

**THAT WITHIN WHICH PASSETH SHOW:
INTERIORITY, RELIGION, AND THE COGNITIVE POETICS OF HAMLET**

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Shakespeare's *Hamlet* emerged at a moment of social transition between Catholic England and Protestant England. The accidents and entailments of this particular culture emerge in the text through images, metaphors, polysemy, ideational conceits, as well as in unique forms of linguistic expression and dramatic signification. Reading the theological disputes, architecture, discursive encryption, and public performances of the day as another form of historical and expressive text, and informing that reading with the latest theories in post-Whig English history, this dissertation uses the information so-gathered to perform a close re-reading of *Hamlet* and explore the way a cognitive primitive—the schema INSIDE/OUTSIDE—is expressed multiply in the text in a polysemic web of signification. It is suggested that *Hamlet* emerged not only at the turning point between Catholic England and Protestant England, but at the strongly figured turning point between the *homo religiosus* of Medieval Europe and the modern European subject. This transition is marked by a split between a private and a public self correlated with the creation of a secular, social culture in Western European cordoned off from the increasingly complex and pluralistic religious culture.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Hamlet (the man) is dominated by an emotion which is inexpressible, because it is in excess of the facts as they appear. -TS Eliot

This dissertation will examine how a particular cognitive schema (INSIDE/OUTSIDE) operates within the linguistic, dramatic, and imaginative elements of *Hamlet*. The central argument is that this cognitive primitive became a saturated metaphor within the the social and cultural conditions of Elizabethan England. I argue not only is the INSIDE/OUT schema a saturated phenomenon, but Shakespeare's texts themselves are a saturated phenomenon and a saturated *artifact* of the time period, which was a period of great religious and social upheaval. In the chapter that follows, I will provide a historiographic map of the territory, examine the theoretical conceits employed, provide definitions of “cognitive schemata,” cognitive “heat,” and cultural “saturation,” and will lay the ground work for how the remaining chapters will work at theoretical and meta-theoretical levels.

A “saturated metaphor” is a concept I draw from phenomenology. French phenomenologist Jean-Luc Marion (with the help of Paul Ricoeur, Jean-Louis Chrétien, and

Michel Henry) has theorized the presence of phenomena which are what phenomenology calls “saturated phenomena.” The saturated phenomenon is simply an event; it is, however a perceptual-cognitive event that can occur in the perception of virtually any aspect of reality. Thus, the saturated phenomenon can be an event, an art object, an interpersonal transaction, etc. Marion understands the saturated phenomenon in terms of four Kantian categories: quantity, quality, modality, and relation (*Being* 314-319). Within each of these categories the saturated phenomenon is “excessive” and is difficult to explain in terms of previous experience. So, the saturated phenomenon is excessive in quantity because it is unforeseeable and nearly impossible to quantify, measure, and otherwise reduce; it is excessive in quality to the point of being almost unbearable; the relation of the saturated phenomenon to other phenomena is that it stands out; and in terms of “modality” the magnitude, quality, and singularity of the phenomenon makes the saturated phenomenon absolute and as such reduces the subject perceiving it to a witness of the event. It can be understood as a loss of subjectivity to the greater task of being an “I” only in relationship to the act of perceiving. The magnitude of the phenomenon reduces the status of the subject, who only serves to perceive the event.

The overarching thesis of this dissertation is grounded in the basic notion that the root metaphor provided by the image schema “INSIDE/OUTSIDE” was a saturated phenomenon in Elizabethan England. It was saturated because the Reformation was, itself, a saturated phenomenon. The reach of the state into the spiritual life of Elizabethan citizens was

experienced literally and figuratively as a trauma. It was a reach they could avoid, resist, or collaborate with. To the point, it was *excessive*: difficult to explain in terms of previous experience and unbearable in quality; it paradoxically reduced the subject as Marion describes, and augmented it. The English Reformation reduced the subject to the witness of the event but it also augmented it as it highlighted the idea of *personal autonomy through resistance*. Therefore the reduction of the subject preceded and then became generative of the augmentation of the subject.

As a result of the Reformation, a cultural and historic saturated event, a particular schema became a a saturated *metaphor* during the time period; which is to say, the metaphor had polysemous meaning in excess of its univocal one.¹ I don't argue that there are not other saturated metaphors at work during the time period. Indeed, it is the nature of the saturated event that it makes almost all of reality seem uncanny and, potentially, every perceptual event could bear the hallmarks of “saturatedness.” The cognitive neurology of trauma, the bio-organic event of living in a heightened fear state, could very well create an apotheosis of perceptual phenomenon, and later chapters will advance that cue-dependent fear states made the perception of novelty pervasive. However, as a scholar looking back at a particular text within a certain context, I perceive a saturated quality to one root metaphor at work in the text and it matches the saturated quality of that same root-metaphor in indices of the culture. This perception perpetually

¹ Chapter 4 will carry on a more extended discussion of univocality and polysemy.

reduced me as the scholarly perceiver, and it became an unbearable experience of quantity, quality, mode, and relation. If there is a reductive quality to the reading of the text in this mode—a problem that we will deal with on multiple occasions in the following chapters—it is not the meaning that is reduced but the scholar and her audience. For the quality of the saturated metaphor is that it opens up to a seeming infinity of manifold meaning. In this sense, the saturated metaphor as a tool for understanding is a very minute way into a text that is the product of a saturated event, and is only one, very small aspect of a highly multi-faceted phenomenon. So it doesn't preclude alternate or even oppositional meanings or readings—it invites them.

A key feature of this historic moment was Catholicism and the binding social practices and beliefs it had previously provided for the Elizabethan subject. Shakespeare's unclear relationship to his family's Catholicism makes it tempting to come up with a final conclusion—one such conclusion would be as many have argued, that he was a Catholic and that he was writing for a Catholic audience, possibly even coming up with deliberately subversive and cryptically communicative texts. My personal opinion is that conclusion is very possible and indeed very likely; many conscientious scholars, including Joseph Pearce and Peter Milward, have done an excellent job in building intriguing historical arguments toward that conclusion, in far more exhaustive detail than a work concerned with a dramatic text could endeavor. However, I am a scholar interested in artistic production and reception and as such, I think the nature of the time period makes “Was Shakespeare a Catholic?” a question necessarily plagued with some

degree of indeterminacy; the “smoking gun” of an identity that was punishable by certain censure and possible torture and execution is certain to be elusive. Ultimately, then, it is a question that, in this particular context, does not need to be decided; in fact, the indeterminacy of that question is figured in the text and becomes a part of the reading and interpretation of it. As Chapter 4 will argue in detail, contradiction and the “planting” of alternate and conflicting meanings in the text would be the specific way an author (or a Catholic) would hide in Elizabeth's England.

All of these chapters *in toto*, however, will argue toward a Catholic England, a suppressed Catholic desire, and a secret Catholic culture, but only as means of understanding *context*. The indeterminacy of the author's Catholic identity and the inadequacy of attributing a delimited “Catholicness” to the text also contributes to the argument about the saturated quality of both the central metaphor in question and the historic event of the Reformation; the Elizabethan subject was repeatedly fractured, destabilized, and caught between multiple vectors of force acting upon him: state, religion, autonomy, survival. This is why the text is also a saturated text. TS Eliot has written that *Hamlet* failed artistically because “Hamlet (the man) is dominated by an emotion which is inexpressible, because it is in *excess* of the facts as they appear.” He goes on to write: “*Hamlet*, like the sonnets, is full of some stuff that the writer could not drag to light, contemplate, or manipulate into art.” It is this intuition about the *Hamlet* text that points to, not its artistic inadequacy, but its saturated quality. For if it failed artistically, why

was it so popular? Why do we return to it again, despite its opacity and difficulty? Marion has written about the icon as a saturated phenomenon; the saturated icon draws the viewer back again and again, and makes it feel as if we still have not drawn all from it that we might. That is why he calls it “the endless hermeneutic” (*Excess* 104-127); *Hamlet*, is a saturated text. Its persistence—as a dramatic text and object of historic and critical inquiry—attest that it, too, has an endless hermeneutic.

1.1 WHY HAMLET? WHY NOW?

Identifying the “endless hermeneutic” quality of *Hamlet* is helpful, but still one may ask: Why yet another study of *Hamlet*? The volume of criticism on *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* is second only in size and density to Jesus of Nazareth. In my case, two compelling reasons—one historiographic and the other hermeneutic—animate my (re)reading of *Hamlet*, a reading that endeavors to enrich our understanding of the play, the man, and his context.

The first reason is a strong sense of archival responsibility. The increasing specialization of fields in humanities scholarship, while producing disciplines of great focus and intensity, often provides a block to meaningful (and necessary) cross-disciplinary dialogues. Consequently, literary studies often lag behind mainstream history studies. While I researched the play, I realized that the majority of previous studies written on *Hamlet* emerged from a dated and

increasingly obsolete historical narrative of the Reformation. Although this outmoded version of history has since received considerable corrective, scholarly attention, it has yet to penetrate theatre and literary studies satisfactorily. As Richard Wilson writes, historical details such as Jesuit martyr Edmund Campion's "minutely documented mission," the anti-Catholic terror, Essex's Revolt, the Gunpowder Plot, and the tortured history of Shakespeare's "investment property" Blackfriar's Gate, are dismissed with "lofty scorn," while literary scholars fail to attend to the revolution in post-Reformation historiography at their own peril (3). Thus, this examination is imbued with a sense of archival responsibility.

The second reason is that I am interested in using cognitive science to develop a scientifically grounded hermeneutics for literature and performance. Multiple scholars across several disciplines have demonstrated that cognitive theory has enormous interpretive potential for the humanities, including performance and dramatic literature.² This study will apply a basic knowledge of cognitive theory to a linguistic analysis of the text. Featured throughout is the use of basic cognitive neuroscience concepts to understand the likely effects the conditions of the Reformation wrought upon the Elizabethan body-mind. Combining these two aims, then, I will use Shakespeare's language as categorical, forensic evidence that will illuminate the ways the Reformation formed and shaped the playwright's consciousness and the consciousness of his

² For just a few examples see in works cited, Alan Richardson, Mark Turner, Mary Thomas Crane, and Bruce McConachie.

audiences.

As will be outlined here, the machinations of the Reformation (beginning with Thomas Cromwell's brilliant, pernicious use of the printing press) created a far-reaching epistemic amnesia in English history and cultural studies. This particular study joins a growing body of work addressing the traumatized "collective memory" of literary scholars concerned with Renaissance literature. This particular remediation combines several theoretical perspectives to perform a restorative, close re-reading of *Hamlet*. It will focus on Shakespeare's characteristic and, at the time, novel meditation on the interiority of human consciousness and experience. I will demonstrate that Shakespeare's innovative meditation takes on richer nuance when the critical mass of restorative, historical scholarship illuminates the text.

The approach herein is prescriptive as well, as it represents a fusion of theoretical lenses. The day of strict, dogmatic adherence to a singular theory recedes as the hyperlink mentality of the internet generation begins to replace older modalities of scholarship. To wit: I will rely heavily on the post-Whig histories of Reformation England while using cognitive studies to extrapolate the specific linguistic devices of *Hamlet* and embed them in their proper historic, socio-religious context. With the help of cognitive psychology, I will frame this study as an extended meditation on interiority, demonstrating that the cognitive schema INSIDE/OUT conditioned the English Renaissance experience and understanding of physical, mental, and spiritual reality. These metaphors found in Shakespeare's language will likewise be found

embedded within the surrounding culture. Both soft and hard markers of the schema appear in the cultural details of 16th and early 17th century England, in psychological, theological, architectural, discursive, and political modes.

1.2 POST-WHIG HISTORY: THE ENGLISH REFORMATIONS

The opening salvo in the attack on Whig history was Herbert Butterfield's polemic, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (first published in 1931). Herein Butterfield, who was a devout Protestant, introduced the concept of “whiggishness.” Whiggishness, according to Butterfield, is the historian's propensity to write narratives that favor Whigs and Protestants, specifically, and side with glory and the victors, generally. This dominant model of British historical scholarship succeeds in validating the present and glorifying the values of the culture that triumphed in revolution. The resulting narrative presents a pat, Hegelian synthesis in which the past inevitably yields to the superiority of present conditions. Since then, however, “post-Whig” scholars have used a steadily building mass of evidence to dismantle incorrect assumptions that lead to persistent “Whiggish” errors in understanding English history.

One such historian, Christopher Haigh, directly contradicts the assumption that England's conversion to Protestantism was an inevitable, populist movement. His study points out that what has become known as the English Reformation is truly the Reformations, reflecting the back and

forth struggle between traditional European Catholicism and the coming Protestantism:

[the title of this book] is English Reformations. It is not The English Reformation. That would claim that the only English Reformations that there ever were took place in the Tudor period and suggest that they formed a complete and effective process. But the various (and varied) Reformations in sixteenth-century England were haphazard and had only limited success, at least by comparison with Protestant aims: they did not make Church or people emphatically Protestant and there remained much still to be done. (12)

Haigh's history documents the methodical dismantling of Catholic culture and also links this clear fact of history to evidence that may be best thought of as the archaeological traces of a predominantly Catholic populace under Elizabeth. Yet, Haigh points out, as much as there remains behind in fragments, much more was simply erased. It is this erasure that has diluted anti-Whig histories of the past; for with erasure, the only archeological traces remaining are silence and lies.

Consequently, when archival fragments are discovered they may seem small—and therefore easy to dismiss—in comparison with the body of accumulated “knowledge” about the nature of “the” Reformation. However, in the presence of deliberate destruction of a defeated culture, one must consider that if a small tip manages to peek through the surface of time and willful erasure, it likely represents a veritable iceberg of information beneath it. The Reformation in England was a form of interior colonization, therefore the history of the dominated Catholic

populace will necessarily be a marginalized history plagued with indeterminacy, but it is from that space, that historians can discover the “radical openness” bell hooks has written about, the kind of radical openness that will allow us to read the literature from the period anew (153-158). It is to suggest that literature and art often provides the voice to the marginalized voice and compels precisely because of its resistant character—it is that voiceless resistance that makes the text appear opaque and somewhat mysterious at points, but it is also the secret of its allure .

The critical series of historical erasures Haigh identified evolved a social history that eventually suffered from an interdisciplinary, epistemological amnesia, allowing gaps in knowledge to pass as enlightened scholarship. For as the generations of post-Reformation scholars became further removed in time and memory from the institution against which the Reformation rebelled (the Catholic Church), they began writing about something of which they no longer had an intimate acquaintance. This idea is not new. As early as 1928, historian Hilaire Belloc wrote:

Yet, the general histories upon which opinion has been mainly nourished missed the very stuff with which they were dealing, because they proceeded from authors who had no intimacy with the Catholic Church...It is not a point of sympathy or dislike. A man may truly relate a battle whether he applaud or deplore its issue. But he cannot relate it truly if he does not know the ground. (2)

This epistemic amnesia has been reinforced by a distrust of Roman Catholicism—and later on, belief in general—propagated by general “whiggishness” in academe. As Belloc (writing a few years before Butterfield) asserts, a formal prejudice of this degree will have an inevitable affect on arguments so built. Regardless of personal prejudices for or against, as Belloc explains, to try to understand the Roman Catholic context in Reformation England should bear no relationship to whether a scholar is personally sympathetic or hostile to the religion itself. It is simply an attempt to fully understand context; a failure to do so through deliberate manipulation of facts for political aims (as it was at first) or simple ignorance or prejudice (as it came to be later) will always result in a basic misapprehension of the cultural products of the time.

