Such Stuff podcast
Season 3, Episode 1: Women and Power

[Music plays]

Imogen Greenberg: Hello, and welcome back to Such Stuff, the podcast from Shakespeare's Globe.

You might have noticed, we've been taking a little season break, but now we're back and well underway with the summer season here at Shakespeare's Globe!

Throughout the summer season, the Globe stage will be home to three History plays which ask huge questions about leadership and leadership battles, power and the loss of power, truth and responsibility. And across the three plays – Henry IV parts 1 and 2, and Henry V – three iconic and traditionally male Shakespearean parts… Hotspur, Falstaff and King Henry V… will all be played by women.

As our Globe Ensemble takes to the stage every week, the plays will change and shift, and resonate with our own political moment… At the start of this remarkable process, the Globe hosted the Women and Power festival, exploring questions around what it means to lead, and what it means to lead as a woman in politics, in academia, and of course, in the arts.

So, this week on the podcast, we'll be going behind the scenes with the Women and Power festival, asking what the relationship between women and power is now, what it means to occupy spaces that have been traditionally male or masculine, how the voices that came before us can inspire us moving forwards, and what the relationship between women and power might look like in the future.

So here’s Farah – who convened the festival – to introduce it properly…

Dr Farah Karim Cooper: The Women and Power festival at the Globe is a one-week festival looking at the relationship that women have or don't have to power. So we've been hosting events which are giving a voice to a lot of women who are underrepresented. It's an intersectional festival, it's looking at women across all social classes, all races, all abilities etcetera. So we've had a night looking at what it means to be a female director in the theatre industry in Britain today; 40 years of activism with Clean Break theatre company and the activist group Southall Black Sisters; we're having Donna Zuckerberg talk about her book Not All Dead White Men which exposes the misogynistic online community. And then we're going to have a symposium looking at women and leadership. The reason we wanted to do this is because we knew that our artistic director Michelle Terry was gonna be programming history plays and casting women as kings, and we wanted to think about what does that mean to be a woman in a position of power. How are you received as a woman in a position of power? Do we have models for leadership? Is the only model for leadership the one that men have created over the last 2000 years? And so when a woman gets into a position of power or leadership, what does she do? What resources does she have to lean on, and what brand of leadership should we be cultivating as women, especially in the 21st century where women's rights are actually regressing? So I felt it was a really urgent time to do this festival.

Power means to me autonomy, it means financial independence, it means having the ability to make my own choices in my work, in my life, how I raise my daughter. Access to power, it has less happy connotations, because women generally are barred from access to power. No matter how much we think we've progressed in the West, think about five other countries elsewhere haven't even got as far as we are now, and we're not even as far as we need to be, and so if we're going to think about women and access to power we have to be global about it and we have to be intersectional about it. And we need men to actually support this, to support women gaining access to power. Because actually no matter where you go they are still the ones with all the access.

Some of the things I've been learning over the week and some of the discussions we've been having have been really thinking about women bonding together, women collaborating, being proactive, supporting each other. Because I think one of the strategies or tactics of the patriarchal systems that we live in is to pit women against each other and that enables the power structures that exist to continue to exist. The minute women start working together and supporting each other, then there's hope that that can change.

IG: So, we'll be hearing from Sarah Amankwah who is currently playing Henry V in the Globe's history plays about what it means to take on the role as a woman and as a woman of colour…

We sit down with Claire Van Kampen to talk about the progress she's seen when it comes to the relationship between women and power in her lengthy career across the arts…

And we get to grips with the backlash to the gains made when it comes to women and power, as we chat to classicist Donna Zuckerberg. Her book, Not All Dead White Men, delves into the murky online world of the alt-right, and how they're appropriating

classical texts to further a misogynistic and white nationalist agenda…

And as we ask how we move forwards with creating access to power for women in a meaningful and intersectional way… we look to the women who came before us for inspiration, with words from Virginia Woolf, read by women of the Globe.

