

## SUPERNATURAL ENVIRONMENTS IN SHAKESPEARE'S ENGLAND

Bringing together recent scholarship on religion and the spatial imagination, Kristen Poole examines how changing religious beliefs and transforming conceptions of space were mutually informative in the decades around 1600. *Supernatural Environments in Shakespeare's England* explores a series of cultural spaces that focused attention on interactions between the human and the demonic or divine: the deathbed, purgatory, demonic contracts and their spatial surround, Reformation cosmologies, and a landscape newly subject to cartographic surveying. The book examines the seemingly incongruous coexistence of traditional religious beliefs and new mathematical, geometrical ways of perceiving the environment. Arguing that the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century stage dramatized the phenomenological tension that resulted from this uneasy confluence, Dr. Poole's groundbreaking study considers the complex nature of supernatural environments in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* and Shakespeare's *Othello*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *The Tempest*.

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SUPERNATURAL  
ENVIRONMENTS IN  
SHAKESPEARE'S ENGLAND

*Spaces of Demonism, Divinity, and Drama*

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CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press & Assessment  
 978-1-107-00835-9 — Supernatural Environments in Shakespeare's England  
 Kristen Poole  
 Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)



CAMBRIDGE  
 UNIVERSITY PRESS

Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom  
 One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA  
 477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia  
 314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India  
 103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

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 education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
 Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781107008359](http://www.cambridge.org/9781107008359)

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First published 2011  
 First paperback edition 2014

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data*  
 Poole, Kristen.

Supernatural environments in Shakespeare's England : spaces of demonism,  
 divinity, and drama / Kristen Poole.

p. cm.

ISBN 978-1-107-00835-9 (Hardback)

1. English drama—Early modern and Elizabethan, 1500-1600—History and criticism.
2. Supernatural in literature. 3. Space in literature. 4. Supernatural—History—16th century.
5. Supernatural—History—17th century. 6. Religion and literature—England—History—16th century.
7. Religion and literature—England—History—17th century. 1. Title.

PR658.S82P66 2011

822'.30937—dc22

2010045992

ISBN 978-1-107-00835-9 Hardback  
 ISBN 978-1-107-46330-1 Paperback

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*To Martin  
and  
Corinna and Juliana*

## *Contents*

<i>List of figures</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xi
<i>Note on the text</i>	xv
Prologue: Setting – and unsettling – the stage	i
Introduction: The space of the supernatural	6
1 The devil's in the archive: Ovidian physics and <i>Doctor Faustus</i>	25
2 Scene at the deathbed: <i>Ars moriendi</i> , <i>Othello</i> , and envisioning the supernatural	58
3 When hell freezes over: The fabulous Mount Hecla and <i>Hamlet's</i> infernal geography	95
4 Metamorphic cosmologies: The world according to Calvin, Hooker, and Macbeth	136
5 Divine geometry in a geodetic age: Surveying, God, and <i>The Tempest</i>	168
Epilogue: Re-enchanting geography	219
<i>Notes to the text</i>	224
<i>Index</i>	278