This epistemic gap combined with an unexamined association fallacy: there is a persistent assumption that the Reformation in England resembled the Reformation in the rest of Europe. This conflation allows the projection of the Reformation in—for one not truly random example—Wittenberg where the Reformation was a populist-driven movement that rapidly spread to the humanist elites, on to the Reformation in England, which was a decidedly more “top-down” revolution. This combination of arguments *ad ignorantiam* with arguments *ad logicam*, continues to reinforce an iron-clad and almost universally accepted notion that the Protestant Reformation across Europe was a monolithic event. Further, it incorrectly characterizes the Reformation as a popular and inevitable zeitgeist toward Enlightenment thinking as early modern man freed himself from superstition. It is the correction of this

persistent error—an error very difficult to correct since it sits so comfortably within contemporary views of religion and belief—that makes a re-examination of someone as significant as Shakespeare fertile ground to till yet again.

Thus, there has been a persistent manipulation of historical narrative that began to dog our attempts to understand almost as soon as Shakespeare's words were set to paper. Truly, it is/was a manipulation of history that began even before these words reached paper or an actor's mouth. The tactics of "soul control" that began in early Tudor England and achieved a level of practiced perfection under Elizabeth I extended its reach into the mind of Shakespeare himself, strongly at work even as he formed his stories and words as images. Indeed, I would argue that the reach of the state and the mind's rebellion against such an unbearably intimate touch can be held responsible, in part, for the complexity and genius of his works. At the very least, a full understanding of this sophisticated form of manipulation and spiritual espionage will suggest that re-reading Shakespeare in its proper Reformation context deserves serious revisiting from multiple angles and the use of multiple theoretical lenses.

The basic assumptions and, therefore, the entire logical structure that underpins our considerations of Shakespeare's socio-religious context, is essentially flawed. The Whig history against which Butterfield and Belloc railed began to be seriously promulgated as objective fact from the 19th century forward and has since so permeated our collective academic consciousness, that its impact cannot be overstated. Scholars must resist a neat narrative of

progress from superstitious belief to Enlightenment skepticism backward into our readings of Shakespeare. That is simply an idea that developed after the fact.

It is a serious (re)consideration of a post-Whig history that will enable me to advance the linguistic thesis this dissertation is hinged upon: Shakespeare's personal and social biography, inescapably embedded as it was in its English Reformation context, fomented an extended meditation on the interiority of human consciousness. I will argue that, for Shakespeare, interiority is a predominant metaphor which informs both his dramatic imagination and his dramaturgy, while becoming explicitly manifest in his elaborate linguistic systems. This metaphor is indexical to the experience of the English Reformation(s) where the metaphor we see in Shakespeare's language became a saturated metaphor within a society in the throes of a social drama that had yet to completely play out. It was also indexical to Shakespeare's specific experience as the son of a surreptitiously Catholic family with familial and social connections to the Catholic underground.

1.3 THE INTERIOR HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS

The idea that a human's consciousness has an interior quality to it seems so obvious to the contemporary mind, it seems banal to note it. However, in Shakespeare's time, the idea was a mass obsession; once the state broke with the Church, what may have been a vague

understanding just two generations previous became a crystalline concept with startling ramifications. That a man could swear allegiance to a Queen in public and his God in private came painfully into focus in Shakespeare's England; acting one way in civic life while believing its opposite in private became a conscious tool of survival. The ever-shifting puzzle of "seeming" was also an ever-present conundrum: which was the "true" person, the public conformer or the interior rebel? This is simultaneously coupled with the rise of professional theatre. One can trace this in the development of the infinitive "to act" which only begins to become associated with theatricality in 1581³. This word also "hyper-linked" to particular theological concepts and to legislative verbiage, where public acts carried the weight of serious corporal consequence from imprisonment, to torture, to death. The popularity of performance and acting—what is Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba?—also posed something of a conundrum, under the circumstances. Act/acting/actor was not merely a funny and whimsical play on words; it was fraught with the weight of physical life or death and eternal salvation or damnation.

If the subject had an interior self that could be concealed, the logic of concealment suggests that it is an interior that could be breached. Shakespeare's age was the age of espionage; Stephen Budiansky pinpoints the birth of modern espionage at the Elizabethan era, naming Elizabeth I's spymaster Sir Francis Walsingham its father. A dark genius, Walsingham invented the mode of false information, counter-intelligence, and "double agents" still used in

³ "actor" *The Barnhart Concise Dictionary of Etymology*. 1st ed. New York: Harper Collins, 1995.

contemporary intelligence seeking today. So, to be the age of espionage meant that it was the age of crafty, translucent doublings, a time when the queen publicly declared that she did not wish to “make windows into men’s souls” yet demanded outward compliance. And, apparently, while not seeking to make windows into souls, existing windows into your home were fair game: the new Church of England's legal systems minutely controlled the daily actions of parishioners through ecclesiastical courts which examined all aspects of a person's daily and social life. It encouraged spying and civilians reporting on civilians, which led to a Bentham-esque society and an over-emphasis on outward actions (Ware 50-56). The first age of contemporary espionage, indeed—and perhaps the first age of modern paranoia. So, the idea that a human’s consciousness exists as something encapsulated, interior, and secret (and subject to deliberate disguise and brutal, forced revelation) was, if not a completely new idea, one that had gained a specific acuity within the context of Reformation England. It was, as Chapter 2 will argue, a motif of the Renaissance, as the idea of the inward gaze traveled multiple trajectories through Augustine and Aquinas, culminating in the figureheads of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation respectively, Luther and Loyola.

1.3.1 The Metaphoric Interior/Exterior

To a creative mind such as Shakespeare’s, this emergent understanding of human experience, as having a contradictory, mutually influencing, interior and exterior evolved into an intricate

system of metaphors that continually played on and off themselves, almost as if they had a linguistic autonomy of their own. The interest in metaphor current to cognitive linguistics will prove helpful in this dissertation, as it will enable a cognitive forensics on the language of his play. A close examination of his specific language choices will prove that this particular metaphor obsessed Shakespeare and, as his popularity suggests, his audiences.

Metaphors of interiority penetrate Shakespeare's work linguistically, imagistically, and thematically so thoroughly that one may even suggest, as Harold Bloom does, that he invented the concept—or, at least, reified it and, in so doing, archived the experience of man in Reformation England for all posterity to absorb, reflect, and apply to their own experience. Most importantly, understanding the interiority of human consciousness allowed Shakespeare his most notable dramaturgical invention: characters with interiors as rich—and as dangerous—as the interior lives of his audience. This is certainly not dependent upon the acceptance of a Catholic Shakespeare or even a Catholic England; for, regardless of the individual, personal (and secret) allegiances of his audience, given the bloody Tudor history of bouncing back and forth between Catholicism and Protestantism, all could certainly identify with the notion that one's inner beliefs put one's physical well-being in as much jeopardy as the plague.

Though the proceeding chapters will deal in depth with these fragments of relatively recent discoveries concerning Shakespeare's position within the English Reformation(s), the true focus of this work is what has remained the incontrovertible constant in Shakespeare scholarship:

the extant texts of his plays and his poetry. *Hamlet* encapsulates the touchstones of this explicitly Reformation obsession with interiority. In the text, Shakespeare represents interiority spatially, thematically, imagistically, and of course, linguistically and therefore provides fecund material to explore the sense of inwardness that haunts Shakespeare's world and, consequently, his work. Consequently, even when historic considerations seem to bring us far afield, *Hamlet* will provide the primary textual focus of this work, though the text of other plays and sonnets will become mutually magnifying lenses both illuminating and illuminated by the character whom Marvin Mudrick has called our "representative to the world," and "Mr. Western Civilization himself" (151).

1.4 GOALS, METHODOLOGIES, AND MATERIALS

To map the path of this study: excavating post-Reformation scholarship for context, I will examine four different breeds of the INSIDE/OUTSIDE metaphor informing *Hamlet* and made explicit in his linguistic choices. A hybrid of methodologies will be employed, including New Criticism, New Historicism, and cognitive studies. The close reading of New Criticism will find an easy marriage with New Historicism under the auspices of cognitive studies.

This type of exegesis and theoretical fusion at moments may have an almost uncanny feel—as if I am, in fact, casting runes and reading tea leaves rather than quartos and folios. For, as Richard Wilson declared about his study of “secret Shakespeare,” he is writing about what Shakespeare *didn't* write, and interpreting his silence (1). Informed intuition and hunches become crucial when dealing with art produced during periods of increased governmental scrutiny and control—for it becomes, in many cases, not only the craft but the vocation of the artist to say without saying and express the otherwise inexpressible. This necessarily informs the craft and vocation of the scholar/critic looking at such moments of heightened state control. In this case, the scholar/critic's job is to decode, as it were, and to reconstruct the specific social, cultural, and spiritual conditions of the time period. This must be done despite the consistent warnings that the truth of such matters may never be known definitively. Otherwise, such defeatism will force us to simply rehearse our own form of whiggishness, which does nothing more than to serve the maintenance of past deception. Error, in this scenario, would be the preferable transgression.

As indicated, this work relies heavily on the percolating body of “post-Whig” English history—previously considered revisionist but now demonstrated to be restorative. Namely: the work of Peter Milward, Christopher Haigh, Hilaire Belloc, and Eamon Duffy. Richard Wilson will permeate this study as the foundation of the claim that Shakespeare lived, studied, acted, wrote, and indeed hid in a Catholic majority England that nodded toward a Queen it believed

would one day be overthrown. With the assistance of a rapidly growing body of scholarship, personal accounts, and relatively recent archeological finds, I will demonstrate that he was born of a populace that was fed by an underground network of seditious, Catholic intellectuals, led by priests and recusants who provided consolation, secret sacraments, and marching orders for the faithful Catholics who peppered the cities but positively over-ran the countryside. Inasmuch as this body of work is foundational, a third theoretical and historical conceit is employed in this text, primarily in Chapter 4, via Clare Asquith, wherein the Elizabethan penchant for cryptography raises the cognitive linguistic emphasis on metaphor and polysemy to the level of code.

Indubitably, these two scholars (along with Joseph Pearce and Peter Milward) are firmly embedded in the Lancashirian school of thought. "Lancashire" has become the shorthand for scholars who believe in Shakespeare's closeted Catholic identity. This term is derived from Honigmann's *Shakespeare: The Lost Years*, which popularized the theory that during 1585-1592, Shakespeare was hired by a wealthy and powerful Lancashire family named Houghton to be their children's tutor, though, of course, the term Lancashirians cover a wide variety of positions on Shakespeare's Catholicism. Wilson ultimately concludes that Shakespeare was connected to the Catholic resistance but remains mute on the subject of his "true belief" while Asquith, based on extant codes of exiles and recusants, constructs a final, encrypted testament on Shakespeare's—very Catholic—faith.

Obviously, the anti-Lancashirians have much to say about the type of historical exegesis Asquith, Milward, Pearce, and Wilson, *et al* employ in order to arrive at their different but certainly related conclusions. The evidence for a Catholic Shakespeare is in no way determinate; it's a conclusion arrived at through a process of some deductive but mostly inductive reasoning. However, though the Lancashirian school once received a fair amount of ridicule as a fringe group, similar to the Oxfordian school (whose members claims that the Earl of Oxford, Edward de Vere wrote Shakespeare's plays), it seems that the arguments advanced on behalf of the Lancashire thesis have now reached critical mass. Mainstream and well-respected Harvard scholar, Stephen Greenblatt, through his recent popular biography *Will in the World*,⁴ and his more academic work in *Hamlet in Purgatory*, brings the idea of a Shakespeare closely associated with the Catholic underground into a more mainstream vein of thought. Though Greenblatt still insists that, based on the texts of his plays, Shakespeare must have been a secular humanist, he concedes that the mass of social and individual evidence, now leads to one clear conclusion regarding his environment if not his personal convictions: his family was Catholic, he was raised in an environment of Catholic resistance, and he very likely had close, personal contact with the martyrs of the Jesuit counter-Reformation, some of whom were members of his extended family.

4

⁴ The 2004 PBS special on Shakespeare certainly has entered the idea of a Catholic Shakespeare into popular understanding as well.

And still, the original point remains: the concrete assertions of post-Whig scholarship have yet to thoroughly penetrate literary studies. Though much throughout history has been said about Shakespeare in his appropriate Catholic context, we are at a tipping point: post-Whig history has shifted from marginalized voice to indisputable fact. To remain relevant, Shakespeare scholarship can no longer afford to take a Whiggish, anti-clerical and pro-Protestant point of view; that is, the idea that the Reformation was a welcome and populist shift and the mark of Enlightenment progress. Such literature tends to treat Shakespeare's irrefutable Catholic past and familial connection to the Catholic underground as a troublesome "problem," at best (a problem he simply had to get over in order to become the secular humanist we all know and love) and, at worst, it manifests as a persistent skepticism that could be identified as an hysterical, scholarly blindness.

Even Stephen Greenblatt's recent work falls somewhat short of the mark; he manages to go quite far in documenting the missing portion of Shakespeare's life and his Catholic "secret." Yet, while acknowledging the Shakespeare family's passionate connection to the counter-Reformation, and William Shakespeare's intimate social and familial contact with the Catholic martyrs of the movement, he also imagines that as young William walks through the gates of London, with the heads of his well-loved friends on pikes on either side of him, Shakespeare promptly decides to become a deeply secular playwright. In light of the evidence Greenblatt himself accepts and puts forth, even the most conservative scholar must maintain, at the very

least, a healthy agnosticism on the Shakespeare Catholic question. Instead, an insistence on a secular Shakespeare in line with contemporary skepticism is stubbornly projected backwards, despite all socio-historic evidence to the contrary.

The seminal works of cognitive theory will be deployed subtextually throughout, particularly Lakoff and Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By* and Mark Turner's *The Literary Mind*, though Mary Thomas Crane's important study of Shakespeare with cognitive studies (*Shakespeare's Brain*) will provide something of a model for the methodology employed in my close reading of *Hamlet*. It will also provide a handy, theoretical conceit that allows me to link social realities with Shakespeare's particular conscious and sometimes sub-cognitive intentions. Crane's work will demonstrate that the material site of Shakespeare's brain provides ample evidence of the way in which one can use the linguistic patterns in anaphora, metaphor, polysemy, and unusual word choice to discuss the author, his social and cultural context, and even his intentionality. In this way Crane will provide the grease needed to slip through the bars of the post-modern conundrum of the text: it is BOTH cultural product and product of the individual author. The text, insofar as it is a map to the material reality of Shakespeare's brain—a brain that operates in a web of personal physical, spatial, ratiocinative, and social experience—is a map to both the author and his cultural and historical context. The text, then, becomes a site where the confluence of individual genius, universal human cognitive schemata, and the specificities of the English Reformation(s) pools into meaning—not necessarily a static meaning

but a meaning that codes and re-encodes itself each time it is plumbed. In this way, the text gains dimension through time but still embodies the original intention of the particular author, even as it is expanded to more general or universal readings.