[Music plays]

IG: First up, Sarah Amankwah is currently playing Henry V on the Globe stage, charting his journey from likely lad to iconic English king across Henry IV parts 1 and 2, and Henry V. The role comes with certain expectations… generations have seen Henry V as a play about a certain kind of Englishness. But the Globe Ensemble has been looking at these plays as if they were new writes, not least with all expectations about casting put aside. Farah sat down with Sarah to ask how she's been getting to grips with the character and the play, what it means as a woman of colour to step into a role that has been the preserve of white, male actors and what she's learnt about women and power, and herself, so far in the run.

FKC: Sarah, you're playing Henry V this year...

Sarah Amankwah: That's correct...

FKC: And I wanted to talk to you a little bit about that. Obviously this is contextualised in our discussions that we're having about women's relationship to power specifically. But the history plays, traditionally aren't really places where women get lots of opportunities for performing.

SA: No [laughs]

FKC: So I wonder if you could talk a little bit about the Globe Ensemble's approach to casting in this trilogy of Henry plays that you're doing.

SA: Yes. So I guess when we first had our meetings for the Ensemble, it was sort of pitched to us that we would be looking at these plays as if they were new plays. So we had no idea what the castings were gonna be, I definitely didn't know. Yeah it was very much the sense of we are approaching these plays with a whole new way of exploring them, so they can be very much set anywhere, with anyone playing the King or Queen, what have you, and exploring it from that kind of narrative. And for me to, to have the honour and opportunity to play a King has been one of the most amazing but also toughest challenges I've ever had to take on, surprisingly. But it's just great, just approaching a particular narrative that has many assumptions about how its viewed or who speaks it, who gives it life if you will. And to be able to be I guess a sort of conduit as well in that sense, because I've never seen these plays, I've never read these plays, so I in particular I guess came from a very fresh and if anything, raw perspective.

FKC: That's exciting!

SA: I just saw these people as people, and you know characters as opposed to sort of imposing a gender on anyone, and just sort of taking these humans in this world and this experience and sharing that, really.

FKC: Has playing this part made you think about the different ways that men lead and the different ways women lead? Has it made you think about women and leadership or women and power?

SA: It's interesting, actually, because I've tried not to? Just to, again, try and not impose anything on the situations and

circumstances. However, what's been very interesting is the conversations that have come up with even just me playing the King. You sort of learn very quickly that no one listens to you. [Laughs]. Like oh great, this is great, this is going to be interesting. Again, and that's not necessarily anything that's done deliberately of course, but just in course of what's kind of... where we've come from and what we, you know the environments we've grown up in, how our culture, backgrounds kind of shape how we view each other in sort of gender differences. But it's very interesting how there is a sort of natural what's the word... privilege that comes with certain men, you know, intentionally and unintentionally when they are playing roles with... authoritative roles. Whereas to women there's a sort of sense of... Oh, oh ok... [laughs]... I sort of have to kind of deal with this sort of nuisance if you will. And that comes from a long stem of you know sort of culture enforced on how we... you know women have been sort of silenced and yeah emasculated or however you want to phrase it. Yeah, so it's been very interesting for myself to again just sort of taking the task of 'Ok, I just sort of have to play this person of authority', and then having certain opinions imposed on you is very, very interesting, because then being able to sort of deal with that and deal with the challenges, in particular of Henry's thought and Henry's kind of pursuits, there's a part of me that's sort of like, 'Are you disagreeing with me, Sarah? Or are you disagreeing with the character?' And sometimes for some people it can be very hard to differentiate the two. Especially me being a woman of colour as well... there is what I've kind of had an ongoing sense of... the sense of being invisible. And obviously that's in and of itself a lie, as every human being has intrinsic worth and dignity and value. But then when one is put in a position when they have to somewhat lead... there is that, that they have to contest with. They have to contest with people's backgrounds, people's views and opinions. Yes, long-winded answer...

