLII (1991), pp. 255–75. For a modern staging of such concerns, see also Bill Alexander, *Exploring Shakespeare: A Director's Notes from the Rehearsal Room* (Nick Hern Books, 2023), p. 189–91.
29. Walter Scott, Kenilworth, ed. Andrew Lang (Macmillan, 1926), p. 283–6.
30. Ibid., p. 291–2, where follows a sustained defence of the 'royal game of bear-baiting' by the Earl of Sussex, this time as a military allegory: 'And then comes Sir Mastiff, like a worthy champion, in full career at the throat of his adversary . . .' (p. 293).
31. Ibid., p. 296–7.

32. *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 20 December 1790 (issue no. 5223).

33. An Act for the more effectual Prevention of Cruelty to Animal (12 & 13 Vict. c. 92), 1 August 1849.

34. See (in its 200th year) <education.rspca.org.uk>; for an American perspective, see William O. Stillman 'The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals', *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science*, II, No. 4 (July 1912), p. 150–8.

35. Joseph Strutt, *The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England* (1801), ed. J. Charles Cox (Methuen, 1903), p. 205. Scott had completed Strutt's unfinished historical novel *Queenhoo* in 1808 (see Jennifer Harris, 'Strutt, Joseph (1749–1802)', *ODNB*).

36. Scott, *Kenilworth*, p. 293.

37. Ibid., p. 291.

38. See S. P. Cerasano, 'The Master of the Bears in Art and Enterprise', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, V (1991), p. 195–209.

39. Thomas Rogers, *Leicester's Ghost*, ed. Franklin B. Williams (University Library of Chicago, 1972), p. ix–xvi. (Subsequent line references are to this edition.)

40. Geoffrey Whitney, *A Choice of Emblemes* (1584), quoted in ibid., p. xi.

41. Thomas Middleton, *No Wit/Help Like a Woman's; or, The Almanac* [1611], ed. John Jowett, in *Collected Works*, gen. ed. Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), p. 828 (Scene 9, lines 475–9); referring to the Southwark pub, the 'Beare at the Bridge F[o]ot' (Lillywhite, *London Signs*, p. 28).

42. John Taylor, *Bull, Beare, and Horse* (1638), D2v.

43. Weis, *Shakespeare Revealed*, p. 30.

44. *Ovid's Metamorphoses: The Arthur Golding Translation 1567*, ed. John Frederick Nims (Philadelphia: Paul Dry, 2000), p. 47–8 (lines 598–600).

45. Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 225.

46. *OED*, **polar bear**, *n.*, 1 ('The northern constellation Ursa Major; the Great Bear'), citing Joseph Beaumont, *Psyche, or, Love's Mysterie*: 'The Northern Polar Bear shall sooner burn, / And Siriu's [*sic*] mouth be sealed up with Frost' (1648).

47. *OED*, **Arctic**, *adj.*, 1a.

48. Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid*, p. 225.

49. *Two Elizabethan Stage Abridgements: 'The Battle of Alcazar' and 'Orlando Furioso'*, ed. W. W. Greg (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), p. 172; *Titus Andronicus*, 4.3. Greene's play was entered for publication in London's Stationers' Register in December 1593, and printed the following year.

50. George F. Warner, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts and Muniments of Alleyn's College of God's Gift at Dulwich* (Longmans, Green, and Co., 1881), p. 60, See Tiffany Stern, *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), Chapter 6 ('Scrolls'), especially p. 180–1.

51. *Henslowe's Diary*, ed. Foakes, p. 16 (21/22 February 1592). Until 1752, years formally began on 25 March ('Old Style'), though 1 January was also celebrated as a New Year's Day. All ambiguous years are here given in 'New Style' (so that what Henslowe considered February 1591 is what we now consider February 1592).

52. *Two Elizabethan Stage Abridgements*, p. 172 ('those arcadyā twins').

53. Calista Lucy, Keeper of the Archive at Dulwich College, plausibly attributes the unique survival of Alleyn's cue-script of *Orlando* to its sentimental retention by his future wife ('Joan Woodward: The Good Sweetheart and Loving Mouse', Dulwich Society, 3 October 2023).