## Figures

- |    |  |     |
|----|--|-----|
| 1  | Anon., <i>The Dyenge Creature</i> . London, 1506. Title page.<br>By permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.  | 67  |
| 2  | Anon., <i>Ars moriendi</i> . London, 1506. Sig. A1 <sup>v</sup> . Reproduced<br>by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University<br>Library. Classmark Sel.5.8.   | 68  |
| 3  | Anon., <i>The Doctrynnall of Deth</i> . London, 1532. Title page.<br>© The British Library Board. Shelfmark C.25.k.21.   | 69  |
| 4  | Gerard Mercator, <i>Atlas novus, sive, descriptio geographica<br/>totius orbis terrarum</i> . Amsterdam, 1638. Vol. I, Fol. C2–3.<br>University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware.   | 110 |
| 5  | Detail from Gerard Mercator, <i>Atlas novus, sive, descriptio<br/>geographica totius orbis terrarum</i> . Amsterdam, 1638. Vol. I,<br>Fol. C2–3. University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware.   | 112 |
| 6  | Detail from Gerard Mercator, <i>Atlas novus, sive, descriptio<br/>geographica totius orbis terrarum</i> . Amsterdam, 1638. Vol. I,<br>Fol. D2–3. University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware.   | 114 |
| 7  | Thomas Hood, <i>The Vse of the Two Mathematicall Instruments,<br/>the Crosse Staffe, (Differing from that in Common Vse with<br/>the Mariners) and the Jacobs Staffe</i> . London, 1596. Title page.<br>By permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library. | 175 |
| 8  | Image demonstrating the use of the Jacob's staff, also known<br>as the cross staff. Source unknown.  | 178 |
| 9  | George Wither, <i>A Collection of Emblemes, Ancient and Modern</i> .<br>London, 1635, p. 143. By permission of the Folger Shakespeare<br>Library.  | 179 |
| 10 | Guillaume de Saluste du Bartas, <i>Du Bartas His Deuine<br/>Weekes &amp; Works</i> . London, 1611. Engraved title page.<br>By permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.  | 182 |

x	<i>List of figures</i>	
11	Aaron Rathborne, <i>The Surveyor in Foure Books</i> . London, 1616. Engraved title page. By permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.	183
12	Leonard Digges, <i>A Geometrical Practical Treatize Named Pantometria</i> . London, 1591, pp. 30–1. By permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.	190
13	Francis Quarles, <i>Emblemes</i> . London, 1635, p. 288. By permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.	204
14	Leonard Digges, <i>A Geometrical Practical Treatize Named Pantometria</i> . London, 1591, pp. 18–19. By permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.	205
15	Christopher Marlowe, <i>Tragicall Historie of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus</i> . London, 1631. Title page. By permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.	217

## *Acknowledgments*

This book took over a decade to write, and thus my debts are legion. At many points the project was nudged, questioned, or sent reeling by the comments of others. Some of these people I know, and I have benefited from a chat over tea at the Folger, a hallway exchange at a conference, or a quick conversation with a colleague. Some of these people I don't know, and help came in the form of a comment at a conference panel, an email inquiry, or a random conversation on the train. It would take another chapter for me to detail these formative encounters here, so I should simply like to say thanks to all of those who have contributed, wittingly or not, to this book.

My interactions in the classroom have helped me to solidify my thinking on many of the topics in these pages, and I am thankful for my students through the years. The conversations that took place in a graduate seminar I taught on “Renaissance Space-time” at the University of Delaware, and a seminar I taught on the senses at the Folger Shakespeare Institute, were especially valuable. Two graduate students in particular, Joshua Calhoun and Hannah Eagleson, deserve a special hand; I'm sure I have learned as much from them as they have from me. Over the years I have benefited from the research assistance of Joshua Calhoun, Daniel Mason, Kelly Nutter, and Amy Sopko. I am grateful to the University of Delaware for General University Research Grants that enabled me to have this help.

The project was launched with two short-term fellowships, one at the Folger Shakespeare Library and one at the Huntington Library. I am grateful to the staff of both institutions, especially to those at the Folger who have generously offered assistance over the years.

Chapter 1 was previously published as “The Devil's in the Archive: *Doctor Faustus* and Ovidian Physics,” *Renaissance Drama*, n.s. 35 (2006), 191–219. A very different iteration of Chapter 4 appeared as “Physics Divined: The Science of Calvin, Hooker, and Macbeth,” *South Central*



*Quarterly*, 26 (2009), 127–52. And a much truncated version of Chapter 3 stands as “When Hell Freezes Over: Mount Hecla and *Hamlet*’s Infernal Geography,” *Shakespeare Studies*, 39 (2011), 152–87. For all of these, I benefited from the comments of the various editors – Mary Floyd-Wilson, Garrett Sullivan, and Carla Mazzio – and from some wonderful anonymous reader’s reports. I am grateful to those journals for permission to include parts of those articles in this book.