FKC: No, really interesting answer, actually because it leads into other questions that I have, because obviously you've been playing it for a couple of weeks now. And I'm curious about the audience and how they're sort of connecting to you as King Henry. Because obviously this part has this sort of legacy of the great English King, the big, white, male authority of the past. And even Shakespeare sort of I guess alludes to that legacy, because he had that legacy in Shakespeare's time. So I'm wondering how you're dealing with the challenges of all those assumptions that are on his character.

SA: Ooh, yeah that's a really hard question. Short answer, I don't know just yet. In all honesty, every day, every show, even today I was just sort of like 'Oh gosh, God help me get through this show!' [Laughs]. 'Cause its very hard to gauge... I mean obviously you can only take what people sort of give you, and some people have been very encouraging and very forward thinking in the sense of you know, seeing myself play this character. But it's very hard to come on the stage and deliver this narrative and try and read or understand what the eyes are telling you? And obviously in a space like the Globe it's so exposing, so there's that and you know, being able to say sort of 'Once more unto the breach' and then you're sort of having, you know this predominantly if you will white audience looking at you, predominantly male as well. And there's parts of the inner psyche that's like you know, sort of has this imposter syndrome? Of like 'I don't think I'm supposed to be here [laughs]. Sorry I'm just gonna... I'm just gonna leave now'. And I think that's partly what Michelle in particular wanted to tackle and there's a part of me that's sort of like 'Wow, I feel like I'm at times this sort of sacrificial lamb that's kind of been pushed on'. But nonetheless, it's something that I'm very passionate about, particularly with art. And I think for those who come to see it, for one they already know I'm playing Henry V, so the fact that they're looking at me is saying a lot. So the challenges come every day, but I think a lot of its very much internal challenges, challenges that I have

personally faced dealing with racism in the industry, dealing with sexism as well, so there's so many aspects of that that I am carrying within Sarah's personhood and having to sort of meet that and push through, it's kind of not a yes and no answer, it's sort of still being navigated through and it's very exciting. It's very exciting because the amount of questions that I've had to ask myself and I have to keep reminding myself, at the end of the day Sarah, these humans are humans, and they're broken and they're fallible and at the end of the day, for me anyway, that's what I am on this journey to expose, that leadership, male or female, isn't going to be perfect. And regardless of how people assume this legacy within Britain, within Henry V, it's always going to have some blind spots. You know, with our politicians, our leaders today, they're not perfect [laughs]. And I think for me, it's being able to show that, if anything, so that we are able to at least have that same grace [laughs] with each other as well. That's kind of been my pursuit or my reminder if you will.

FKC: So to what extent is... really, you've probably kind of answered this in many ways... but to what extent is your identity being brought to bear on how you're sort of crafting this character.

SA: Good question...

FKC: I mean it may not be something, until the end of the run, that you're really, fully conversant with!

SA: Yeah. I guess... so when you say, just to see if I understood your question, my identity...

FKC: As a woman...

SA: As a woman of colour?

FKC: Yes.

SA: I think, without having to... It's interesting actually, I guess yeah... touching on what I'd said in the previous question I think which you'd alluded to... being able to again, strip back and by stripping back I don't mean denying my gender and my race, but at the same time all I have are his words.

FKC: Yeah.

SA: That's all I have. And there are times where I guess through the whole process, having to sort of suppress this imposter syndrome and go, well I've been given these words and whenever I sort of walk on to the stage even to this day, hearing you know 'Here comes your majesty', I have to believe that they're talking about me? I sort of look over my shoulder and go, 'Oh wow they're actually... they're talking to me'. And I think in that sense as well that that can be somewhat relatable to the character in his journey of having to wrestle with his identity and being this sort of reluctant king and having to kind of take on the sins of his father and all of that has allowed me as Sarah to wade into those kind of issues. But then at the same time, with the face I have, with the amazing God-given body that I have, I am able to stand and speak a voice, with a voice sorry, that people are less exposed to, says something else which I am still yet to discover, actually. And I think there's a part of that, whether people want to call it humility or not, I think it's... for me, I just kind of have a delayed response to things anyway. So I think allowing whatever that is, when I speak his words, for those people to engage, especially with speeches like 'Upon the king' and you know 'Crispin's Day', there is something that again, we tend to... certain things that we don't get when we don't have a woman's perspective, which makes it even more poignant because obviously we're so used to seeing things from a male, a white, male perspective. To then have a woman, if anything a woman of colour who in society, in my opinion is very much the

lowest of the low, to be able to speak such words, to be visible, for me says so many other things which I think is quite a powerful message. That I think is an absolute honour to be part of it. It's sort of history in the making if you will.