54. Warner, *Catalogue*, MS VIII, f. 5v (transcribed in *Henslowe's Diary*, ed. Foakes, p. 301).

55. 1.1.103; *Robert Langham*, p. 47.

56. *Twelfth Night*, ed. Roger Warren and Stanley Wells (Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 85.

57. Ben Jonson, *The Masque of Augures*, in *Ben Jonson*, ed. C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson, 11 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925–54), vol. 11, p. 629–43 (p. 634).

58. David Wiles, *Shakespeare's Clowns: Actor and Text in the Elizabethan Playhouse* (Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 167.

59. 3.1.4. She is 'Ursley' here in the 1600 Quarto, revised in the Folio to 'Ursula', which she remains thereafter within the dialogue in both texts.

60. As editors note, Margaret may be Shakespeare's slip for Ursula, or evidence of her later introduction to the plot: see *Much Ado About Nothing*, ed. Claire McEachern (Arden, 2016), p. 270–1.

61. Taylor, *Bull, Beare, and Horse*, D4r.

62. *Troilus and Cressida*, ed. David Bevington (Arden, 1998), p. 346.

63. The generally accepted reading for Q's 'double hen'd spartan' (1609), optimistically revised to read in F 'double hen'd sparrow'.

64. Thomas Moffet, *Healths Improvement: or, Rules comprizing and discovering the nature, method, and manner of preparing all sorts of food* [*c.* 1590], 'corrected and enlarged by Christopher Bennet' (1655), cited in Oscar Brownstein, 'The Popularity of Baiting in England Before 1600: A Study in Social and Theatrical History', *Educational Theatre Journal*, XXI (1969), p. 237–50 (p. 242). See also Emily Cockayne, *Hubbub: Filth, Noise, and Stench in England, 1600–1770* (Yale University Press, 2007), p. 97.

65. Eric Griffiths, 'Timeliness', in *If Not Critical*, ed. Freya Johnston (Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 47–64 (p. 63). On the student lawyers at the Inns of Court for whom this play (and *Twelfth Night*) may have been designedly performed, see Nick de Somogyi, 'Shakespeare and the Three Bears', *New Theatre Quarterly*. XXVII, No. 2 [NTQ 106] (May 2011), p. 99–113 (p. 106–9).

66. See *Troilus and Cressida*, ed. Bevington, p. 1–3: 'Even the original publishers of Quarto and Folio seem not to have known what to call it' (p. 3).

67. Scott, *Kenilworth*, p. 293–5.

68. *Henry V*, 4.0.50–1; Ben Jonson, *Every Man In His Humour*, ed. Martin Seymour-Smith (New Mermaids: Ernest Benn, 1966), Prologue, 9–11 (added to its 1616 text).

69. Scott, *Kenilworth*, p. 295.

70. See Nick de Somogyi, *Shakespeare's Theatre of War* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998).

71. 'As is the eccho of a Cannons crack / Dischargd against the battlements of heaven' (*The Troublesome Raigne of King John* [1591], in *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, ed. Geoffrey Bullough, 8 vols (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957–75), vol. 4, p. 113; lines 1514–15).

72. There is some debate among scholars as to whether the pictured animal is a bear or a wild boar ('certains n'y voient pas un ours, mais un sanglier'), but the fact that it is muzzled tends to the former interpretation. I am grateful to Clémentine Paquier-Berthelot, Director of the Bayeux Tapestry Museum, for her kind correspondence on this matter.

73. *The Lay of Havelok the Dane*, ed. Walter W. Skeat, second edition, rev. ed. K. Sisam (1915; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 60 (lines 1837–40) [my glosses].

74. *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2012), Psalm 88 (page header), Ss.ii.r [fo. 254].

75. *The World of the Luttrell Psalter*, ed. Michelle P. Brown (British Library, 2006), p. 15.

76. Thomas Nashe, *Pierce Penilesse his Supplication to the Divell* [1592], *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, ed. Ronald B. McKerrow (Sidgwick & Jackson, 1910), vol. 1, p. 211–12.