To be clear: the “slippage” of language and history itself does not make the search for the “original” meaning less meaningful but more. This neither destabilizes the author’s original intent nor makes it determinate and unilateral. Rather, it makes constructing meaning in a text a manifold, multivalent activity as subject to debate as it is to Derridean *jouissance*—except that the “joy” and the pleasure comes from construction rather than deconstruction. So, although Crane and this work will come to wildly different conclusions, the approach of the work shares the same reliance on the stability of cognitive structure to provide a foundation for a close reading so performed.

Thus, the use of cognitive theory is both explicit and implicit. It is explicit insofar as I use the understanding of the production and reception of language it provides to perform a close read and to identify the use of a predominant cognitive schema (OUTSIDE/INSIDE) to explain the fascination with disguise and appearance and disappearance. It is implicit insofar as its meta-theoretical orientation makes it once again acceptable (and dare I say fashionable) to talk about the author, his intent, and the making of meaning. This will provide for us not only a cognitive poetics of Shakespeare but a cognitive *forensics*, through which we can plumb the Shakespeare mystique and seek more subtle traces of what once filled the gaps in Shakespeare’s

autobiography—and the deafening silences he leaves in his wake on the most crucial issues of England's Reformation(s).

1.4.1 The New/Old Historicized, Critical Cognitive Close Read

In general, the cognitive studies approach satisfies because it synthesizes various critical forms within one work of scholarship. Specific to this study, that Shakespeare lived and wrote in a cultural context that used code, subverted meanings, and parabolic projection as the tools of socio-religious survivalism first and entertainment or literature second makes the invitation of the cognitive linguistic approach not only enticing but necessary.

Shakespeare's work provides an acutely figured product of something I call *cognitive fusion*, which I believe is a biologically realist explanation of phenomenology's saturated event. It is not intended to provide a totalizing definition of the phenomenon, but to provide a descriptive dimension to what happens at the psycho-neurologic level during the saturated event. Cognitive fusion happens when sub-cognitive operants are forced to the level of cognitive reflection. Cognitive fusion is responsible for most resonant experiences between a) artist and artwork and b) artist and audience. It is behind the aha! of recognition that occurs in these moments, the *déjà-vu* experience of both empathy and truth recognition. This is a model that could be applied to most artists in most media. The peculiarities of Shakespeare's individual

biography as well as his particular dramaturgical gifts make him an ideal case for this particular theory of the artist.

Over the previous two decades of scholarship, the seeming progression away from the hyper-individualism of New Criticism toward something “better” (read: something co-operative with social theory) has come full circle through the application of cognitive linguistic models that are both individualistic and culturally embedded, thus allowing us to return to what was satisfying about the New Critical approach, while remedying what was most problematic about it. The cognitive studies model finally provides a more “embodied” paradigm for art and literature that allows for the subject-as-brain—if not an *entirely* autonomous one. Thus, we can fashion a nuanced theory of the subject that allows for a degree of individuality while still acknowledging the power of cultural forces to act on and through the individual. As a theory grounded in scientific realism only increases its appeal, for the same tenor of inquiry that once made Foucault’s question “What is An Author?” a radical act—and appeared to overturn the author-centered criticism of the New Critics—now makes cognitive theory scholar Mary Thomas Crane’s question “Did Shakespeare Have a Brain?” equally radical, with one important difference: Crane’s radical question subsumes what has gone before and synthesizes rather than deconstructs:

Shakespeare provides a particularly appropriate test case for a literary theory that purports to offer a new way of conceiving authorship. [...] a focus on Shakespeare’s

brain allows us to attend to Shakespeare as author without losing the complexity offered by contemporary theory. (3)

Crane goes on to outline her project thusly:

I argue that in each of the plays examined here a network of words⁵ connected by spatial metaphors, functions as a structural element that outlines some of the patterns and connections of Shakespeare's lexicon. I believe that Shakespeare uses these words as a focal point for explorations of the spatially centered experiences of cognitive subjectivity as it figured in the development of the "individual" in the early modern period and as those new individuals were represented by fictional characters on the space of the platform stage. (7)

In a related vein, Lakoff and Johnson's study, *Metaphors We Live By*, demonstrates that metaphors and their "systematicity" are inescapable and universal cognitive constructs. Systematicity is a concept in cognitive science which describes the ability of the brain to rapidly create multiple lexical, imagistic, and proprioceptive maps, tracing relationships from one domain to another. It is this which explains the ability of metaphor to suggest multiple meanings at once and the general ability of the brain to understand one thing (or multiple things) in terms

⁵ This book operates along Crane's theory of a play as composed as of lexical webs. Admittedly, this ignores the embodied reality of performance which proposes a model of plays as a web of actions. I also acknowledge the enormous difference between read text and aural text, and briefly cover the difference between text read and text performed from a neurocognitive point of view in chapter 5 but in the interest of scope, primarily narrow the focus to words.

of another. The apparent scientific underpinning for this is described through a cognitive model of processing called connectionism, through a function described as PDP (Parallel Distributed Processing) documented by McClelland and Rumelhart. Connectionism describes intelligibility as a system of small information units processed simultaneously through multiple interconnected neural networks. While the model risks a reductionist approach to cognitive processing, and though the two approaches (PDP and connectionism) may not necessarily be mutually exclusive, PDP provides a challenge to computationalism, which diminishes the mind's capacity for polysemy and metaphor; obviously, a model which embraces polysemy and metaphoric functions is a better model for those working in literature and performance reception.

That a particular metaphor's outward accidents are influenced by cultural values and constructs is similarly unavoidable—the famous example Lakoff and Johnson provide is the Western capitalist metaphor TIME IS MONEY (*Metaphors* 8). Living within a cultural system that immediately understands the relevance of that metaphor only makes it easier to apprehend. One can easily imagine how the metaphors of a different time period may have their outward accidents easily misapprehended or missed altogether. This is the primary argument advanced in this dissertation: that a lack of understanding of Catholic culture, particularly Catholic culture during the Reformation, can create lexical maps in the scholar/reader that do not have a 1:1 relationship with the lexical maps of the Elizabethan audience. In short, we seem to be speaking

the same language but we are not. The idea that we can approach Shakespeare's text and distill meaning from it out of context is a partial illusion. As Gilles Fauconnier writes:

The folk-theoretical illusion that each expression of language has a meaning that we all retrieve in basically the same way allows interlocutors to interact under the impression of mutual comprehension, when in fact they may be engaged in quite different mental space constructions (160).

This is a necessary and fruitful illusion in literary studies at times, it is one that allows a text some degree of persistence, for each person and each age can re-write the primary text to fill their own needs and desires. But to study the text is to realize that it is art and artifact and to discover meaning buried within it that both illuminates the phenomenon of the text itself and the historical period in which it was created and first performed.

If it seems to be an old idea (New Historicism), dressed in new cognitive science clothing, it is because, to some degree, it is. Cognitive science simply imbues one critical technique—among many valid critical techniques—with the weight of interdisciplinary coherence. It's a meta-theoretical strike that situates language within embodied realism, while still providing continuity within social theory. So, to summarize: in order to understand the possible lexical maps created in the mind of the Elizabethan audience (and in Shakespeare's mind, too, as he crafted) one must reconstruct the cognitive domains from which they projected. One way to approach this task is to use other cultural expressions of the time—this will entail

examining architecture, state-sponsored violence, and theological doctrine from the period to create a facsimile of the domains specific to the English Reformation consciousness.

The general ability to project from one domain to another in linguistic expression protracts into specific cognitive schemata common to all humans. Lakoff and Johnson's theory⁶ goes on to advance the hypothesis that particular early childhood embodied experiences—both spatial and locomotive—give rise to universal cognitive schemata which humans parabolically project onto their experience. Consequently, these schemata manifest themselves in and through linguistic expression in both day-to-day language as well as heightened aesthetic forms.

A logical application of this work in cognitive psychology is to use our understanding of the systematicity of linguistic metaphors as both individual and social products to provide a cognitive forensics about the past. When providing such a thorough and broad theoretical foundation, to extrapolate a common cognitive schema (in the case of this present study, INSIDE/OUT), and focus on the specific nature of its appearance across a particular, popular body of work can be very revealing indeed. To conduct such a study while also searching for hard and soft markers of the schema in other accidents of the historic and social moment, even more so. Using a prominent creative and language-oriented brain as a material site for excavation will yield many clues about the mysteries of that particular time period and for the particular

⁶ Their theory operates in concert with other similar linguistic theories on lexical systems advanced by multiple cognitive scientists such as Mark Turner, Gilles Fauconnier, and Sydney Lamb to name but a few.

subject in possession of that brain. In fact, such a study provides a set of mutually magnifying lenses; in some cases, the artistic expression will elucidate the historic moment, in others the historic moment will illuminate the artwork.

As I proposed earlier, the concept of *cognitive fusion*—the idea that an artist teases out subcognitive operants into the level of conscious reflection, thus fusing both subcognitive and cognitive processes and delivering a sense of resonance—provides a new paradigm of the individual artist. As Lakoff and Johnson point out, metaphorical operants largely work below the level of explicit cognition. The artist, then, is one who finds himself with a unique gift for teasing out our operant cognitive media and thrusting them forward into conscious, pleasurable reflection. It also provides a neuro-cognitive basis for the phenomenological experience of the saturated event—the excessiveness of a piece of art (in this case the excessiveness of a particular metaphor) in part, derives from cognitive fusion. And so, it is this paradigm and this cognitive linguistic framework which will allow the body of post-Whig scholarship on the Reformation and the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods in particular to inform our entire (re)excavation of *Hamlet*.

1.4.2 The In/Out Schemata, Conceptual Blending, New Terms (Saturation and Hotness)

The idea that our consciousness exists as something contained, inward, and autonomous and, therefore, subject to secrecy and disguise has likely been a ready, sub-cognitive archetype

applied to our understanding of our physical, mental, and spiritual selves since human consciousness began and first began to create language. Created through a mental process called “conceptual blending,”⁷ this metaphor emerges and re-merges in individual and social circumstances with varying intensity. However, the historical conditions of the Renaissance allowed this particular image schema of ourselves as conscious human beings to gain increasing acuity, culminating in a sort of linguistic and imagistic saturation point, and finding a singular expression in and through Shakespeare’s dramaturgy.⁸

During the Reformation, the idea that consciousness was something so interior as to be hidden not only from society and the state, but possibly from one’s self was an idea fraught with the weight of moral responsibility, even as it bestowed man with a new autonomy. For this idea that man contains an interior discrete from his exterior—and therefore secreted from all except God—is only made possible through the idea that a man thinks, feels, and believes as his will, conscience, and intellect dictate, despite what external power structures tell him what he “should” think, feel, or believe.

For the non-cognitive scientist, the concept of IN/OUT bears some explanation.

According to Lakoff and Johnson, most of us conceptualize metaphor—which they define as

⁷ Conceptual blending involves the projection of one domain onto another, which then creates a third new domain that frames the lexical set so derived. See Turner and Fauconier.

⁸ This brackets the play as a system of written words left in the wake of the ephemera of their performance without discrediting the multivalent activity of “wrighting” the play. At the beginning of Chapter 2 I will demonstrate how this inward looking imago conditioning consciousness began in the medieval period and travels a direct trajectory from Augustine/Aquinas to Luther/Ignatius.

understanding and experiencing one thing in terms of another—as a literary device, a poetic means of communication, when it is, in fact, a far more basic operant underpinning thought, language, and action: “Our ordinary conceptual system in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature” (*Metaphors* 3). Conceptual systems are not some intellectual abstraction, they rule motion, perception, proprioception, interpersonal relationship—and, crucial to this dissertation, self-perception. Based on this idea, Lakoff and Johnson demonstrate that the phenomenon of human experience is “very much a matter of metaphor” (ibid).

These conceptual systems are sub-cognitive—that is, they operate below the level of consciousness, not in the manner of a Freudian subconscious, but in the manner of computer hardware. In order to trace this hardware, Lakoff and Johnson examine language:

In most of the little things we do every day, we simply think and act more or less automatically along certain lines. Just what these lines are is by no means obvious. One way to find out is by looking at language. Since communication is based on the same conceptual system that we use in thinking and acting, language is an important source of evidence for what that system is like. (ibid)

Though Lakoff and Johnson are using this orientation to understand cognition and develop a new(ish) theory of mind, it is the project of this dissertation, and other studies like it, to use language in this way to understand the semantic system under-girding a piece of dramatic

literature. What is a play, but a conceptual system, that uses language as its smallest constituent part? Exceeding their worth as an object of study unto itself, the lexical webs created by an ideal case like Shakespeare, will also provide a window into the workings of the mind itself. In this sense, you can think of a play as a web address: *www.play.author.socialcontext*. For this study of Hamlet, Shakespeare, and Reformation England (or, if you will, *www.hamlet.shakespeare.reformationengland*), we are particularly focused on the cognitive schema of INSIDE/OUT. A cognitive schema, in the context of Lakoff and Johnson's theory, is a visual metaphor that has moved one level up in the organizational system of mind. It does not "structure one concept in terms of another but instead organizes a whole system of concepts with respect to one another (*Metaphors* 14). These schemata emanate from our physical experience in the world as a body locomoting through time and space. The container schema (i.e., a bounded region in space) is an image schema we use to organize the poles of INSIDE/OUTSIDE.

In his book *The Body in the Mind*, Mark Johnson outlines five outstanding features of INSIDE/OUTSIDE as represented by the container schema:

1. protection from and resistance to external forces
2. limits and restrictions on that within the container
3. relative "fixity" of location within the container

4. extreme accessibility or inaccessibility depending on how the observer is positioned relative to the container and its contents
 5. transitive properties, i.e., let y = container, x =the contained, whatever is in x is also in y
- (22)

Bruce McConachie seized upon the usefulness of this particular metaphor and put it to work in his study of Cold War drama. For McConachie, the containment metaphor was particularly appropriate to the culture organized under the National Security Act of 1947 which sought to contain the United States from an encroaching Soviet threat. For McConachie, this proved to be a “nodal point of containment culture for postwar America” demonstrating how the five features Johnson presents are at work within the metaphoric structure and literal verbiage of the law. Citing other “containers and their entailments” within American Cold War culture, McConachie asserts that “containment was at the hub of a vast network of cold war conceptions that structured much of the dominant culture of the era” (14).

At the introduction of this concept he quickly dismantles the inherent suspicion a philosopher of history would have in using metaphor as “a road to truth”; for McConachie, Lakoff and Johnson’s claim to a new philosophy of “embodied realism” holds tremendous power in historical examination. Lakoff and Johnson define embodied realism as: “the view that the locus of experience, meaning, and thought is the ongoing series of embodied organism-environment interactions that constitute our understanding of the world” (*Philosophy* 249).

According to embodied realism, our earliest experiences of the material world create the metaphors for which we will continue to understand the world. Because these first experiences are pre-linguistic, it makes these metaphors sub-cognitive, though they can be made cognitive through conscious reflection. And because our earliest proprioceptive experiences are virtually universal, these metaphoric concepts are universal as well, making them somewhat trans-historic and trans-cultural. Yet, they can and do have interesting cultural variants and merge with historic moments in multiple—and informative—combinatorial schemes, or conceptual blends.