FKC: It really is. Fantastic, have a great season.

SA: Thank you.

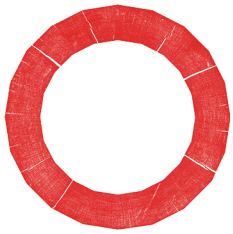
FKC: And thank you so much for joining us on the podcast.

SA: Thanks so much, thanks for having me. Thank you.

[Music plays]

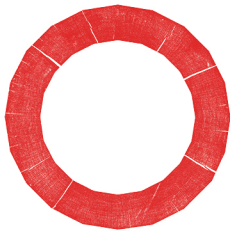
IG: Next up… as a classicist and academic, Donna Zuckerberg might not seem like a likely candidate to stand on the front line against the darkest recesses of the internet… But when she stumbled across online groups who were using the classical texts and ideas she worked with every day to further a misogynistic and racist agenda, she started the research that led her to write Not All Dead White Men. So, what has the ancient Greek philosophical idea of stoicism got to do with white nationalists? And what has The Art of Love, a book by the ancient Roman poet Ovid, got to do with pick up artists and incels? Here's Donna…

FKC: So Donna, you've just published a really fascinating expose of the alt-right and misogynist online communities in your book Not All Dead White Men, and I feel like it does tell us a little bit about the way these groups use classical texts to advance this sort of awful, dangerous agenda and you also give us some sort of guidance about how to cope with it as well. Can you tell our audiences how you came to research this topic and how you coped with the material once you got digging?



Donna Zuckerberg: So, it started in late Summer 2015, I launched an online classics publication called Eidolon in early 2015 and then in August we had our first big hit, which was an article called 'Why is Stoicism having a cultural moment?' And I was searching the sources of the traffic for the article, which was much higher than I expected it to be, and I found some of the traffic coming from Reddit. Which was a little alarming, for those who know Reddit, Reddit can be quite a dark place. But it was actually quite a nice sub-Reddit, about stoicism where people sort of debate how to apply stoic ideas to the difficulties in their lives. So somebody had posted our article and they were debating about it. But there was a commenter who had been down voted a lot by the community, because it turns out that red pill people are not actually well liked by the rest of the stoicism community. So there was a commenter who had responded to this community saying he thought that the red pill was the reason why stoicism was rising in popularity again, because the red pill was so interested in stoicism and that struck me as deeply bizarre because if I had one word to describe the red pill, in my experience of it before that time, it probably would have been angry, and that's the opposite of stoicism.

So the red pill is an online community of mostly men, mostly between the ages of 18 and 35, mostly straight, mostly white, who are united by the idea that our society and by our society we usually mean US society, but Western society, discriminates against straight, white men. And they believe that they have attained enlightenment that allows them to see that they're discriminated against, when most of society thinks that the opposite is true. And this metaphor of the red pill comes from the movie The Matrix, where Ne-Yo swallows a red pill which allows him to see the world for how it really is. Initially, the red pill was really focused on men's rights movements and then kind of gradually shifted from there to misogyny and it grew to include the pick-up artist community and also allied communities which don't have exactly the same view but share a common world



