

London Study Trip 2018

The study trip to London at the end of the summer term 2018 was offered as an optional addition to the course “p is for Political Theatre” which dealt with plays that were concerned with the negotiation of power between Parliament and the Monarchy. Thus, our group activities included a guided tour through the Houses of Parliament and a day trip to Windsor Castle. To see the two places related to those powers ourselves was fascinating and extended discussions started during the seminar. The Houses of Parliament in particular proved to be especially interesting as the guide also answered questions that went beyond the usual tour but dealt with our seminar topic. Since one of the scenes of *King Charles III's* movie adaptation is situated in the Parliament, seeing it in reality helped to get an image and feeling of the place and the situation. While the plays did not feature Windsor Castle itself, the guided tour was an adequate way to evoke British history in general. The portrait descriptions always provided additional historical information and it was wonderful to find the famous portrait of Henry VIII in one of the rooms. Some of the plates in St. George's Chapel particularly sparked our curiosity as they gave an insight into the British class system, especially into the nobility.

The study trip also included activities that spanned beyond the seminar. For example, we watched the musical *Young Frankenstein* at the Garrick Theatre. Seeing this *Frankenstein* adaptation was quite fitting in the context of the module as a whole because one of the other courses dealt with Posthuman Futures and *Frankenstein* was one text that was discussed there. Although the musical *Young Frankenstein* was interesting as a modern adaptation of Mary Shelley's tale it was not as captivating as we had hoped and its very comical manner did not excuse the sexist comments. However, it did serve as a good starting point for critical analyses and discussions. Another additional point on our agenda was Shakespeare who features a lot in our studies. Therefore, a visit to Shakespeare's Globe was an adequate way to spend the evening together. To see a performance of *Hamlet* in its 'original surroundings' was amazing and an incredible opportunity. The modern stance on the play with the roles' changing gender and the deaf-mute Rosencrantz was brilliant and inspired a lot of fruitful discussions afterwards.

All in all, the study trip was a very rewarding experience and very beneficial not just to the seminar in particular but to our studies in general.

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