McConachie's approach to history forces these cognitive schemata to the surface and teases out primary metaphorical operants in a temporally conditioned cultural context because, "certain basic schemas and metaphors...organize significant areas of a culture" (14).

McConachie calls himself a "cognitive historian" of theatre; more importantly he provides a useful definition of the cognitive historian's project: "the cognitive historian needs first to understand the primary cognitive mechanisms that bonded spectators to actors and their actions in the playhouse" (26). For McConachie, the container schema is the key organizing schema to Cold War culture, and, as a result, it inhabits the most successful theatrical performances of the period, organizes the special world of each play, and provides the "hook" that allows audiences to make meaning of what they are seeing and then connect "the protomeanings of the performance they just witnessed to their everyday lives" (ibid).

There are two potential problems with this approach. The first problem McConachie addresses and corrects with a term he coins: “cognitive probability.” Since McConachie’s thesis literally lies in the sub-cognitive processes of the audiences and artists he is studying “there can be no hard evidence of its occurrence”—but he can demonstrate the prevalence of one metaphor over others through indirect evidence, by dredging up related cognitive organizational processes at work in a volume of cultural artifacts. He further clarifies:

The argument of this book is not that early cold war spectators always processed their theatrical involvement through metaphors of containment. An analysis of representative popular performances and their historical context, however, shows that containment and other primary metaphors of the period shaped significant interactions between the stage and most spectators during the 1947-1962 period. (25)

This brings us to the second somewhat related but different pitfall of the approach—because these schemas are always at work, everyday even as I write this and you read it, consciously teasing out any of the primary spatio-temporal metaphors will seem to have great truth power. Suddenly, one will see containers everywhere.

And yet.

It is undeniable that certain metaphors at certain moments begin to achieve greater saliency—this is as true of the collective consciousness of a particular period in a community’s history as it is of a particular individual . To add to McConachie’s idea of “cognitive

probability,” which explains how a scholar might amass a sheer volume of evidence in order to prove an historic hypothesis about particular schemata, I would like to further elaborate and introduce the idea of *hotness*. I borrow the term from media studies figure Marshall McLuhan who described media in terms of *hot* and *cool*. Cool media are media which require a stronger collaboration from the individual, whereas hot media are more dominating (37). I argue that the phenomenon of saturation as defined by Marion is likely to occur at a social level when certain cultural moments heat a particular cognitive schema. I am further submitting that this is very likely to occur when there are top-down moves from the State to the individual to control thought and belief, since “idea wars” are fought within language any time a centralized power seeks to export an image of omnipotence.⁹ It won't always manifest through the INSIDE/OUT schema—but it is a probable site of discursive contestation, for a very simple reason: in order to export the image of omnipotence, the state necessarily must invade the boundaries of personal autonomy in order to control the population. Whether through state-sponsored torture of its subjects or McCarthy style legalism, the effort of the state to homogenize subjects and police thought will always call the basic entailments of inside and out (as it pertains to individual autonomy) into question. This was certainly the case in both the English Reformation and the Cold War alike. Thus, although the basic image schemata introduced by Lakoff and Johnson by definition are always cognitive magnets, attracting attention and inspiring creative elaboration and cognitive

⁹ This idea owes a debt to Hannah Arendt's “Lying and Politics: Reflections on the Pentagon Papers”.

blends wherever and whenever they appear, specific conditions can heat up a particular image schema and give it an even stronger radioactive power than usual. McLuhan's concept of media temperature is, then, apt; in the right circumstances, an image schema can seem to throw off heat, and have a certain kind of radioactive contagion affecting all within a certain radius of it.

This is the neurocognitive basis for phenomenology's idea of the saturated event; if a cognitive schema heats up, cultural expressions will reach a saturation point, providing multiple examples of the schema and eventually providing new domains of expression through cognitive blending. Shakespeare's work as a whole reached a saturation point with *INSIDE/OUT*, and the cognitive blend that results is a new dramaturgy of interior life. Practicality often drives saturation in a cultural expression, as in the case of architecture in Elizabethan England. As Chapter 3 addresses in depth, the architecture of England during the Reformations was conditioned by the culture of espionage and secret religious practice, creating through Sir Nicholas Owen and his contemporaries, a literal "Chinese box" England, with structures housing any number of secret holding places, priest holes, and Mass rooms. In this case, for an illustrative example, the saturation point indicates a re-entrenchment of a universal schema, where a dramatic shift in daily existence conditions our reception of the schema, causing everyone to experience it as novelty.

Novelty—as a concept of cognitive theory—will appear frequently throughout this dissertation and also bears some explaining. As most fields do with concepts it cannot *quite*

explain, cognitive neuroscience has a long-term fascination with something called cognitive novelty. We know that the brain processes novelty differently from routine, and some have theorized that there are discrete areas of the brain that deal with novelty.¹⁰ Joseph Le Doux discusses novelty in his book *The Emotional Brain*. LeDoux explains how our cognitive “arousal systems” work. Emotional stimuli trigger arousal systems in the brain. These arousal systems are directly linked to our ability to attend to and cognitively synthesize information (291). This dissertation suggests that at historic turning points, at the beginning and endings of eras, paradigm shifts—such as the one that occurred when Henry VIII, a former “Defender of the Faith” suddenly takes a Protestant turn—and abrupt changes in socio-political conditions can arrive with a strong sense of personal and general threat. A person living in these conditions (where, say, your neighbor is taken from his home, interrogated, tortured, and executed) would experience a heightened state of cognitive awareness that may “heat up” one or several image schemata, particularly ones associated with the nature of the threat, by re-presenting a routine cognitive schema with the entailments of novelty because of its heightened meaning in a new context. Thus a mind—especially a creative and linguistically oriented mind such as Shakespeare's—in this situation would begin to see multiple phenomena around it in terms of this hot, cognitive schema leaving a mind open to the experience of cognitive fusion I defined

¹⁰ See *The Executive Brain* by Elkhonon Goldberg in bibliography.

earlier in this chapter, and thus producing in the artist and in his audience the experience of a saturated event. To the degree that the conditions for cognitive novelty were conditions common to many people of the time, it would make those particularly heated schemata a point of fascination for audiences and linked artist to audience in mutually magnifying points of cognitive fusion in the artist's choice of words, images, and metaphors.

With this idea in mind, the historian can use a particular schema as a lens through which to examine the period, and mine the results. This doesn't necessarily privilege one schema over the other, as in saying that THIS schema was more prevalent than any of the others. Rather, it examines the way in which a particular schema may have reached a cultural saturation point, a state of heightened saliency thus becoming "hot"—if it is hot, it will saturate. The interesting question in McConachie's examination of Cold War drama, then, is not whether the container schema appears in Cold War drama as a repeated motif, because of course, it does, it must. It would be mere tautology to assert that container schemata organize cognition for human beings, therefore container schemata exist in Cold War drama. The question posed by McConachie's work and others like it is: why? Why might the container schema seem heightened in this work, more prevalent, more salient? More "hot"?

That brings us to the moment of this particular study of Reformation England when erasure and silence were tactics of power and survival respectively—an historic nuclear fission that occurred when the ascendancy of a Protestant Queen over a reluctant Catholic populace

created an intricate web of disguise, concealment, and containers—and a terrifying invasion of the State into the spiritual lives of the commoner.

1.5 THE CATHOLIC MAJORITY

One idea that has haunted English history is the idea that Elizabeth I united a Protestant majority, who collectively longed to be freed from the shackles of the medieval Catholic Church. Recent historians (most notably Edwin Jones, Christopher Haigh, and Eamon Duffy) have scoured documents remarkably ignored by previous historians—not the documents circulated by Thomas Cromwell. Cromwell, Henry VIII's chief minister, has come to be known as the world's first modern propagandist, benefiting from the emergence of the printing press. In a way that marked subsequent English history, the Tudor family was able to circulate only those histories that told the story the King and Cromwell himself wanted to be told. This laid the foundations of the “Whig history” that has been so roundly criticized in recent years.

Scrutiny of even more primary documents—personal journals, histories, letters, wills, and the private manuscripts of exiled Catholics at last yields quite a different understanding of just what happened in early 16th-century England. Henry, of course, was no Protestant himself. Awarded the title of Defender of the Faith for his initial opposition to Luther, Henry considered himself a good Catholic and had little to do with Protestant ideas. It was his second wife, Anne

Boleyn and her small, exclusive entourage who espoused the Lutheran ideas that were spreading in other parts of Europe. It was only when Henry's battle with the Pope brought him the ultimate denial for his annulment that Henry found any of the typically Protestant arguments against Catholicism useful. The elite group of Luther's followers in Boleyn's circle found Henry's desire for a male heir through Boleyn a unique opportunity for the advancement of the Lutheran Reform.

The size of the Catholic opposition has long been underestimated, but it is now understood to have been a significant and threatening majority until the end of the 16th century. Extant records include warnings to Elizabeth I and the anxious concerns of the Protestant majority, who often committed to paper their worries about a Catholic uprising. The speed with which the Lutheran faction of the Henrican court operated "occasionally alarmed" Henry, who's passion really did not extend beyond the annulment from Catherine of Aragon he desired (Asquith, 6). Though the dispensing of monastic lands to a new class of *nouveau riche* took advantage of the stunned passivity of the faithful Catholics who had long suffered disputes between their King and Rome, it wasn't until the Reformers in Henry's court began blatantly attacking the centerpieces of Catholic life that any sort of protest erupted.

In 1536, the largest rebellion in England's history (some 30,000 people strong) marched on London under a banner of the Five Wounds of Christ, demanding the restoration of the monasteries as well as the rituals, rites, and traditions banned under Henrican law. Though Henry

easily squelched the dissent through lies and strategic be-headings, the size of the uprising shocked him. By 1538, Henry showed strong signs of repenting what he had unleashed, desperately trying to retract all that he had enacted. He outlawed public discussion of the sacraments and clerical marriage, and leading Parliament in 1539 he stood by the Six Articles, which set out harsh corporal punishments and execution for denying essential Catholic doctrine. However, Reformer Archbishop Thomas Cranmer had already seized control of his son Edward, and laid the foundation for further extreme enactments, upon Henry's death in 1547.

Edward's reign did not last long; his death at the age of 15 allowed Catherine of Aragon's daughter Mary to ascend. Bloody Mary's reign lasted for five years—though there was a feeble attempt by the Protestant minority to crown the “nine day queen” Jane Grey, Mary's overwhelming support amongst the populace, particularly among the powerful, landowning Catholics, allowed an easy accession to the throne. Pious Mary spent the five years of her reign attempting to restore England to Rome and to seek revenge for the disgrace of her mother. Mary's unpopular marriage to King Phillip II of Spain produced no Catholic heir. In what little remained of her life, Mary set about trying to convert Elizabeth, the next in line to the throne, but since any acknowledgment of Rome or the validity of Roman Catholicism would immediately call Elizabeth's legitimacy and accession into question, there was little doubt in anyone's mind: Elizabeth I would be a Protestant queen.

Elizabeth I rose to power through the maneuverings of William Cecil who had long been grooming Elizabeth for such a vocation. The country was in a post-influenza malaise that Clare Asquith, among others, has advanced as the explanation for the relatively easy accession of a Protestant queen in a Catholic majority. In 1559, the law that allowed for another state religion with the sitting queen as Supreme Head, passed by a slim three vote swing. Though the loyal Catholic populace feared the further decimation of their Catholic practice, after so many years of Tudor swings back and forth between extreme Protestantism and ardent Catholicism, few believed that Elizabeth's Protestant rule was anything lasting or permanent:

...onlookers at home and abroad were certain that before long the country would revert to the popular Catholicism of the previous reign. The imminent prospect of a return to the old religion was the chief reason they refrained from open rebellion. Encouraging Catholic hopes, the Queen entertained one Catholic suitor after another—a Catholic marriage, perhaps to a Hapsburg, perhaps to one of her Catholic courtiers, seemed inevitable. Moreover, Elizabeth's health was frail: she almost died of smallpox in 1562. Catholic successors were waiting in the wings. It would pay to keep quiet, especially as in the early days of the reign both Catholic leaders and the government turned a blind eye to 'church papists'—Catholics who attended the obligatory Protestant communion service in public and Mass in private. (Asquith 13)

Thus, Elizabeth I came to power in a country that still believed that Catholic Restoration and a Counter-Reformation victory were but a heartbeat away. Thus, also, the idea that a man's private belief existed as something contained, secreted away, and bounded from his public action became cemented, as Sir Francis Bacon's tribute to her attested: he admired her for "not seeking to make windows into men's souls" (MacCulloch 290).

1.5.1 The Case for a Catholic Shakespeare

Although I advance a sub-argument about his secret, Catholic identity, I freely acknowledge that there is no final proof of Shakespeare's religious leanings, only a critical mass of accumulated evidence that make a strong suggestion in that direction. Consequently, I in no way tie this sub-argument to the ultimate thesis, which is, briefly that the peculiar conditions of the English Reformations allowed for a potent cognitive blend that produced the "interiority" readily identified with Shakespeare's dramaturgy. Nonetheless, for me, the consideration of Shakespeare's extended meditation on interiority is an index of his Catholicity (with a decided capital "C").

The accidents of the English Reformation permeated the culture with little regard for "Protestantness" or "Catholicness"; whether one was sympathetic to or adamantly opposed to a man disemboweled for his recusancy, hardly removes the impressure such a graphically literal removal of the visceral interior from the body has on the imagination. With the Catholic reign of

“Bloody Mary” not far behind them, and the likely-seeming specter of another Catholic Restoration firmly in mind, whether one was Protestant or Catholic mattered little, as far as the secret nature of belief, conscience, and the soul, disguise, deception, were concerned. It may have been the key to Shakespeare's instant popularity that one could easily adapt the metaphors of *Hamlet* to one position or the other—and likely provided the playwright with a credible deniability either way. It was the nature of the Reformations that one had to be ready to play the game on either side. However, I will make no secret that I am convinced that he was a secret Catholic. The following points summarize the most popular arguments for a Catholic Shakespeare.

1.5.1.1 “He dyed a papiste.”

Yes, it’s a well-known story: the Anglican reverend and ardent reformer Richard Davies, exiled Protestant under Queen Mary I, rector of Sapperton in Gloucestershire in the second half of the 17th century, trusted confidante of the Archbishop of Canterbury and William Cecil, claimed what many were already beginning to wonder about William Shakespeare: “he dyed a papiste”—(and also that he was a troublesome stealer of venison). Many take this small hand-written note, discovered amongst Davies’ belongings at his college, Corpus Christi at Oxford to be too casual and off-handed to have any significance on the debate. However, as Peter Milward argued about this location and the inclinations of a man such as Davies:

He was thus living at a time and in a place sufficiently close to the actual scene of the poet's death for us to accept him as a credible mouthpiece of local tradition. His profession as an Anglican divine, moreover, removes him from any suspicion of religious bias, such as might have attached to a Catholic priest making a similar claim for the poet.

(ix)

As will become clear in the arguments constructed for this dissertation, I employ an obvious bias in favor of Reverend Davies' now infamous, jotted testimony about Shakespeare's religious orientation.