While the contents of another small article (“Psychologizing Physics,” *Shakespeare Studies*, 33 [2005], 95–100) do not directly appear in this book, writing that piece helped me to formulate and focus on my key ideas. The editor who asked me to write that submission was the late Cynthia Marshall, whose warm intellectual generosity, as manifest in an email correspondence that was longer than the article itself, continues to amaze and inspire me.

At Cambridge University Press, Reader A provided a detailed and crucial report that enabled me to better see my argument and to restructure the whole manuscript. Likewise, I profited from the final comments of Reader B (as in Bruce Smith, who graciously unmasked himself). Sarah Stanton was patient and supportive through a long process of revision. Rebecca Taylor smoothly ushered the manuscript into production. Andrew Dawes copy-edited the book with a keen eye and good humor, and Meg Davies (once again) swiftly produced an expert and artful index.

I am blessed with a most extraordinary writing group. This book simply would not exist without them. Through sharing drafts, camaraderie, and pretentious cheeses, the group provides me with a rich, sustaining, and fun intellectual life. The group has morphed as people have moved into and out of the Philadelphia area, and so through the years I have received invaluable feedback and support from Scott Black, Claire Busse, Edmund Campos, Alice Dailey, Jane Hedley, Matt Kozusko, Zachary Lesser, Laura McGrane, Nicole Miller, Scott Newman, Eric Song, Garrett Sullivan, Jamie Taylor, Evelyn Tribble, and Julian Yates. Most especially, Nora Johnson, Katherine Rowe, and Lauren Shohet have graciously read additional drafts and provided additional encouragement.

My neighbors and friends have preserved my sanity during the insane process of simultaneously writing a book and raising children. Michael Hanowitz and Tom Maciag, Shannon Coulter and Matthias and Lillian Ohr, Drury and Ellen Pifer (who doubles as a colleague), Steve Helmling (also a colleague), and, by long distance, Jennifer Carrell have sustained me with wine and laughter.

*Acknowledgments*

xiii

I tend to write with the aid of a computer and a cat. Thus at the risk of once again incurring the gentle (?) ridicule of my friends, I hereby acknowledge the feline contributions of both the old guard, Floh and my sorely missed companion Cleo, and the new guard, Katie and Pig.

My beloved daughters, Corinna and Juliana, have been growing up alongside this book. While they have often made it difficult for me to think about theology and physics (or, for that matter, to think at all), they dazzle with a spark of the divine and a sense of the real. Every day I am joyful just to see them, and I try to borrow from their unbounded energy, creativity, and enthusiasm for life.

When writing a book that in many ways is about early modern modes of mapping, it is convenient to be married to a cartographic historian, even if he is an Americanist. I met Martin Brückner in my first week of graduate school, and we soon began talking about our mutual interest in the conceptualization of space. The conversation has continued for the last two decades. In the BC era (i.e. Before Children), we even managed to co-author an article, “The Plot Thickens: Surveying Manuals, Drama, and the Materiality of Narrative Form in Early Modern England,” *English Literary History*, 69 (2002), 617–48. This book (Chapter 5 in particular) is peppered with references to that piece. What I thought was a mere cul-de-sac of my intellectual life turned out to be the main road of the journey. I am happy, immensely grateful, and honored to have Martin traveling beside me.

### *Note on the text*

For sixteenth- and seventeenth-century sources, I have retained original spelling (with the exception of modernizing the long s), although I have standardized capitalization in book titles. The place of publication is London unless indicated otherwise. In my extended discussions of *Othello*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *The Tempest* I have used Arden editions. Throughout the book, unless a different edition is specified, references to other Shakespearean plays are from Stephen Greenblatt *et al.* (eds.), *The Norton Shakespeare*, based on the Oxford Edition (New York and London: W. W. Norton and Co., 1997).