view about what they call the sexual marketplace, which is, I mean it's what it sounds like. Everybody is sort of allotted a sexual marketplace value and everybody's trying to get the highest value significant other that they can. So the pick-up artists are one way of looking at the sexual marketplace, the men going their own way are another group, they think that the sexual marketplace is so skewed against men that the only thing is to opt out entirely. And then the incels, who have been getting quite a lot of press lately, are another way of looking at the same world view and they believe they're the losers in the sexual marketplace, they're so unattractive that they will never be able to convince women to sleep with them. And then over the course of 2016, this group grew to include anti-Semites, vocal white nationalists and even people who identify as neo-Nazis and then people who wouldn't identify as white nationalists or neo-Nazis, this is the group that calls itself the alt-light. So they're aware of all the sort of negative baggage attached to those terms and instead see themselves as the defenders of Western civilisation which is itself for them essentially a code for white culture. So all of those groups fall under this larger umbrella of the red pill and they exist almost exclusively online in virtual fora, you know Reddit, 4Chan, 8Chan, various blogs.

So I decided to look further into that, and around the same time, I was working on a comparative project about Ovid and pick up artists and then I started to notice pick up artists actually talking about Ovid, which I hadn't expected. I'd expected it to be comparative as I said, I didn't expect it to be a reception project. So at that point, when I had these two very different threads, you know one with the pick-up artists and Ovid, and one with the red pill more generally and stoicism, it began to look like a much bigger project about this online community and classical antiquity.

So I started researching and I started writing the book in late 2015. When I started it was really about anti-feminism and

misogyny, that was the primary focus of the community. They were still sort of coming off of gamer-gate? I don't know if your audience will be familiar with that. It was a largely American movement in the video game community, a reaction to the rise of progressivism and feminism in the video game community, very focused on harassing female game developers and female game journalists. And that was really where they developed a lot of their online terror tactics, you know: doxxing, revealing people's identifying documents; swatting, right, placing calls to the FBI to make it sound like something terrible is going on at their house so a SWAT team shows up. Tactics like that were developed during the gamer-gate era and have continued on to today.

Anyway, so I was writing this book and researching it throughout 2016, and I watched as these communities went from being primarily anti-feminist to being anti-feminist and anti-Semitic, which had always been there, but it became much louder, and then by the end of 2016, you know, the rise of the alt-right, really very vocally white nationalist. And that shift happened whilst I was doing this research.

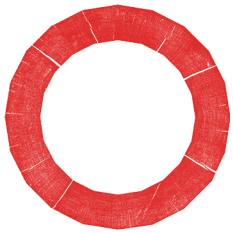
FKC: Fascinating.

DZ: And... it was tough to watch. I set myself sort of strict limits to how much I could research on these sites per day...

FKC: Yeah that's what I was wondering!

DZ: Because otherwise I think I would have gone off the deep end. Sort of an hour per day. Or if I hit something that was so gross that I felt like I needed to sort of sit down, close my computer, play with my dog, then I did that.

FKC: Yeah. It was really interesting what you were saying about how in 2016, you actually were able to chart that shift, while you were actually researching it, and obviously the sort of rise of



populism in the country and Donald Trump's election may have contributed to the I suppose feelings of courage that these groups now have...

DZ: Absolutely...

FKC: They're emboldened in some way.

DZ: That's exactly right. I remember how excited they were after the election. And one of them posted a sort of celebratory article on his website that said 'Now if you rank women on a scale of 1 to 10 and openly talk about how hot they are, people will say 'You sound like the President of the United States''.

FKC: So you're no doubt aware of the issues in the United States that the Medieval community, the Medievalists are having...

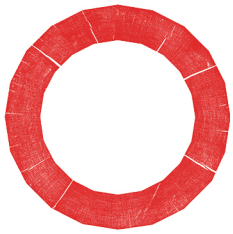
DZ: Yes!

FKC: With white supremacists who are co-opting Medieval literature, ideas and iconography in order to reinforce their own ideology and of course your book points out what's happening in classics. In some ways I feel like it won't be long before they come for Shakespeare. And of course, the Nazis in Nazi Germany already came for Shakespeare…

DZ: Right.

FKC: So I'm wondering what advice you might have for those of us who are sort of custodians, teachers of, scholars of and lovers of these classic texts.