1.5.1.2 "My Worthy Good Cosen, Maister WS": The Southwell Connection

Robert Southwell (c1561-21 February 1595) was a Jesuit missionary to England, and one of several very likely (if not entirely absolute) connections between Shakespeare and the Jesuits (see Chapter 3). Southwell was a poet of some great reputation amongst England's poets in general, with Ben Jonson saying on record that, in exchange for having had the God-given ability to pen Southwell's "The Burning Babe," "he would have been content to destroy many of his [own poems]." Southwell did not write his poetry in didactic form but in lyric form, unusual for a priest at this point in history. Though he knew the danger to his life with the accession of Queen Elizabeth, he requested to be sent on mission to England and addressed his poetry to the faithful Catholics still living there. He wrote an impassioned and public plea to Elizabeth, making the case that one could be a faithful Catholic and loyal to the crown. Elizabeth was not

inclined to agree. She set Richard Topcliffe, a member of Parliament and feared priest-hunter-cum torturer, on his trail and he was captured, abused, and tortured over the course of three years before he was executed by dragging, partial hanging, and disemboweling while still alive.

The Southwell-Shakespeare connection is by no means absolute but is based on the several compelling facts that lead one to induce a strong probability that the connection between the two was direct and cognizant. The strongest evidence is a published letter entitled “St. Peter’s Complaint” written to “My Good Cosen, Maister WS”—an address to a poet whom Southwell admires, but whom he admonishes to take up graver matter in his poetry. There are oblique references in the poem to Shakespeare’s work “Venus and Adonis,” which was likely published the same year (1592) that Southwell’ penned this letter (Wood 153). Whether or not the WS is William Shakespeare is somewhat uncertain. Through Christopher Devlin’s 1956 biography of Southwell, however, we know that there is a decided and documented (though distant) relationship between Southwell and Shakespeare’s mother. There are no first, second, or third cousins on Southwell’s side with the initials WS, and certainly none with the reputation for poetry that our WS had, let alone having authorship of a poem concerned with Venus, a subject he names specifically in the letter. The last line of the letter is: “it rests in your will.” If we are to conclude that Shakespeare is the WS of this letter, it makes a strong case for a Catholic Shakespeare, associating with the Catholic underground.¹¹

¹¹ The pervious discussion owes a debt to my colleagues on Shakesper.net, particularly Peter Bridgman and Bruce

1.5.1.3 Where There's A Will...

In 1750, a document was found concealed in the rafters of the Shakespeare family home that has been purported to be the spiritual last will and testament of John Shakespeare, which unequivocally points to his passionate loyalty to the Roman Catholic Church. Unverified accusations of forgery against the document have been noted, though the purported motive for such a labor and research-intensive forgery in the 18th century remains obscure. Furthermore, the text of the document has been found to be a word-for-word copying of a text authored by Charles Borromeo, the cardinal archbishop of Milan, and circulated in Warwickshire county by both Edmund Campion and Robert Persons at the time of John Shakespeare's residence there. As Pearce records:

Herbert Thurston, S.J. found, in the British Museum, a Spanish version of a spiritual testament which corresponded, phrase for phrase, from the middle of Item III to the end, with the spiritual will of John Shakespeare. Printed in Mexico City in 1661 it was entitled "The Testament or Last Will of the Soul" and was ascribed to St. Charles Borromeo. Father Thurston subsequently discovered another Spanish version of the "Testament," dating before 1690, and a version in the Romansch language that had been printed in

Young.

Switzerland in 1741, both of which ascribe authorship to St. Charles Borromeo, the cardinal archbishop of Milan who died in 1584. (35)

The validity of the original document—lost except for records of its existence—is now largely accepted, but the meaning of such a document continues to come under intense scrutiny. Stephen Greenblatt uses the will as an example of what he sees as the Shakespeare family’s “double consciousness” living a split life as both Protestant and Catholic. He is not the first to question John Shakespeare’s Catholic identity based on his activities under Elizabeth. As a Protestant civic officer, he ordered the dismissal of a Catholic priest and the whitewashing of the Catholic frescoes in the local church. John Shakespeare rose to public office under Queen Mary—which would only be possible for a Catholic. Yet, he continued to flourish under Elizabeth.

Eamon Duffy's scholarship may have unraveled this puzzle. Duffy documents the act of whitewashing as a hallmark of Catholic survivalism, arguing and providing evidence for the act of whitewashing as a technique that allowed Catholics in the public sphere to comply without sin. For Duffy, whitewashing was an act of hope and a testament to a belief that Restoration would one day conquer. Whereas overtly Protestant magistrates would destroy frescoes and paintings, smashing statues, the Protestant-seeming, Catholic, Counter-Reformation activists would whitewash over paintings and simply remove statues placing them in strongholds for the day when Restoration would survive. As Duffy has documented, these strongholds have since

been discovered and many Catholic *objets d'art* have surfaced through the years, the fruits of these secretly rebellious efforts (*Altars* 583).

Whether or not all of this proves John Shakespeare's alleged Catholicism remains in dispute. The case for his Catholicism is primarily derived from his Last Will and Testament and his recorded recusancy, but other less direct evidence coalesces around the man. The area in which the Shakespeare family lived was a hotbed of Catholic recusancy, and thus, reports on recusant activity were regularly drafted and submitted to the crown. John Shakespeare was named a recusant in 1592—though there is a note in official records that his non-attendance may have been due to fear of processing for debt. Whether or not this is true has not been verified. His debt is somewhat suspect; Catholic recusants were often persecuted through heavy fines for failing to attend services and their ability to conduct business was hampered by local Protestant magistrates. Shakespeare's "Lost Years"—the years between leaving Stratford and arriving on the scene in London—are also the subject of some hypotheses relating to John Shakespeare's reduced financial circumstances. Often, Catholic families would send their sons to Italy for education, the cost of which may certainly be one way in which the family coffers were so thoroughly drained. This possibility has often been offered as an explanation for the breadth and depth of Shakespeare's knowledge of the world, which has been repeatedly noted as improbable for a Catholic who had received little formal higher education, a favorite argument of the Shakespeare-didn't-write-his-own-plays adherents.

Others doubt the actual existence of the debt. Significant, recent scholarship has cast a considerable shadow of doubt over the “common knowledge” that Shakespeare’s debt, as recorded in the official document marking his recusancy, was actual. Joseph Pearce (*The Quest for Shakespeare*) has collected this evidence in his recent book. Pearce asserts that the myth of John Shakespeare’s indebtedness at the end of his life has been eradicated. Research has uncovered (through records kept by the exchequer) his wide prosperity as a wool trader and banker, that lasted until the end of his life.¹² If one can believe the records kept by the exchequer (and why would these be falsified?) then, the “suspicion” of debt processing written in the document recording John Shakespeare’s recusancy is a trumped-up defense of recusant behavior in what has been amply demonstrated to be a Catholic hotbed in Elizabethan England (Pearce 43). Either way—real debt or false debt—the key point is that the recording of “fear of processing for debt” in no way dampens the significant fact that John Shakespeare did not attend Church services in a time when such an action had grave consequences.

1.5.1.4 The Arden Family and Susannah Shakespeare

Mary Shakespeare *nee* Arden was indisputably from a family with strong and visible ties to the “Old Faith”. That she came from not only an obviously Catholic family but a family of Catholic

¹² Pearce cites DL Thomas and N.E. Evans (see Works Cited for full bibliographic information)

insurgents is simply a matter of record. Edward Arden (a cousin of Mary Arden Shakespeare) was executed (1583) for his alleged involvement in the Somerville Plot, of which his son-in-law John Somerville was the chief conspirator. Arden is the only known link connecting Somerville to the Catholic underground movement. The rest of the Somerville clan is conspicuously absent from any records of insurgency or recusancy. The Arden family was also implicated in the Throckmorton Plot of 1583, the Parry Plot of 1585, the Essex Rebellion of 1601, and the Gunpowder plot of 1605.¹³

There is more. Shakespeare's daughter Susannah was a noted recusant. Judith and Hamnet Sadler, the godparents of Shakespeare's twins of the same name, were arraigned at the Church courts for being practicing Catholics.¹⁴ There is also the issue of Blackfriar's Gatehouse. Shakespeare, at the end of his career, and before retiring to his home in Stratford-upon-Avon, bought the Blackfriar's Gatehouse in London as, history tells us, an investment (de Grazia 5). But, as has been noted by Joseph Pearce via Mutschmann and Wentersdorf, this particular property was a "notorious center of Catholic activities." The history of the property begins as a Dominican Order and passes from one Catholic "papist" to the next from the Catholic Bishop of Ely, to William Blackwell, to Blackwell's widow, Mary Blackwell nee Campion, relative of

¹³ See Pearce 44, and H. Mutschmann and K. Wentersdorf, *Shakespeare and Catholicism*, whom Pearce recommends for the "Genealogical Tables" section, which traces the Shakespeare family's connections with Catholic insurgents against the crown, including the ones named above and others. See also Greenblatt, *Will* 58-59, 80, 101, 119, 158, 160.

¹⁴ Shakespeare, who disappeared for a period of time himself, did not register with the local Church, upon arrival in London under danger of prosecution.

Edmund Campion Jesuit martyr (and, as will be later discussed, a Jesuit who was one Counter-Reformation activist amongst many of the Shakespeare family's acquaintance in Warwickshire). If there is any doubt that Blackwell's genealogy demonstrates her Catholic sympathy, she allowed the Catholic Bishop of Ely to lodge at her home until his death in 1570, at a time when housing a Catholic priest was an act of treason. Also a tenant of Blackwell's was Mary Banister, the sister of the Robert Southwell who addressed his Catholic plea to the poet WS. The property continues to pass through the hands of noted Catholic recusants, a place where records show that secret deliveries from Rome and priests continued to land, until which time it is purchased by William Shakespeare from Henry Walker (another identified Catholic recusant) as "an investment property". Shakespeare takes his "investment" and leases it to a John Robinson whose father was known to harbor the priest Richard Dudley. John Robinson's son went to Rome and took Holy Orders, while his other son stayed with him at the Gatehouse. Six years after Shakespeare's death, a tragic collapse of the house revealed that it had been used as a secret house for the Catholic Mass for many years. And Robinson was not just a tenant; he visited Shakespeare in Stratford, was with Shakespeare as he lay dying, and was the witness to the signing of his will.¹⁵

¹⁵ See Joseph Pearce, Peter Milward, Clare Asquith, and Richard Wilson.

Together these facts help to tilt the balance from a possibly Catholic William Shakespeare to a probable one. He was the son of a mother who was not just of a Catholic family but a criminally Catholic family, many of whose members were prosecuted and brutally executed for such an allegiance. His father at some point found it necessary to have a testament to his Catholic identity hand-inscribed, a document which pleads with his children to pray for his deceased soul in purgatory, and offers apology for any action against the Catholic Church he performed while alive. He lived in one of the areas of the country marked by Elizabeth's court as a "recusant hotbed" closely monitored for a possible threat against the Queen. He was schooled by a devoted (and martyred) Catholic, Simon Hunt who spirited a student away to a secret Catholic college in Douai, France (Wilson 54). Shakespeare's wedding is alleged to have been officiated by a Catholic priest (Pearce 84). On this (and more) the case is built for a Catholic Shakespeare and allows me to advance a thesis hinged upon the idea that Shakespeare wrote in and through a Catholic context shrouded and easily misapprehended or forgotten, for all the reasons enumerated in the preceding discussion.

1.6 DOCUMENT MAP

In this introductory chapter, I've covered the cognitive linguistic framework of this study and asserted the post-Whig scholarship that provides the historiographic context in which I am working. In the following four chapters I will cover specific socio-cultural emanations of interiority that bracket the Reformation and Counter-Reformation and inevitably work in and through *Hamlet*.

In Chapter 2, "Cognitive and Dramaturgical Interiors: Interiority in the Renaissance" I will describe the beginnings of modern interiority in Catholic, medieval philosophy through Augustine and Aquinas and I will demonstrate that their inward mode of reflection travels a trajectory through St. Ignatius Loyola and Martin Luther. I will then bring the concept of interior consciousness to bear upon the text of *Hamlet*, and demonstrate how interiors are both a recurring motif and a dramaturgical illusion Shakespeare employs in a novel way.

In Chapter 3, "Dark Interiors: Priest Holes, Confessionals, and Secrets," I will examine the "Chinese box" architecture of Reformation England including priest holes and Borremeo's confession box. I will explore recusant Catholic architect Nicholas "Little John" Owen and Jesuit martyr Edmund Campion, the hunted priest responsible for bringing the idea of the confession box to England, with whom the Shakespeare family had direct contact. This context will be brought to bear on Shakespeare's spatial imagination, focusing on *Hamlet* as a dramatic space

where the literal and linguistic suggestion of dark interiors coalesces into a nested space of hidden motive and intrigue.

In Chapter 4, "Textual Interiors: Cryptography," I will catalogue the Elizabethan/Jacobean propensity for hidden meanings and encoded texts as well as the use of cryptography as a major tool of recusancy. I will posit the distinction between mere metaphor and code, and will suggest that, at moments, the systematicity of the language in *Hamlet* raises itself to the level of code, also exploring the way contested discourses were disguised and appropriated as a status quo in Elizabethan public life. I will re-excavate *Hamlet* for the most commonly used metaphors, symbols, and metonymy widely recognized among Catholics as the language of resistance.

In Chapter 5, "Gutting: The Public Performance of Disemboweling and *Hamlet*," I will connect the Reformation's most imagistically determined form of torture and execution—disembowelment—to repeating images in the *Hamlet* text, and mark Elizabethan England as a society in the final stages of Victor Turner's social drama. This chapter will demonstrate that Shakespeare's plays in general and *Hamlet* in particular are haunted by this particularly graphic and phobic facet of the Elizabethan imagination.

2.0 COGNITIVE AND DRAMATURGICAL INTERIORS: INTERIORITY IN THE RENAISSANCE

Seems, madam! nay it is; I know not 'seems.'

'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,

Nor customary suits of solemn black,

Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,

No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,

Nor the dejected 'havior of the visage,

Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,

That can denote me truly: these indeed seem,

For they are actions that a man might play:

But I have that within which passeth show;

These but the trappings and the suits of woe. (1.2.79-89)

The interior life of man became a veritable obsession during the Renaissance period. The Catholic tradition that launched Renaissance Humanism was a bifurcated tradition centered on

inward reflection and outward devotion. Until this period, it was the latter that had shaped daily life more than the former (Kaufman 1). However, the values of Renaissance Humanism—initially still Catholic in flavor—placed a new focus on inward reflection. Ironically, it was this move from outward devotion to inward reflection that animated both the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation. The Reformation capitalized on the turn inward and seized the opportunity to challenge the seeming idolatrousness of Catholic practice, in particular the iconography and the veneration of saints that formed the imaginative heart of Catholicism. At the same time, it also enabled the contrapuntal theological points of the Counter-Reformation through the teachings of St. Ignatius Loyola, whose *Spiritual Exercises* (covered more thoroughly in Chapter 3) begins with the deep inward gaze. Both theological strikes gave great power to the individual will and conscience. It is in this context that Shakespeare's imagination attached itself to the idea of a spiritual and cognitive interior, and from here he created and developed a dramaturgical interior, characters with rich inner-lives and transparent inner-reflections defined in both positive and negative space, through what is held secret as much as through what is laid bare.

