

Shakespeare's Stage

When people think of William Shakespeare usually a few things associated with him comes to mind. One, to me, would be the Globe Theater, in London, England.

The Globe is not only historically valuable because it was where many of Shakespeare's plays were performed, but also because it is the only building left in London proper that still has a thatched roof. The Globe also was made by wooden tools out of wood by hand and is still repaired that way. There are no nails and no steel rods. The only addition to the structure of the theater is a roof top sprinkler system that was required to be installed in order to keep the thatched roof. The stage itself lends beauty to the whole place. It is meant to represent heaven, earth, and hell. If you look at the stage from the "grounding" level you will see the blue "sky" ceiling with the signs of the zodiac depicted on it. The stage floor is wood and seen as the brown earth. The pillars represent "what holds up the sky". The raised part that the stage is set upon is seen as hell. The placement of actors on the stage was very important, since where they would stand would either associate them with heaven, earth, or hell. I think a good example of this would be the placement of kings. They were typically elevated off of the stage on a platform or appearing on the balcony. This would help to represent their being seen as more than a man and less than a god, since kings are

supposedly appointed by God, and would therefore be closer to heaven than anyone else. An excellent example in one of Shakespeare's plays would be Richard II, when he is up on the battlement of the Castle (which would be the balcony, or 'heaven') and comes down to meet Bolingbroke. His coming down really parallels his decent from kingship, and losing God's favor, in to a man (ending on the stage, or "earth").

