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978-1-107-00835-9 - Supernatural Environments in Shakespeare's England: Spaces of Demonism, Divinity, and Drama

Kristen Poole

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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*.

KRISTEN POOLE is Associate Professor in the English Department at the University of Delaware. She specializes in the religious culture and literature of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England. She is the author of *Radical Religion from Shakespeare to Milton: Figures of Nonconformity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), and has published articles in numerous scholarly journals.

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*To Martin
and
Corinna and Juliana*

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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.

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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*

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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.

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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.

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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).