Through Hamlet, we see a character at war within himself, a war which paralleled the state of affairs within the spiritual and civil principalities he inhabited. Unpacking the arguments of subjectivity that seek to deny the existence of an autonomous Elizabethan “self” as we understand the word today, one discovers that, on the contrary, not only did the modern “self”

exist, the vectors of social and hegemonic influence converge on a self that acted as a concealed locus of resistance against these forces. Enabled by the implicit tools suggested by medieval theology and philosophy, which was explicitly and implicitly taught through Catholic catechesis, practice, and ritual, it is this resistance that shaped the self as much as the social and hegemonic vectors contemporary scholarship has fixated upon; studying the social influences and power structures of the time has borne much fruit but it led to a creeping elision, an essential misunderstanding of what it meant to an individual to live in a time of dual allegiance to State and Church split. In fact, it was the nature of Elizabethan self-hood, as shaped through Catholic theology, to make surreptitious decisions of conscience *independent of the monarchy*, creating thoroughly imagined tropes of private and public selves at war with each other.

The language of *Hamlet* is steeped with a Renaissance self, mind, and soul imagined as something contained, and this imaginal conceit is repeatedly signified through polysemic webs of insides and outsides. Mood, memory, and mind and the related ideas of thought, word, and action, are also hyperlinks to the idea of an interior self contained in the semi-permeable body, through which “that within which passeth show” continually threatens to either burst forth or leak out. The contained self/mind/soul is laden with the emotional gravity of spiritual warfare, in which the theological battles fought within the public liturgies of Elizabethan England gained new heights. We know language is processed globally at microsecond speeds. Consequently, whether or not Shakespeare, his actors, or his audiences were thoroughly conscious of these

metaphoric parallels is not the point—rather, the key point is that these tropes necessarily evoked a sub-cognitive representation of these religious hot spots, giving this cognitive primitive the experience of novelty and imbuing them with the high stakes jeopardy of both spiritual and physical threat.

2.1 LOYOLA AND LUTHER

If it's safe to say that the Reformation had a significant impact on human consciousness in Europe—and indeed, how could it not—then the figures of Loyola and Luther were also influential figures in the shaping of collective consciousness. The personal experience of Loyola and Luther, though leading them to radically different actions and ideologies, created parables of inward journeys (amidst pain and struggle) toward the inner-self. At the site of the inner-self, the pilgrim met with God and ultimately, conversion and revelation. This is a cognitive blend emerging from the merger between the cognitive schema of SOURCE-PATH-GOAL and INSIDE/OUTSIDE. The metaphor “Life is a Journey,” emerges from what George Lakoff (*Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things*) has called an Event Structure Metaphor. This maps from the domain of space onto the domain of events. *Bildungsroman*, or the coming-of-age trope in literature, is one such example of an Event Structure Metaphor, conditioning how we engage with and see literature of this genre as an event in space taking place along a longer journey

toward maturation. But the experiences of Loyola and Luther mark another level of projection. It further maps the unseen space of inner experience onto the idea of space, wherein interior consciousness rests at a locus, and that locus is the inner-self. Both Loyola and Luther provided a model, not only for resistance, but for self-possession and action, independent of the external power forces that aimed to shape their thought, word, and action.

The biographies of the two figures most associated with the Reformation are hinged almost entirely upon the metaphor of inward experience. There are other similar influences backgrounding this thought, specifically St. Augustine, who turned inner reflection into a literary trope through his seminal work, *The Confessions of St. Augustine*. Most specific to the Elizabethan time period, however, are Loyola and Luther, who provided powerful figure heads of thought and imagination for Reformation consciousness. Though it seems counter-intuitive to say it, Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits (and consequently the founder of one of the most powerful arms of the Counter-Reformation) and Martin Luther were really very similar indeed. Both came to their individual epiphanies through introspection and both inspired a new (and strangely identical) *modus operandi* for Christian action—the transformation of the inner life. Loyola, who was forced into a time of solitary reflection from war wounds, developed powers of imagination that far surpassed the blind obedience to Church rule that had formerly governed the lives of Catholics in Europe. His interiority became, in a sense, a discovery of itself and a radical shift in Christian thought was born; quite suddenly, personal experience and

conversion became central tenets of the faith. It is far from merely coincidental that the spiritual journey was markedly similar to Luther's. As Diarmaid MacCulloch notes:

Luther's parallel solitary struggles with God led him ultimately to a sense that his salvation was an unconditional gift of God, making him free of all his natural bonds; this freedom empowered him to defy what he saw as worldly powers of bondage in the medieval Western Church. Inigo (Ignatius) found that his encounter with God was best expressed in forms drawn from the Iberian society which had created the most triumphant form of that same Church: chivalric expressions of duty and service. The contrasting conversion experiences thus led respectively to rebellion and to obedience. It was a momentous symbol of what came to separate Protestant Reformation and Catholic Counter-Reformation. (221)

Here, Loyola and Luther emerge as two antecedent figures of the Reformation who, like Shakespeare, also seems to have "invented" an expression of the human interior—but through spiritual rather than literary experience. These two figures manifest as examples of Renaissance inward reflection, discernment, and examination of conscience, leading to inner transformation and, indeed, conversion. Both underwent legendary solitary experiences in which they both discovered and re-conceived their own identity and their relationships with God, the Church, and with themselves. Thus, both figures represented to Reformation Europeans the imperative of

developing an inner-life, one with boundaries that clearly demarcate oneself from the Social and from Authority and, consequently, highlight individual experience as a way into God's grace—though they diverged radically from each other in their respective ideas on the means and modes of that grace. Finally, both figures come into a new perception of human liberty and free will. One, Loyola, will decide that one must willingly give the gifts of freedom and autonomy over to obedience and the other, Luther, to rebellion.

As aforementioned, there is a popular strain of Shakespeare scholarship that argues Elizabethans had not developed a sense of an interior self as we conceive of that concept today, and that to project that understanding onto Shakespeare, his characters, and his audiences, is a psychological anachronism. This idea, however, is directly contradicted by the conditions and arguments of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. This concept of an interior and necessarily resistant self, separate from external matrices, is a necessary consequence and conceptual exponent of the historical conditions caused by the Reformation. In England, this was represented by Cardinal William Allen (1532-1594) who designated the body as the realm of the earthly prince while the priest's province was the soul (73-4). Herein, Cardinal Allen not only refers directly to an interior in the form of the soul, he immediately calls that interior into the service of resistance, which points directly to a concept of both agency and autonomy. Almost as if they were literary characters rather than historic religious figures, Loyola and Luther

impersonated the idea of spiritual agency and autonomy and provided an idealization of introspection leading one to revelation and ultimately, God.

2.2 THE DRAMATURGICAL INTERIOR

While there is this popular strain of Shakespeare scholarship that argues the Elizabethans had no sense of a modern self, there is one prominent voice, Harold Bloom's, that speaks out against this idea—or rather asserts that there was no self *before* Shakespeare, only after, because Shakespeare *invented* the modern human. What Shakespeare actually did, I suggest, is invent a *dramaturgical* interior, through dramatic device: overhearing, self-overhearing soliloquies, secrets, lies, and revelations. Shakespeare performed an extended session of creative play on the idea of interiors, human interiors and physical interiors, formally and in content. His plays centered imaginatively on the formal aspects of characterization, and the conceit of their self-discovery. In so doing, Shakespeare provided a model of humanity that begins—and in a certain sense, ends—with the simple cognitive schema of INSIDE/OUTSIDE applied to character, plot, setting, and, dramatic form itself.

When Harold Bloom infamously claimed that Shakespeare invented the human it was a declaration of war. In general, the hyperbole of his assertion drew predictable, critical vitriol. His self-proclaimed "Gnostic Transcendentalism" bleeds through his rational argument, as it seems to imply that Shakespeare—and, in a certain Bloomian mystic turn, his characters—actually hold a divine creative power. This idea, while Romantic and appealing to some, seems to deserve the rigorous critical spanking it received; this is not the true opening salvo of the argument, however. For when divorced from his imaginative conceit, Bloom's claim is neither so ludicrous as his critics portray nor so radically transcendental as Bloom would have us believe. Really, Bloom reports on something quite simple but nonetheless profound: our personalities are different today because Shakespeare wrote his plays.

Despite insinuations that either Shakespeare or his fictions (or both) must be some breed of ever-living immortal, Bloom's most persuasive argument is merely this—Shakespeare's characters are unmistakably and singularly "inward," and this is the dramaturgical invention that gives us our ideas about being human. Unlike the static and fatalistic characters of his antecedents, Shakespeare creates characters who develop themselves as we watch. Much like *The Spiritual Exercises* have been described as a form of "self-overhearing," the dramaturgical development also happens through "overhearing," mostly characters overhearing *themselves* and thus, re-conceiving themselves. Since their appearance on stage and page, we have located ourselves in them and *modeled* ourselves on them.

It is not difficult to advance this argument when one considers that, for one small example, a profoundly influential thinker such as Freud developed most of his psychoanalytic theory on the characters of drama and was deeply influenced by *Hamlet* in particular. Hamlet permeates our collective imagining of self—and still today, our language and archetypal vocabularies are steeped in the memory of Hamlet and similarly act as our model for human reality. It is this conscious and unconscious modeling that allows Bloom to advance this argument of “The Invention of the Human” and provides firm ground to stand on.

This work also advances an argument of invention—but it differs from Bloom’s argument in some subtle but significant ways. “To invent” means, simultaneously, to originate or create through experimentation and ingenuity or to produce from one’s own imagining—but it also means to come upon or to discover. This odd twist in multiple meanings is an accurate understanding of the way Shakespeare invented human interiority. Shakespeare certainly didn’t invent the interiority of man’s consciousness. But he created a collection of *dramaturgical devices* representing that experienced aspect of consciousness. In so doing, he both *discovered* that man’s inwardness was something that could be represented and hence *developed* this already extant aspect of man’s sentient nature. The power of that creation, from the moment of its proliferating reception, ceased to merely reflect and began to dynamically interact and shape the innate capacity of man to turn inward and cultivate an inner life with boundaries between the Individual and the Social, the Individual and the State, and the Individual and God.

In this way it can certainly seem as if Shakespeare invented the Human—but Bloom knows not seeming. He argues: “...Shakespeare gives us a Hamlet who is an agent rather than an effect of clashing realizations,” my argument asserts that he is both. He is an effect first and an agent after. To assert what Bloom asserts, that he was, is, and always will be an agent and not an effect is to assert that Hamlet arrived from the ether, that Shakespeare created him *ex nihilo*. This is not how the stuff of consciousness works—through cognitive blending, the possibility of invention always exists but it is invented from existent phenomena, language, and experience. If Hamlet was created completely *ex nihilo*, his reception would not be what it was. He was received as he was—and continues to be received so—because of the power of the invention to help man develop and locate himself within the play, just as the characters develop themselves. As the characters persist as elements of entertainment and objects of study throughout time, our fulminating critical interpretations change, expand and become layered with projections of story onto story. We can't look at Hamlet quite the same way after having watched Mel Gibson play him on screen or Raph Fiennes play him on stage. The legion of pop cultural imitations and variations on the themes and characters in Hamlet, likewise has an impact. We truly can't see Hamlet quite the same, ever again, after Bob Denver played a musical Hamlet on *Gilligan's Island*.

This phenomenon is a cognitive function of written and performed narrative, known as *parabolic projection*. Parabolic projection is described well by Mark Turner in the preface to *The Literary Mind*:

Story is a basic principle of mind. Most of our experience, our knowledge, and our thinking is organized as stories. The mental scope of story is magnified by *projection*—one story helps us make sense of another. The projection of one story onto another is *parable*, a basic cognitive principle that shows up everywhere, from simple actions like telling time to complex literary creations like Proust's *a recherche du temps perdu*. (xi)

Thus, as multiple interpretations of *Hamlet*, its themes, meanings, and characters, as well as explanatory and descriptive criticism of it, proliferate, the Human is continually re-conceived and re-conceiving through this iconic piece of dramatic literature. To borrow Turner's verbiage, the “mental scope” of *Hamlet* and the location of ourselves within it, continues to expand in multiple directions at once.

2.2.1 The Social and the Individual

Considerations of form aside, the primary way Shakespeare alludes to, creates images of, and conjures the idea of rich personal interiors is words. By that I mean it is a decidedly linguistic invention—though Bloom would rail at the prospect. For Bloom linguistic theories are

inextricably social and for Bloom social explanations of Shakespeare are blasphemy: "We cannot extract social information that will explain his ability to create..." (7). Here, Bloom depicts social explanations as diminishing Shakespeare's creative genius. Yet, we cannot extract a Shakespeare who creates without language and language is, by its very nature a social invention. What purpose has the mind for language other than social transaction? Here Bloom obstinately indulges in an invention of his own, a realm of the purely aesthetic divorced from all traces of ideology. Ironically, he blindly insists on an agnostic and apolitical Shakespeare which, in the context of Renaissance England, is about as bold and as radical an ideology as one could dream up. Yet, the very real notion Bloom introduces, that Shakespeare has continued to shape man's conception of himself, persists.

The dynamic and ever shifting interaction of *Hamlet* and culture makes me sympathetic to Bloom's argument. It is clear that Shakespeare more than merely represents cognition—in fashioning a Hamlet such as this Hamlet, this impassioned, eloquent, and complex Hamlet, Shakespeare's action overflows into a more creative act, one that inspired a growing social mimesis until even centuries upon centuries hence we are becoming what Shakespeare created. He did this through a series of critical, autonomous choices in the selection of words and through what we expect was a collaborative experience between himself and the members of his company. His autonomy in the selection of words thus varies in dominance. For as Crane has explained in the introduction to her book *Shakespeare's Brain* (entitled "Embodying the Author-

Function”), the cognitive science description of what occurs in language selection features both socio-cultural and conscious cognitive processes and that means that it may “again be possible to write about Shakespeare as an agent, conceiving of that agency as partly conscious and partly unconscious” (19).

This autonomous, authorial selection was inevitably influenced by his colleagues, his audiences, and his own perception of the world in which he lived. Conceived of in this way, Shakespeare becomes an individual who, through his own particular skill, is able to design polysemous webs that work directly in and through schematized cognitive operants. As a result, the produced work resonated, and the audiences cathected to his work, and thus began to reflect and shape man’s understanding of himself. The Genius Explanation vs. the Social Explanation is the false dichotomy inherent in Bloom’s argument and at work in the academy every since the New Critics began to struggle for air. Our understanding of language production and reception of literary device does away with this false division once and for all. The Genius Mind, or as Mary Thomas Crane has it the material Brain, *is* particular to the individual in possession of it even as it is deeply embedded in multiple social matrices.