77. Geoffrey Gates, *The Defence of Militarie Profession* (1579), p. 57. George Peele's *Edward I* was printed in 1593, the anonymous *Famous Victories of Henry V* in 1594.

78. Thomas Nashe, *Strange News: Four Letters Confuted* [entered in the Stationers' Register on 12 January 1593], in *Works*, ed. McKerrow, vol. 1, p. 281. ('Tame' is the Oxfordshire village Thame.)

79. Kingsford, 'Paris Garden and the Bear-Baiting' (p. 174–5), transcribing National Archives, C146/8581 (reproduced in de Somogyi, 'Naming of Bears', p. 219). On Whiting, see de Somogyi, 'Three Bears', p. 102.

80. *Edward III*, ed. Richard Proudfoot and Nicola Bennett (Arden, 2017), p. 345.

81. Barrett to Alleyn, from Evesham, Worcestershire, 11 June 1610: 'The beares have with greatt victorie performed all their M[aster]s' matches, especially Littell Besse of Bromly, who fou[gh]te in one day [20] duble and single coursses with the beste doges in all the cuntrie' (Warner, *Catalogue*, p. 72; MS II, f. 45).

82. See de Somogyi, 'Naming of Bears', p. 220–2.

83. *OED*, **Arthur**, *n.*, 1; Michel Pastoureau, *The Bear: History of the Fallen King*, trans. George Holoch (Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 51–5 (p. 53).

84. *Lydgate's Troy Book*, ed. Henry Bergen, Early English Text Society (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1906), p. 31 (line 683).

85. *Richard II* (3.2.156); *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (3.1.68). (Pastoureau makes no reference to Shakespeare.)

86. Nashe, *Works*, ed. McKerrow, vol. 1, p. 212.

87. On Alleyn as Talbot, see *Henry VI, Part 1*, ed. Edward Burns (Arden, 2000), p. 2–3; *Edward III*, ed. Proudfoot and Bennett, p. 48; Taylor, *Bull, Beare, and Horse*, D4v.

88. *Henry V*, 4.3.51–4; de Somogyi, 'Naming of Bears', p. 219; Taylor, *Bull, Beare, and Horse*, D4r–D4v.

89. *Henry VI, Part 2*, 5.1.144–7.

90. *Henry VI, Part 1*, ed. Burns, p. 57–60.

91. *Henry VI, Part 2*, 5.1.151–4.

92. *Henry VI, Part 3*, 2.1.15–17.

93. *Narrative and Dramatic Sources*, ed. Bullough, vol. 1, p. 285 (see also de Somogyi, 'Naming of Bears', p. 230). The same term is used in the manuscript Jacobean bill advertising 'a greate mach . . . to plaie v dogges at the single beare' at the Bear Garden (Warner, *Catalogue*, p. 85; MS II, f. 86); and (perhaps casting doubt on that document's authenticity) in Richard Brome's 1636 play *The Antipodes*, where a similar document is recited: 'Royal pastime in a great match . . . six dogs of a side to play single at the game-bear for fifty pound' (*The Antipodes*, ed. Ann Haaker (Edward Arnold, 1967), 4.1.8–10). Leslie Hotson describes as 'typical' a satirical version from 1650 beginning 'A Match, a match' (Hotson, *The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage* (Harvard University Press, 1928), p. 64).

94. John Field, *A Godly Exhortation, by occasion of the late judgement of God, shewed at Parris-garden, the thirteenth of Januarie* (1583), B4r. For a later, more complicated political instance, see the epitaph on the bear Blind Bess, who 'many prize / 'Gainst Butchers Dogs she won' (26 November 1660; Hotson, *The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, p. 69).

95. Edward Topsell, *The Historie of Foure-Footed Beastes. Describing the true and lively figure of every Beast* (1607), p. 36–7.

96. *1 Henry IV*, 1.2.70–1; *2 Henry IV*, 1.2.169–71.

97. Henry Lok to Robert Cecil, 8 June 1598, in S. P. Cerasano, 'The Master of the Bears in Art and Enterprise', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, V (1991), p. 195–209 (p. 202), quoting TNA SP12/267/43.