DZ: I mean they undoubtedly will. They're cherry pickers, right, there doesn't need to be a real coherent, historical narrative. So



the first piece of advice I would give is that it's incredibly tempting when you see the mistakes or the sort of very shallow surface readings in what they do to focus on correcting that, and though I do think that's important to a certain extent, you know it's our job as scholars to try to disseminate accurate understanding of the material we study, don't mistake that for actually responding or counteracting their influence in a substantive way. Because you will never convince a white supremacist not to be white supremacist by correcting him about Shakespeare, right? I think that's a lesson that I think a lot of people learnt the hard way. They would sort of point out a mistake, and think well, if that person makes obvious mistakes then no one will pay attention to what they're saying. And really that is never true. It doesn't matter. You have to point out the ideology underneath. And you have to do the hard work of showing some people that the kind of unthinking assumptions behind why they are drawn to Shakespeare might be the same as the reasons why white supremacists are drawn to Shakespeare. That's been one of the hardest things in classics is that... a lot of classicists fall back on narratives about the foundations of Western civilisation. Which are also narratives that are very attractive to the far right.

FKC: Those are actually two really good tips. And the first one that you mentioned, that is a really easy trap to fall into, isn't it?

DZ: It is. That was one of the first things that my editor said to me when I was writing this book. It was on the Ovid chapter, actually. There was a lot more pointing out mistakes they made, with a sort of winky, you know, like 'haha look how dumb they are' kind of undertone and she said to me, 'Donna it doesn't make you a better person than they are because you know more about Ovid'.

FKC: [laughs] Yeah.

DZ: And she was right!

FKC: Thank you Donna, and thank you for being on the front line and for writing this book.

DZ: Oh thank you, for having me.

FKC: It's an extraordinary book and we really appreciate you coming here and speaking tonight...

[Music plays]

IG: Next up, Farah sat down with composer, playwright and director Claire Van Kampen to talk about her career leading orchestras, companies and teams in the arts industry. How has her own relationship with power changed? How has others perception of her positions of authority changed? And what gives her hope for the future of women leading from the front in the arts industry?

FKC: Claire, thank you for being with us today, I wanted to ask you about something definitional, if you could talk about what it means to be a female leader. You work in the arts, you're a composer, a director, playwright... and I wonder if you could just sort of elaborate for us for you what it means as a woman to be in this field.

Claire Van Kampen: Well I think we're redefining what leadership means more and more, and today's symposium was no exception really, because my fellow panellists just gave me so many insights about the developing forms of leadership that they're encountering and engendering. When I first became if you would say the leader of what I was doing, it was probably twenty, thirty years ago, when we assumed more of a male cloak as female leaders. We led in that form, in the way that men were leading, that's all we could do, because our role models weren't there in the way that they are for some of these younger women, now. So I would say that my ability to lead and my thoughts

about my own leadership are ever-changing, and particularly now almost exponentially as the world is now focusing itself so much on gender, and what it is to be led by particularly female gender in the workplace.

FKC: A lot of people have this imposter syndrome, but I hear women talking about it more than I hear men talk about it, so whether or not men actually suffer with it but just don't mention it and women are more open about mentioning it... I wonder if you could talk about the concept of imposter syndrome, and did you ever suffer it and what advice would you give to younger women who are sort of dealing with their own sense of imposter syndrome?

CVK: I think this is a very real problem, and it is not just a problem for women of my generation... you know, when I went to school, I heard rhetoric which contained phrases such as 'women can't drive, they make bad drivers', 'no woman has ever written a symphony', 'name ten women poets of excellence', that kind of thing. So I started to think that perhaps all of the things I wanted to do, I wouldn't be able to do because I was female. It's something that can be so implanted in you that you're not even conscious of it and it informs the whole of your life and the whole of your interface with what you want to do in life, your ambitions and it creates an enormous anxiety and fear. So that when you step into what you feel you want to do and can do, it's very difficult to lose those critical voices that say, 'Oh you're going to fall on your face', 'You're never going to be able to do that', 'Why not let a man do that? They know how to do that, do you really know how to do this?' And it doesn't help that, certainly when I started out in my professional life, I was openly questioned by the men I was leading, especially in orchestral bands and in administrative sections of my work, I was challenged by men who perceived me as taking their job. So I think the imposter syndrome has to be addressed at a very early level for females in school. I don't think our education system is geared towards it.