The individual brain both acts and is acted upon. Autonomy is a hotly disputed topic within cognitive science. Lakoff and Johnson would argue that our phenomenologic experience of having an autonomous inner life—a centered, stable “subject” who is the locus of our

sensations, experiences, feelings, emotions, and consciousness—contradicts cognitive reality. Craig Delancey, on the other hand, a cognitive scientist and philosopher of mind concerned with artificial intelligence argues that autonomy is not only real, but it is the central puzzle of Artificial Intelligence (223). Artificial Intelligence fails, primarily because it cannot solve the riddle of autonomous, intelligent action; however much we are able to predict human behavior, there are elements that remain entirely unpredictable and individual, often, as Delancy argues in the subtitle of his work which is “Passionate Engines,” the individuality of human action and expression seems to lie at the nexus of reason and emotion. Therefore, when one contemplates human action (or even animal action) and decision-making, to deny any sort of autonomy (however erroneously conceived the character and nature of that might be) is absurd. Some form of autonomy, then, is a real cognitive phenomenon—and the individual can only invent as Shakespeare invented through an exercise of this autonomy. So in this theory of “Invention,” we must freely bounce between the social and the individual—understanding the effects of the Reformation on Shakespeare in his biographical particulars and on the world he inhabited. For, if the social is removed from our theories, what check and balance are there to the critic’s personal conceit projected onto the object of his study?

For a telling example, Bloom ignores the rich Catholic tradition of inward reflection that had emerged across Europe through the Medieval time period, beginning with Augustine, moving through Thomas Aquinas and crystallizing in the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius Loyola.

It was a tradition with which Shakespeare was undoubtedly familiar but Bloom is not, because it is not something that Bloom himself is interested in. And what man, no matter how much a genius, is an island unto himself? In Bloom's imagining, Shakespeare, like Bloom himself, finds his own context completely irrelevant and rises above it, becoming, as Bloom writes, "too wise," to take a position on the most passionate topics of the day—religion and politics.

Conversely, what theory regarding Shakespeare's lasting influence can be taken seriously that doesn't acknowledge the specific brilliance of his creative autonomy? For if the Social is the only, or even most dominant means of production, then why don't all the plays written during this time period contain exactly the same metaphors, the same linguistic patterns, the same polysemy opening endlessly into deeper meaning, the same recurring motifs? Why do the characters of Webster or Marlowe not persist and haunt the same way the characters of Shakespeare do? Why did their language fail to reach the status of lexical innovation as Shakespeare's did? Though some would answer that the random assertions of "hegemonic canonicity" have made this so—but to what end? To what end does hegemonic canonicity continue to perpetuate such a grandiose myth, even now when the age of information makes an outward reaching of the canon more possible and indeed, probable? Certainly, then, some minds/brains seem more acute at channeling the predominant social metaphors of an age and, in a certain form of literary prognostication, the age to come.

2.3 THE INTERIOR AS HERMENEUTIC CODE IN HAMLET

...the inward service of the mind and soul grow wide withal. (1.3.13-14)

Narratologists like to talk about the driving force of a good story through the terms hermeneutic and proairetic codes, first coined by Roland Barthes in *S/Z* (1970), his structuralist analysis of Honore de Balzac's *Sassarine*. The hermeneutic code is a series of unanswered questions and the proairetic code is the resolution of the actions. These two vectors of story converge upon the Hamlet plot in the line: “But I have that within which passeth show.” Here in Act 1 Scene 2, the previous action of the play—the ghost story—has all been prologue to the catapult that lets loose through Hamlet’s line. It immediately establishes a tension and morphs into threatening action as we watch—and the narrative is keyed to the unraveling of that which Hamlet has within. Hamlet announces not only the hallmark of his character but the overarching leitmotif of Shakespeare’s most heralded play. A Hamlet with no “within” is a Hamlet divested of energy and a story divested of its driving codes.

And yet, some critics refuse to accept subjectivity and interiority as a theme in *Hamlet*. Foucauldian critics such as Terry Eagleton, Catherine Belsley, and Jonathan Goldberg do not concede that a modern subject existed in the Elizabethan era, arguing that the subject only existed in relation to external matrices of power. Exploring the socio-

political context provided by the English Reformations reveals that not only did a strong concept of the interior subject exist but the power of a personal, autonomous interior will took on a hyper-realized mode within the soul-control politics of the Tudors' religious maneuverings. So much so, that the metaphors dangling from the pinpoints of the interior/exterior cognitive schema and the logic of containment heated up and saturated Reformation English culture.

The Reformation in England made the very idea of a subjective interior and exterior boldly apparent in the separation of inner conscience and public action. It was not that the interior subject was nonexistent except for its relationship to external matrices. Rather, Elizabethans experienced their self *as trapped within* external matrices of powers that controlled belief. Thus, the self becomes a point of resistance and, consequently, the interior became a heat sink as Henry and his daughter Elizabeth forced a separation of conscience and action:

Henry's very act of securing parliamentary approval for royal authority over the church had authorized [lay] people to have an opinion on the right ordering of religion. The Queen might insist on obedience and storm against 'vain love of singularity'; she tried to separate the question of inner conscience from outward obedience [...] demanding only that people attend church, not that they stand

questioning about their beliefs; the inner conscience had been recognized and licensed, the door opened to challenging authority in ways unthinkable before.

(Budiansky 56)

It is precisely this emphasis on an internalized and autonomous psyche represented in word play, metaphor, imagery, and imaginative spatial formatting that played a significant role in Shakespeare's popularity. For the idea of a human will, trapped within the external matrices of power, resonated with an emotionally charged, paradigmatic shift represented in the violent machinations of the English Reformations. In fact, not only is the concept of the modern subject fully formed, as evidenced in the text of *Hamlet*, but Shakespeare takes it a step further by mocking those who would, as the Foucauldians and post-structuralists have it, allow themselves to be shaped solely through power. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are prototypes of such people and, as such, lack the internal agency, autonomy, and inner experience portrayed in the other characters of the play, which extends even so far as the grave diggers, who denote a striking homage to autonomy, even in the lower classes. In Act 4 Scene 1, Hamlet derides Rosencrantz and Guildenstern for being "sponges" absorbing the will of the powerful around them without counsel or discernment:

HAMLET That I can keep your counsel and not mine own. Besides, to be demanded of a sponge! What replication should be made by the son of a king?

ROSENCRANTZ Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

HAMLET Ay, sir, that soaks up the king's countenance, his rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the king best service in the end. He keeps them, like an ape, in the corner of his jaw, first mouthed to be last swallowed. When he needs what you have gleaned, it is but squeezing you and, sponge, you shall be dry again. (4.2.11-21)

Hamlet similarly plays with Osric and with Polonius on this same point of mocking—those who live only in relationship to external power matrices are held up for derision.

Wilson notes that even staunch Foucauldian critics like Barker admit that Hamlet's obvious refusal to "unfold" himself "gesture[s] towards 'an essential interiority' for a 'separation has already opened up' in his resistance 'between the inner reality of the subject and an inauthentic exterior' (qtd. 23-4). The Foucauldian dismissal of a developed interior subject dissolves when the concept of resistance is introduced. For who or what is to do the resisting if there is no sense of autonomy or self-hood to be employed?

The strong Catholic subterfuge is palpable to the Elizabethans in the figure of the organized Counter-Reformers and the strong Catholic feelings that still clung to the majority of the populace and thus haunted the Elizabethan regime. The Counter-Reformation characterized itself as a tension caused by a resistance of the interior self against the public self mandated by

the state. The Catholic Counter-Reformation sent its missionaries into the still deeply Catholic and convicted countryside, to deliver marching orders to the faithful. Despite ardent cries for regicide of a heretical Queen, the faithful were strictly instructed to hold strong and keep their devotion internalized, until which time it would be safe to re-emerge. Their Catholicism was something to be held as that within which passeth show. “Papists,” writes George Gifford, are ones who “keep their conscience to themselves and yet go to Church” (qtd. Wilson 48).

2.4 MEDIEVAL ROOTS

[Hamlet] How all occasions do inform against me
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more.
Sure, he that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and godlike reason
To fust in us unused. Now, whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple (4.4.31-9)

The medieval philosophy that fed the Renaissance mind like some ideational, intravenous transfusion, challenges the proposition of the Elizabethan non-self more than merely a little. The two major trajectories of thought, Augustine and Aquinas, each telegraphing Plato and Aristotle respectively, were built entirely on a notion of inward journeys toward Wisdom/God, thus providing a notion of a stable inner self, that points directly to sublimity.

It is not controversial to note that St. Augustine's graphomania was the harbinger of the Renaissance. As James J. O'Donnell wrote: Augustine is an example of textual "self-creation" as he charted his inward reflections on a quest for God (289). His neo-Platonism was the single most contributory factor to the revived interest in Plato and the Greeks during the Renaissance. Renaissance thinkers and artists saw in Augustine a synthesis of Platonic and Christian ideals, and his thinking inspired their own, as both a subject of Renaissance painting and an author of a philosophy that was generative of artistic practice. Meredith J. Gill's *Augustine in the Italian Renaissance: Art and Philosophy from Petrarch to Michaelangelo* documents Augustine as a subject of painting, to be sure, but also shows how his subjectivity, through his philosophy, influenced the thinkers and artists of the period. Incontrovertibly defining him as neo-Platonist, she examines the ideas he portrayed in his opus. McGill identifies the way in which Augustine speaks of an "interior language of the heart" (8). She also discusses the way in which he contrasts external desires of the material world, with "the solitary and interior contemplation of God" (15).

Will (i.e., autonomy and agency) was a centerpiece of his philosophy and he argued that will was the hierarchical head of the human, which, in ideal form, governs both love and intellect (21). Whether this will is actualized or not is irrelevant. For, imaginatively, the Catholic culture that emanated from the high tradition, figured itself as one completely governed by inner desire, inner will, and Reason. That Will was very much on Will's mind is evidenced throughout the text.

Thomas Aquinas had a similar influence on Renaissance philosophy and imagination. At the risk of reductionism, one could easily summarize the animus of Aquinas' work as a quest for harmony between the wisdom of the ancients and Christian moral truths, and assert that this animus, through the dissemination of Aquinas' work via Gutenberg, infused the Renaissance spirit with its Christian humanism. That he was concerned with the interior nature of man's experience of consciousness is apparent. His commentary on the Gospel of John conducts an extensive meditation on the "inner" Logos or Word (similar to Augustine's interior language of the heart). Aquinas was also, like Augustine, intimately concerned with matters of intention or will. In the *Summa Theologica*, will is the cornerstone upon which Aquinas defines the moral human being. He separates will from the appetites and designates it as a signifier of a autonomous, rational human person who "is not immediately moved in accordance with the irascible and concupiscible appetite but waits for the command of will, which is the higher appetite" (Aquinas).

Furthermore, Aquinas identified something he called "the interior senses." Expanding upon Aristotle's identification of the five senses, Aquinas also added the interior senses, which he describes in article four of question seventy-eight in the first part of *Summa Theologica*, naming *sensus communis* or the unifying sense, memory, the imagination, and the *vis cogitativa*. It is worth noting that each of these, particularly memory and imagination, have been studied at length in cognitive neuroscience and have been attached to the development of a consistent autobiographical self-concept in the individual.

Thus we see that both the Augustinian and Thomist traditions explored this explicit idea of an interior self subject to self-scrutiny. Through the influence of medieval philosophy on the Renaissance, we can note the implicit and explicit presence of interiority and subjectivity as a central motif of art and literature produced across Europe, as a direct extension of the ideas expressed in Augustinian neo-Platonism and Aquinas' Aristotleanism. In Medieval philosophy, to deny the centrality of a self with agency was to deny reason and autonomy which were both construed as a sign of the godhead within. To deny the Will was to deny God.

2.4.1 At War Within Itself

An extrinsic, material sign of Will was Borromeo's testament (discussed thoroughly in Chapter 1), disseminated in England by Edmund Campion and other Counter-Reformation Jesuit missionaries, and it is significant as a point of resistance. Like the one discovered in John Shakespeare's rafters, the will stood as textual marker of resistant autonomy and similarly marked a distinctive theological concept: will and intention supersede all, even when outward action and devotion are impossible. Imaginatively, drafting the wills created a textual and physical outside for that which was, by its nature, interior. It performed multiple social functions, and as it relates to this discussion of *Hamlet*, two in particular. First, it ruptured the membrane between discrete private and public selves—but then, as Shakespeare's father did, it was again hidden, a strange doubling of the containment schema that resembles Chinese boxes, something that will be discussed in Chapter 3. Second, and specific to Shakespeare's imaginative concept of himself as a writer: it reified writing as a liminal activity that bridged outside and in. Thus, the “wills” provided an outward point of clarity in a conflicted Elizabethan self, where devotion to the crown and devotion to God warred continually, and where the needs of the soul and the physical threats to the body did battle for dominance.

Hamlet is a play about such a self at war with itself—a concept not even fathomable in a subject that supposedly only defines itself through external hegemony. In typical Renaissance/Medieval fashion, the faculties of the mind and the actions of the body can act in accord; the hallmark of insanity, however, and, indeed, the danger of perdition creates a war-like disharmony within the individual: “my tongue and soul in this be hypocrites” (3.3.430). Here Hamlet wants to murder his mother but resolves not to—just as when the ghost first appears and Hamlet wants to act but decides to be prudent, this conflict provides further evidence of the autonomous will taking a central role in Shakespeare’s understanding of the individual embedded within external hegemonic discourse. It is precisely the will of Aquinas that allows Shakespeare to turn the revenge tragedy on its head.

Ophelia’s madness is also described in terms of inner-conflict as such: “[Claudius:] Poor Ophelia/ Divided from herself and her fair judgment/ Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts” (4.5.58-60). This quote illustrates an inner-self that is separate from rational judgment, but divorced from its essential human characteristics when unable to keep harmony within. However, that is not to say that Shakespeare is not interested in the destabilization of autonomy and the self. On the contrary, one may view *Hamlet* as an extended meditation on the unraveling ideal of a unified, harmonious self acting with full autonomy. He connotes this idea through his form—tragedy—and conjures the desire for and the idealization of a stable subject in negative

space; he creates a stable, autonomous subject through its felt absence. In Act 5 Scene 2, Hamlet talks of his own discord at center.

Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting
That would not let me sleep. Methought I lay
Worse than the mutinies in the bilboes.
Rashly— And praised be rashness for it: let us know
Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well
When our deep plots do pall, and that should teach us
There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will—“(5.2.4-11)

Shakespeare's pre-Romantic inkling is remarkable: he noted that the potential exists for Divine Will at the center of his own unraveling. So, even in the midst of the destabilization there is the hope of a greater ordering to come, a sense that the disorder only marks the ideal toward which the individual strives. This is reflected in the *Summa Theologica* through Aquinas' anti-Platonic notion of the immediacy of the Divine Influence. Notable in light of our Foucauldian considerations, Aquinas is very much thinking of the relationship of a single will to the will of many, specifically the many of earthly principalities—

Further, in God nothing is defective or imperfect. But it seems to be imperfect in a ruler to govern by means of others; thus an earthly king, by reason of his not being able to do everything himself, and because he cannot be everywhere at the same time, requires to govern by means of ministers. Therefore God governs all things immediately. (Aquinas)

This is an objection to the idea that God does not govern all things immediately. If, the objection asserts, God does not govern all things immediately, then he is like a lesser, mortal, and imperfect earthly king, who must use ministers to execute his will. Aquinas answers that the design of all events and their unfolding is divine providence, and the design is perfect and governed immediately. However, in the execution of the design, he governs by means of other things, including the free will of human beings.