98. *Henry V*, 3.7.141–4.

99. Taylor, *Bull, Beare, and Horse*, D2r.

100. Olaus Magnus, *Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus: Description of the Northern Peoples* [1555], ed. Peter Foote, trans. Peter Fisher and Humphrey Higgens, 3 vols (Hakluyt Society, 1996–8), Book 18, Chapter 26 ('She-bear rages when her cubs are stolen'), vol. 1, p. 908.

101. John Taylor, *Taylors Revenge* [7 October 1614], *All the Workes of John Taylor the Water Poet* (1630), p. 142–7 (p. 143), describing 'a greater puzzell then the blinde Beare in the midst of all her whip-broth' (see de Somogyi, 'Naming of Bears', p. 222–5). Gloucester denounces Edgar as a 'murderous caitiff [caytife]' in the 1608 Quarto, but as a 'murderous Coward' in the 1623 Folio. The revision – if that is what it was – promotes dramatic irony (Edgar eventually proving a valiant champion in single combat with Edmund) over his threatened, *captivity* at the stake, in common with the *captive* bears so routinely and wretchedly punished ('caitiff' then still being alive to its cognate).

102. Anne Barton, '"Enter Mariners Wet": Realism in Shakespeare's Last Plays' (1986), in *Essays, Mainly Shakespearean* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 182–203 (p. 199).

103. Lizzie Loveridge, 'War Horse takes the art of puppetry to the sublime', <https://theatrevibe.co.uk/2007/10/18/review-war-horse-at-the-olivier-in-2007/> (accessed 1 November 2023).

104. Anthony Mackinder, with Lyn Blackmore, Julian Bowsher, and Christopher Philpotts, *The Hope Playhouse, Animal Baiting, and Later Industrial Activity at Bear Gardens on Bankside: Excavations at Riverside House and New Globe Walk, Southwark, 1999–2000* (Museum of London, 2013), p. 13.

105. *The Lamentable Tragedy of Locrine*, in William Shakespeare and others, *Collaborative Plays*, ed. Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 76–132 (p. 76–7).

106. John Stow, *Annales of England*, 'continued and augmented by Edmund Howes' (1631), p. 1004. Prince Henry sought to redeem the bathos by commending one of the dogs, 'saying, he that had fought with the King of beasts, should never after fight with any inferior creature' (ibid.). See also *The Progresses, Processions, and Magnificent Festivities, of King James the First*, ed. John Nichols, 4 vols (J. B. Nichols, 1828), vol. 2, p. 259; Prince Henry staged a bloodier re-match there between the three lions and 'divers Doggs' the following April (ibid., p. 307–8).

107. *Jacobean and Caroline Revels Accounts 1603–1642*, ed. W. R. Streitberger (Malone Society, 1986), [vol. XIII], p. 15.

108. Ibid.; *Progresses, Processions*, ed. Nichols, vol. 2, p. 80; Leeds Barroll, *Politics, Plague, and Shakespeare's*

Theatre: The Stuart Years (Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 148–9.

109. Warner, *Catalogue*, p. 73–4 ('Depositions of Bryan Bradley and Richard Tyler, servants to Henslowe and Alleyn': July 1611).

110. De Somogyi, 'Three Bears', p. 101–2, 111, n.14.

111. On the stoically named George Stone, see ibid., p. 102. The first Black 'Action Man' figurine (1977) was named 'Tom Stone', a conflation of two of the most famously heroic Jacobethan bears, George Stone and Tom Hunks. The latter (*fl.* 1590–1605?) shared his name with Sir Thomas Hunks, a 'professional soldier', knighted in Ireland in 1605, whose elderly widow later counted among the patients treated by Shakespeare's son-in-law John Hall: see Joan Lane, *John Hall and his Patients: The Medical Practice of Shakespeare's Son-on-Law* (Stratford-upon-Avon: Alan Sutton, 1996), p. 244–7.

112. *Progresses*, ed. Nichols, vol. 2, p. 259.