It's geared to achievement and success on the page, but not on the stage of life, not enough! But now I think we're starting to develop, particularly over the last eighteen months, two years, to develop female role models that give us more assurity of who we are and who we might become and it all comes down to developing your sense of authenticity, self-authenticity, discovering who you really are. Once you bond with that, then you are not so much in danger of falling into the imposter syndrome.

FKC: I think, obviously you've talked a lot about how things were different when you were younger, and we've seen a lot of progress in the last fifty years... what challenges are there now, and how would you advice young women about taking on the next fifty years in terms of progress? I know that's a huge question! [laughs].

CVK: Well, it's a very important question because I see there's a fork in the road. We can go down the side of the fork that we know, which is to be militant, adversarial, combative, to take on sort of face to face those who don't agree with us or are objectionable. Or we can develop another route. And we're still discovering what that might be but I think it is to do with the collective nature of a democratic, collective view of how to proceed, which is to do with empathy, compassion, education and understanding. For example, if I am faced now with someone who is blatantly sexist, let’s say, towards me, I no longer think is that person right? And therefore pull that question back to myself and get angry about it. I now think, they must feel very threatened to feel that. This means that they're world can't be very stable to them in a way that my world is more and more becoming stable in an interior sense to me. Because the more I know myself, the more I feel I can operate in the world. So in a sense, it doesn't mean that you're excusing or condoning this behaviour, but you're putting yourself in a position where you're not its victim. And I think there's... we don't really know how to do

this yet, but we are... if we can find out a methodology to combat these problems without being adversarial, and take another approach, I suppose you could say its conflict resolution in a peaceful way, then I think the world will really change. If we don't, it won't change it'll just keep going backwards and forwards, and we won't move forwards in a true sense.

FKC: Well my last question then is thinking really about the theatre industry as it is today, and the world of classical theatre, Shakespeare. Is it still, in your view, dominated by men who are, you know, often Oxbridge educated, or do you see some change happening and do you feel optimistic? Actually, seeing what Michelle Terry is doing with the Globe, I feel incredibly optimistic. She's in charge, although she won't like that phrase, of the most incredible experiment where she is changing and sort of smashing old forms of how we do Shakespeare and how we put it on the stage. It's no longer dominated by that Oxbridge sort of white middle class male highly educated person who tells actors how to be on a stage and what to do with a text. The actors are given enormous responsibility. I think that's a very true model, personally, of how it originally was in the day the playwright wrote the plays. So to me that feels very, very inspiring. I think theatre is changing? I think that's very difficult for a lot of people who don't want it to change and don't want the structures to change. More and more I think we need to enable people to go to the theatre, we need to make it a place that is so attractive they're put down their iPhones and their tablets and their television programmes and want to go out and be social together. And that's why the Globe is such a unique space in a world of theatre because it’s a social space where people see each other. And real theatre, the blood and guts of theatre, is where change happens and that's what the Globe is all about for me.

FKC: Thank you, Claire, and thank you for inspiring us with your work today.

[Music plays]

IG: When it comes to women and power, it sometimes feels like we've been having this conversation for far too long, but we still have so much further to go. To move forwards, we look to the women who came before us. A Room of One's Own by Virginia Woolf is a seminal feminist text, fighting for a space for women, both literal and imaginative. In a particular passage, she imagines what would have happened if Shakespeare had had a younger sister, as 'adventurous' and 'imaginative' as him… but bound by the constraints of her age…

[Reading of text]

Lucy Butterfield: Cats do not go to heaven. Women cannot write the plays of Shakespeare.