113. Barbara Ravelhofer, '"Beasts of Recreacion": Henslowe's White Bears', *English Literary Renaissance*, XXXII (2002), p. 287–323.

114. Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas his Pilgrimes: Contayning a History of the World in Sea Voyages and Lande Travells by Englishmen and others*, 20 vols (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1906), vol. 13, p. 281.

115. *Ben Jonson*, ed. Herford and Simpson, vol. 7, p. 351; see Ravelhofer, '"Beasts of Recreacion"', p. 305–8. However originally staged, some of the power of that entrance might be glimpsed in *Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (2005, dir. Andrew Adamson), in which Tilda Swinton steers her own (digitally created) polar-bear-drawn chariot into battle.

116. Helen Wilcox, 1611: *Authority, Gender, and the World in Early Modern England* (Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), p. 24; Judie Newman, '"Exit, Pursued by a Bear": *The Winter's Tale*', *Notes and Queries*, CCXXXIII (1988), p. 484; Michael D. Bristol, 'In Search of the Bear: Spatiotemporal Form and the Heterogeneity of Economics in The Winter's Tale', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, XLII (1991), p. 145–67 (p. 159); *Ben Jonson*, ed. Herford and Simpson, vol. 7, p. 352.

117. On the play's relationship with noise in Jacobean London, see Cockayne, *Hubbub*, p. 109–18.

118. *Epicoene or The Silent Woman*, ed. L. A. Beaurline (Edward Arnold, 1967), 2.6.57–8.

119. Juana Green, 'Properties of Marriage: Proprietory Conflict and the Calculus of Gender in *Epicoene*', in *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama*, ed. Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda (Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 261–87 (p. 265). Such tableware, known as 'Nuremberg plate', was then becoming 'highly fashionable' (ibid.), presumably thanks in part to the succession of German dignitaries then visiting James's court – and being entertained with a series of bear-baiting exhibitions: see for example *Progresses*, ed. Nichols, vol. 2, p. 307 (Friedrich Ulrich, 1610), and Warner, *Catalogue*, p. 73–4 ('the Landgrave of Hesse his son', July 1611).

120. Jason Scott-Warren, 'When Theatres Were Bear-Gardens; or, What's at Stake in the Comedy of Humours', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, LIV (2003), p. 63–82 (p. 68).

121. Richard Almond, 'A Huntsman's Home', *History Today*, LXI, No. 4 (April 2011), p. 6–7. I am grateful to Louisa Kennedy for affording me access to the murals of Madingley Hall.

122. *Mucedorus*, in *Collaborative Plays*, ed. Bate and Rasmussen, p. 503–50 (2.113); Ravelhofer, '"Beasts of Recreacion"', p. 319.

123. *Mucedorus*, p. 513–14. For additional discussion, see Leo Kirschbaum, 'The Texts of *Mucedorus*', *Modern Language Review*, L (1955), 1–5; and George F. Reynolds, '*Mucedorus*, Most Popular Elizabethan Play?', in *Studies in the English Renaissance Drama*, ed. Josephine W. Bennett, Oscar Cargill, and Vernon Hall Jr (P. Owen & Vision Press, 1961), p. 248–68.

124. W. J. Lawrence, *Those Nut-Cracking Elizabethans: Studies of the Theatre and Drama* (Argonaut, 1935), p. 27.

125. Dennis Biggins, '"Exit pursued by a Beare": A Problem in *The Winter's Tale*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, XIII (1962), p. 3–13 (p. 4); Teresa Grant, 'Polar Performances', *TLS*, 14 June 2002, p. 14–15.

126. For an enjoyable recent take on such literalism, see April De Angelis, *The Divine Mrs S* (Faber, 2024), where John Philip Kemble complains to his sister, Mrs Sissons, that the 'trouble with playwrights is they've never set foot in a theatre. They casually write "Enter on horseback", they haven't given a bloody thought to getting a horse up the backstairs' (p. 16).