It would have been impossible, completely and entirely, for any woman to have written the plays of Shakespeare in the age of Shakespeare.

Let me imagine, since facts are so hard to come by, what would have happened had Shakespeare had a wonderfully gifted sister, called Judith, let us say. Shakespeare himself went, very probably — his mother was an heiress — to the grammar school, where he may have learnt Latin — Ovid, Virgil and Horace — and the elements of grammar and logic.

He was, it is well known, a wild boy who poached rabbits, perhaps shot a deer, and had, rather sooner than he should have done, to marry a woman in the neighbourhood, who bore him a child rather quicker than was right. That escapade sent him to seek his fortune in London. He had, it seemed, a taste for the theatre; he began by holding horses at the stage door.

Very soon he got work in the theatre, became a successful actor, and lived at the hub of the universe, meeting everybody, knowing everybody, practising his art on the boards, exercising his wits in the streets, and even getting access to the palace of the queen.

Meanwhile his extraordinarily gifted sister, let us suppose, remained at home. She was as adventurous, as imaginative, as agog to see the world as he was. But she was not sent to school. She had no chance of learning grammar and logic, let alone of reading Horace and Virgil.

She picked up a book now and then, one of her brother's perhaps, and read a few pages. But then her parents came in and told her to mend the stockings or mind the stew and not moon about with books and papers.

They would have spoken sharply but kindly, for they were substantial people who knew the conditions of life for a woman and loved their daughter — indeed, more likely than not she was the apple of her father's eye.

Perhaps she scribbled some pages up in an apple loft on the sly but was careful to hide them or set fire to them. Soon, however, before she was out of her teens, she was to be betrothed to the son of a neighbouring woolstapler.

She cried out that marriage was hateful to her, and for that she was severely beaten by her father. Then he ceased to scold her. He begged her instead not to hurt him, not to shame him in this matter of her marriage. He would give her a chain of beads or a fine petticoat, he said; and there were tears in his eyes.

How could she disobey him? How could she break his heart? The force of her own gift alone drove her to it. She made up a small parcel of her belongings, let herself down by a rope one

summer’s night and took the road to London. She was not seventeen.

The birds that sang in the hedge were not more musical than she was. She had the quickest fancy, a gift like her brother’s, for the tune of words. Like him, she had a taste for the theatre. She stood at the stage door; she wanted to act, she said.

Men laughed in her face. The manager — a fat, loose-lipped man — guffawed. He bellowed something about poodles dancing and women acting — no woman, he said, could possibly be an actress. He hinted — you can imagine what.

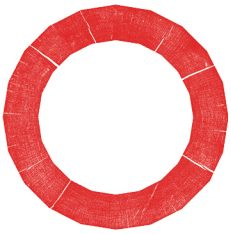
She could get no training in her craft. Could she even seek her dinner in a tavern or roam the streets at midnight? Yet her genius was for fiction and lusted to feed abundantly upon the lives of men and women and the study of their ways.

At last — for she was very young, oddly like Shakespeare the poet in her face, with the same grey eyes and rounded brows — at last Nick Greene the actor-manager took pity on her; she found herself with child by that gentleman and so — who shall measure the heat and violence of the poet’s heart when caught and tangled in a woman’s body?— killed herself one winter’s night and lies buried at some cross-roads where the omnibuses now stop outside the Elephant and Castle.

That, more or less, is how the story would run, I think, if a woman in Shakespeare’s day had had Shakespeare’s genius.

[Music plays]

IG: That was read by the lovely Lucy Butterfield from our Comms team.



That’s it from us, but you can catch Sarah Amankwah and the rest of the Globe Ensemble on the Globe stage until the 11th October. Donna Zuckerberg’s brilliant, if a little terrifying, book Not All Dead White Men is out now, and you can pick up a copy in our bookshop.

Look out for more festivals and events like Women and Power, coming to the Globe soon. Tickets and more information about all of our productions and events can be found on our website.

You’ve been listening to Such Stuff with me, Imogen Greenberg, and Dr Farah Karim Cooper.

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