127. The Fortune, on the northern outskirts of London's city limits, was the playhouse Alleyn and Henslowe built in 1600, soon after the Globe's opening on Bankside in 1599. See, for example, Julian Bowsher, *Shakespeare's London Theatreland: Archaeology, History, and Drama* (Museum of London Archaeology, 2022), p. 96–101.

128. See Blaire Van Valkenburgh, 'The Biology of Bears', in *Bears: Majestic Creatures of the Wild*, ed. Ian Stirling (HarperCollins, 1993), p. 50–61 (p. 51). At the time of writing, a comparably ambiguous controversy has arisen as to whether a bear filmed in a Chinese zoo was in fact a 'human in a bear suit': <https://www.itv.com/news/2023-07-31/chinese-zoo-denies-sun-bear-is-human-in-a-bear-suit> (accessed 6 November 2023).

129. *Ben Jonson*, ed. Herford and Simpson, vol. 10, p. 535.

130. Ibid., p. 198.

131. John Taylor, *A Cast Over the Water* (1615), in *All the Workes*, p. 155–63 (p. 159).

132. Samuel Rowlands, *The Knave of Harts. Haile Fellow. wel met* (1612), F4r; second edition (1613), F3v.

133. See de Somogyi, 'Three Bears', p. 106–10.

134. *Bartholomew Fair*, in *Selected Plays*, ed. Martin Butler (Cambridge University Press, 1989), 3.4.149–51.

135. Gerald Eades Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, 7 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941–68), vol. 6, p. 200.

136. *English Professional Theatre, 1530–1660*, ed. Glynne Wickham, *Herbert Berry, and William Ingram* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 598 (contract dated 29 August 1613).

137. William Ingram, *A London Life in the Brazen Age: Francis Langley 1548–1602* (Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 112.

138. Edward Fenton [translating Pierre Boiastuau], *Certaine Secrete Wonders of Nature, containing a description of sundry strange things* (1569), t.p. (epigraph).

139. Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, vol. 6, p. 203.

140. See W. Martin Conway, *Early Dutch and English Voyages to Spitsbergen in the Seventeenth Century* (Hakluyt Society, 1904), p. 2–6; Conway, *No Man's Land: A History of Spitsbergen from its Discovery in 1596 to the Beginning of the Scientific Exploration of the Country* (Cambridge University

Press, 1906), p. 61–2, 101–3; Louwrens Hacquebord, 'Three Seventeenth-Century Whaling Stations in Southeastern Svalbard: An Archaeological Missing Link', *Polar Record*, XXIV, No. 149 (April 1988), p. 125–8 (p. 126–7); and John C. Appleby, 'Conflict, Cooperation, and Competition: The Rise and Fall of the Hull Whaling Trade during the Seventeenth Century', *The Northern Mariner/Le Marin du nord*, XVIII, No. 2 (April 2008), p. 23–59 (p. 25–6, 29–33). I am grateful to the staff of the Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge, for their assistance (now long ago).

141. At least as of 2017: Phoebe Smith, 'Svalbard', *From Our Own Correspondent*, BBC Radio 4 (broadcast 14 January 2017), <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b087pffj>. For early ('1613. Hope I.', 1625) and modern maps, see Vidar Hisdal, *Geography of Svalbard*, second edition (Oslo: Norsk Polarinstitut, 1985), p. 68–9 and Appendix 3. On contemporary associations of playhouses with naval vessels (and islands), see *The Tempest*, ed. Nick de Somogyi, (Shakespeare Folios: Nick Hern Books, 2015), p. xlvi–l.

142. Judith Cook, *Dr Simon Forman: A Most Notorious Physician* (Chatto & Windus, 2001), p. 188–9.

143. See Reynolds, '*Mucedorus*', p. 262 ('a brown bear playing the part [in *Mucedorus*] may have been powdered with flour and chalk', relaying the suggestion of the director of the Zoological Society, L. Harrison Matthews); and Biggins, '"Exit pursued by a Beare"', p. 3 ('brown bears, whether born albino or subsequently painted white, could stand in for their Arctic brethren'). For a comparable imagining of a statue by Shakespeare, see Buckingham's description of the silent crowd in *Richard III*: 'they spake not a word; / But, like dumb statues or breathing stones / Gazed [F Stared] each on other, and looked deadly pale' (3.7.24–6).

144. Andrew Gurr, 'The Bear, the Statue, and Hysteria in *The Winter's Tale*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, XXXIV (1983), p. 420–5 (p. 420).

145. Henrik Ibsen, *When We Dead Wake*, in *'Ghosts' and Other Plays*, trans. Peter Watts (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964; 1986), p. 237. Ibsen evidently stressed Ulfheim's nickname (as the animal's 'hunter', 'slayer', 'shooter', and 'murderer') as '*Bjørnejæger . . . Bjørnedræber . . . Bjørneskytte . . . Bjørnemorder*' (p. 301); 'I've posed in music-halls,' says Rubek's former model and muse Irena, 'naked on a turn-table, as a living statue' (p. 242).

146. Wiles, *Shakespeare's Clown*, p. 167.

147. *A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare: The Winter's Tale*, ed. Robert Kean Turner and Virginia Westling Haas, *et al.* (Modern Language Association of America, 2005), p. 817.

148. Barry Sanders, 'Anthropology, History, and Culture', in *Bears*, ed. Stirling, p. 152–63 (p. 154–5).

149. *A New Variorum Edition*, p. 817.

150. C. G. Jung, 'The Fight with the Shadow' (1946), BBC Radio Talk, in *Collected Works*, ed. Read *et al.*, vol. 10, p. 218–26 (para. 456). The full quotation, arguably of equal relevance to Leontes of Polixenes as to Shakespeare's professional neighbours, reads: 'Anything that disappears from your psychological inventory is apt to turn up in the guise of a hostile neighbour, who will inevitably arouse your anger and make you aggressive.' For a useful recent book-length discussion of the concept, see *Jung's Shadow Concept: The Hidden Light and Darkness within Ourselves*, ed. Christopher Perry and Rupert Tower (Routledge, 2023).

151. Bristol, 'In Search of the Bear', p. 156–7.

152. *The Winter's Tale*, ed. Pitcher, p. 77.

153. Bart van Es, 'Company Man', *TLS*, 2 February 2007, p. 14–15.

154. Gary Taylor, 'The Order of Persons', in *Thomas Middleton and Early Modern Culture*, ed. Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), p. 31–79.

155. Helen Gilbert, 'A Line of Distinction: Orangutan Farces and Questions of Interpretation', *Kunapipi*, XXXIV, No. 2 (2012), p. 152–62.

156. Taylor, 'The Order of Persons', p. 51.

157. Alan Bennett, 'The National Theatre', *Untold Stories* (Faber, 2005), p. 383–7 (p. 386).

158. Harold Pinter, interview with Mark Lawson (2005), *Front Row*, BBC Radio 4 (repeated 26 December 2008), <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/boogy71c> (accessed 5 November 2023): from 18:29, proceeding to remember the 'mink-coated brigade' at the New York first night of *The Homecoming*.

159. See, originally, Harold Pinter, *Various Voices: Prose, Poetry, Politics 1948–2005* (1998; London: Faber, 2005), p. 43; and on which, lastingly, Simon Trussler, *The Plays of Harold Pinter: An Assessment* (Victor Gollancz, 1973), p. 13–15.

160. John Osborne, *Look Back in Anger* (1956), in *Plays: One* (1993; Faber, 1996), p. 94–5.

161. Alan Ayckbourn, *House & Garden* (Faber, 2000), p. v.

162. 'Two Sides to Ayckbourn Story', <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/872323.stm> (accessed 10 November 2023).

163. *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, ed. Giorgio Melchiori (Arden, 2000), (1.1.268–70), p. 142; see de Somogyi, 'Three Bears', p. 103–6.

164. On *The Tempest* and the Anthropocene, see John Kerrigan, *Shakespeare's Originality* (Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 94–6.

165. Moira Buffini, Matt Charman, Penelope Skinner, and Jack Thorne, *Greenland* (Faber, 2011), p. 63–6. I am grateful to Helen Warner for her kind permission to reproduce her photograph of this production.