Consider this next to the Hamlet quote cited above; Hamlet's irrational impulse, forced by his tortured night-time conflict, discovers a plot for his murder led by the ministers of the King (in this case, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern). The corrupt rulers in residence at Elsinore, unable to be everywhere and see everything themselves, govern by means of spies, which necessarily fractures a sense of autonomy in the rulers—this is markedly corrupted and incomplete, and provides a human and imperfect opposite to the one true governor of the self: God, who governs all things immediately and perfectly. In *Hamlet*, this diabolic human

governance is something against which the human person must struggle in order to keep his soul in tact; it points to the imperative of resistance against earthly principalities.

The argument against a developed inner subject in the modern sense is also entirely refuted by the Renaissance concept of inner conscience, which was identified through religious role models of the age and demonstrates a strong sense of both personal autonomy from earthly power structures and a developed interior life. The workings of conscience are demonstrated in the interior closet scene between Gertrude and Hamlet, which, not coincidentally, is preceded by Claudius's confessional soliloquy: "[Hamlet] Come, come and sit you down you shall not budge/you go not till I set you up a glass /Where you may see the inmost part of you" (3.4.23-5). Hamlet's and Claudius's soliloquies amount to self-interrogations and represent a clear sense of personal culpability and an equally explicit sense of autonomy over one's own actions. And Gertrude's outburst in the closet scene is similarly telling: "O Hamlet, speak no more!/Thou turn'st my eyes into my very soul /And there I see such black and grained spots/As will not leave their tinct "(99-102). And later in Act 4 Scene 5, this penetrating aside: "To my sick soul (as sin's true nature is)/Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss./So full of artless jealousy is guilt,/ It spills itself in fearing to be spilt" (17-21).

Although, the supersaturated schema of INSIDE/OUT fed the English imagination in explicitly physical and spatial terms (as later chapters will explore in depth), it can be seen first

and foremost as a concept applied to internal self-division. Renaissance philosophy and religion was built upon homologies—man’s physical self represented his emotional and spiritual self (as in humoral psychology) and all that existed on the physical, earthly plane had cosmological correlates in the heavens and in the spiritual realm. Within the symmetrical metonymy of such a system of thought, that man has an inside and outside physically was only emphasized by the fact that he also has a psychological, and spiritual inside and outside, an idea which led to an obsession with the “inwardness” of human experience. The conditions of the Reformations in England—where concealing, or “keeping inside” what one believed and thought were often essential to spiritual and physical survival—made this experience of “inwardness” come into spectacular focus.

2.5 ARTIFICIAL-INTELLIGENCE AND THE REPRESENTED SELF

As the above section demonstrates, the cumbersome theoretical inheritance of Elizabethan “selves” and the troubled academic discourse that couches “subjectivity,” in this post-modern moment, are useful but need to be acknowledged as limited in descriptive power by their failure to take into account the subtleties of Medieval philosophy. The marriage of certain theoretical giants (particularly, Foucault, Derrida, and Lacan) within the post-modern literary dialogue has produced a body of critical literature that is, to borrow a term, “maximally counterintuitive,” i.e.,

it contains enough information that clashes with intuitive or "folk" theories of mind that we find it difficult to accept or process. The focus of these theories is on hegemony. According to this point of view, the culturally dictated modes of discourse in which we must either willingly or unwillingly engage, complicate traditional notions of an autonomous self. In literary criticism, more than complicating such notions, it actually seeks to dismantle the stable, fixed self as had featured prominently in historicist and New Critical claims on literature. These critics see the self as a fictional construct that emerges from a confluence of discourses. That those discourses converge at the site of the material brain was either ignored or completely misunderstood. Here we arrive at arguments such as feminist critic, Catherine Belsey and the late critical theorist Francis Barker who argue that the modern subject, as we currently understand it, is a myth that is projected backwards onto the Early Modern and Medieval periods.

In this thinking, the myth of the "subject" is also falsely attributed to the age, including "inwardness" and interiority. For Belsey and Barker, and those who subscribe to the same breed of post-structuralist ideologies, the "myth" of a self is one that should be abandoned in both backward and forward looking thinking. Though, as Mary Thomas Crane has noted, one might think that few could find a rational argument against the notion that Shakespeare's dramaturgy is remarkably inward, there are many larger theories that deny an inner, autonomous, and stable subject altogether, considering it a late modern, cultural construction. Popular, post-structuralist arguments (particularly ones emanating from Foucault and often a prominent tributary of the

New Historicist movement) lead to an almost pathological denial of common human experience as it is habitually expressed in linguistic metaphor. Such arguments, nevertheless, add a useful layer of complexity to our consideration of the self. This is a consideration that necessarily implicates not only the theory of self represented in Hamlet and in Elizabethan society, but in critical theory in general, as the relationship of a self to a text presents the starting point of critical encounter.

The social matrices that act in and upon us are undeniable. Obviously, we are *embedded* selves, selves that absorb-process-emit-resorb continuously. We are selves of Heraclitus' river, always changing and being changed, always acting and being acted upon. But we are each, indeed, *a self*. How that self is defined *consistently* in varying explanatory modes—neurochemically, biologically, corporeally, psychologically, existentially, phenomenally— involves such broad-reaching matrices of epistemological disciplines, it is almost laughable to think that it is necessary to broach it in order to read a piece of literature or see a play; yet, it does seem essential to literary criticism that we seek to understand a tripartite confluence of selves: selves represented, selves writing, and selves reading.

Along these lines, a scientifically realistic theory of representation, readership, and authorship that allows us to read meaning in a play, has great appeal and a two-fold experience of cognitive pleasure: it is minimally counter-intuitive and it is less reductive. I say it is

minimally counter-intuitive (again borrowing this term from cognitive science) because it seems to gibe with how we understand ourselves, with our intuitive notion that yes, though we change, there is a consistent and at least semi-autonomous "I" who does the experiencing and sensing. And I say less reductive because previous theories of subjectivity seemed to reduce the human to hegemonic discourse. As such, theories so derived ignored both phenomenal experience and biological material reality.

The main endeavor of classical cognitive science illuminates how the mainstream of post-modern discourse ignores biological material reality (and by that I mean the brain) to the point of factual error. Classical cognitive science began as a technological science focused on the development of Artificial Intelligence; that its discoveries had far-sweeping impact on the philosophy of mind, cognitive psychology, neuropsychology, and analytic philosophy, and now, literary studies, were unintended (and beneficial) secondary-effects. In order to create models of intelligent—and perhaps even sentient—computational beings provided truly awesome technological and intellectual advances in the study of human thought, action, and will. In order to develop models of Artificial Intelligence (AI) that worked at even the most rudimentary levels of autonomous action, scientists across disciplines quickly realized that a "self-model" was going to be necessary. In order to replicate realistic, rational, autonomous behavior, the intelligence had to have a model of self in order to "think" and act. This self-model must operate on the level of image (self-representation) and phenomenology (the qualia and experience of

existence). What is becoming increasingly clear is that it matters very little whether the "self" is represented or actual—the representation of a consistent and stable self to the self is necessary for rational process and consequent action (which, one might note, is also driving the hermeneutic and proairetic codes of *Hamlet*).

Admittedly, to anyone sensible of these ongoing dialogues (the speed of which is currently so fast, many of them will be completely redefined by the time this writing sees its final audience) any coherent model of self is hopelessly incomplete—it's yet to be defined. Some believe that it may never be defined, for it seems to be a matter best left alone by philosophers of mind and cognitive scientists, a somewhat mysterious topic best left to poets and other artists, very much as Heidegger suggested about philosophy and metaphysics. Francis Crick, famously, refuses to define the qualia of experience because the qualia of consciousness, the experience of *being*, defy scientific method and clear experimentation. Antonio Damasio and Joseph Le Doux both offer convincing narratives of a continually reformulating biological self, abandoning Cartesian mind-body dualism. However, far from eradicating the *experience* of “self-hood” common to most humans, such theories do little to explicate the intuitive experience of the self as an autonomous and consistent entity, the “I” of perception, emotion, proprioception, relationship, and thinking.

Others do try to reduce the experiential self to the bounds of material reality. Steven Pinker arrives at conclusions couched in unjustifiably loaded terms such as: "But cognitive

science is showing that the self, too, is *just* another network of brain systems" [emphasis added] (42). Just? It seems rather more satisfying to take Crick's agnostic point of view, since cognitive reductivism seems so maximally counterintuitive. The material reality of self-hood—as it arises from the neural networks of our grey matter—can then be seen as generative of, or at least enmeshed with our experience of self-hood. And that seems to apply a much more stable category for self-hood than *The Ghost in the Machine*, not less.

Still, for our purposes it is sufficient to establish this: a sub-cognitively represented, socially-embedded, and consistent "self," however it is continually made and remade, is necessary to make the world intelligible and to be intelligent. Our phenomenal experience of the world and our memory of these phenomenal experiences, at least creates the impression of a stable self to the self. (Unless we "self-deceive" a term even Pinker uses frequently. But who is doing the deception to whom? If the self is non-existent?) The phenomenal self is not separate from embodied experience. It is not a non-physical Other (the homonculous) that lives in the brain observing our bodily and psychological experiences. It arises from embodied experience.

Furthermore, the presence of this self is evident in deriving meaning from experience through narrative. Narrative, and by extension, self-representation within the narrative, is the primary means through which we construct meaning and make experience intelligible. Arising spontaneously and present since early childhood, narrative is a common feature of all conscious experience. It is our persistent and sub-cognitive impetus to narrate that "constructs the self"

(Fireman, McVay, Flanagan 5). It is this self-represented cognitive self that allows for a consistent theory of subjectivity that includes but is not reduced to a concept of external and social influence. It is this autobiographical "I" that creates and receives meaning in the playhouse, or in front of the written page.

Again, this does not completely invalidate post-structuralist criticism. Certainly, the stability of a consistent self, conceptually or in "reality," is challenged by the enormous influence of cultural power-structures. There is a certain aspect of Niels Bohr's theory of complementarity to all of this—complementarity arose when Bohr was trying to decide whether light was particle-like or wave-like. Bohr realized that light sometimes behaved like particles and sometimes behaved like waves, given the circumstances. The self is neither a stable, fixed entity, nor radically unstable and/or non-existent. Again, the image of Heraclitus' river proves useful: the self is ever in flux, ever-reformulating, ever-influencing and being influenced. But a consistent "I" exists—in fact, it **MUST** exist—in order for experience to be made intelligible.

Returning to our opening question—did Elizabethans have a self? Yes—they, like all conscious humans, had a self-represented and autobiographical "I," one whose ontology and character was being challenged by socio-religious conditions and a state empowered through tactics of soul control. But certainly, they had a sense of self—from where else would Shakespeare derive and his audience be able to understand "to thine ownself be true" (1.3.78)? Leaving the more esoteric question of whether the word "self" refers to anything stable enough to

qualify as its own ontologic category, we will now move forward on the idea that the Elizabethan self was real in the sense that the Elizabethan mind, necessarily, represented a "self" cognitively. And, inasmuch, they were able to have reflections and ideas about that self.

Elizabethan autonomy is really the central puzzle of this this distinctly post- modern dilemma. What the post-structuralists really question is not whether or not the Elizabethans had a "self." The Foucauldian and Derridean and precedently Nietzschean discourse that led down this path is focused almost exclusively on power. Self = Agency. The question of whether or not Elizabethans had autonomous agency is really the more pertinent question—and certainly, they did lack the sort of agency and autonomy we are familiar with today. It was precisely the reach of the state into matters of the heart and soul occurring in Elizabethan society that brought the question of self-hood and autonomy into question.

Given his familial ties and biography, and his likely connection to the Jesuit underground during the Elizabethan era, it is no surprise, that inwardness was a particular obsession for Shakespeare and many have noted his dramaturgical advances in this regard. Harold Bloom has noted it, August Willhelm von Schlegel, the great German translator of Shakespeare, taking his cue from Coleridge, found his translation focus in the inwardness of Shakespeare's characters. Katherine Eismann Maus wrote an entire book on the subject of inwardness in the English Renaissance, with a particular focus on Shakespeare. The "inwardness" of human experience became not only more apparent through the politics of Reformation England, it often became a

tool for spiritual, social, and physical survival. As was discussed in the opening chapter, it is difficult (perhaps impossible) to tell when the phenomenological experience of human inwardness dawned within human consciousness; the same is true of all sensiomotor schemata so derived.

Certainly, however, there are soft markers during moments of history when particular schemata heat up due to social conditions as well as soft markers in personal biographies when particular schemata become “hot”—Shakespeare emerged during a period of social hotness, when his own biographic experience also generated heat around the same schema. It is this confluence of the social and the individual that led to his extreme popularity. Since it relies upon common sensorimotor metaphors that remain pertinent to human experience, regardless of the crescendo and diminuendo of social and personal heat, the particular fecundity of this confluence still resonates today.

2.6 INTERIOR WORKINGS : MEMORY, MOOD, AND MIND

Hamlet makes a nodding gesture toward the revenge tragedy genre from which it emanates but it turns the revenge tragedy inside out by turning the action inward. While the traditional revenge drama was focused outward on action and its consequent tragedy, *Hamlet* turns the

focus inward where moral intention, memory, mood, and motivation (or the concealment of these) are plotted points on the graph of rising and falling action. And it spurs the audience on to do the same, inciting the audience to do as Polonius asks Renaldo to do: “Observe his inclinations in yourself” (2.1.70). The focus of the court at Elsinore, particularly where Hamlet is concerned, seems to move naturally toward the inner working of the mind and soul. Laertes’ in Act 1 Scene 3, to Ophelia regarding Hamlet:

For nature, crescent, does not grow alone

In thews and bulk, but, as this temple waxes

The inward service of the mind and soul

Grows wide withal (11-14)

In Act 1 Scene 5, as Hamlet and Horatio wait for the ghost to reappear, Hamlet brings forth the secret of the behavior of the court, airing the dirty laundry so to speak, the birthmark or blemish that he fears taints the entire image of Elsinore amongst the ruled and the land’s enemies—the debauchery and drunkenness he feels destroys the virtue of his father’s court. The secret, that should it leak out, could be the downfall of the crown:

So oft it chances in particular men

That for some vicious mole of nature in them—

As in their birth (wherein they are not guilty,

Since nature cannot choose his origin),
By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,
Or by some habit that too much o'erleavens
The form of plausible manners—that these men,
Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,
Being nature's livery or fortune's star,
Their virtues else (be they as pure as grace,
As infinite as man may undergo)
Shall in the general censure take corruption
From that particular fault. The dram of evil
Doth all the noble instance of a doubt
To his own scandal. (25-40)

Continuously characters talk aloud and to each other on their inner state, as Claudius does:
“My soul is full of discord and dismay” (4.1.46). The members of the court discuss memory,
mood, and mind and thus create a multivalent image of an inner-self.

Memory in particular is evoked as an embedded container that informs and creates
affection, character, and mood. In his survey of drama and memory theatre, Attilio Favorini

called *Hamlet* a “memory suffused work” and asserted that “the form and pressure and direction of [the] characters’ lives are inflected with the rhythms of memory and forgetting” (30). The idea of memory living within (and playing a part in defining) a self that is contained comes from the ancients—Plato first noted the memory in the image of a bird in a cage. This image of the memory experienced as something contained persisted through the Renaissance as Europe, with the advent of printing, madly and passionately reacquainted themselves with the classics, both directly and through the medieval scholars of the Church. *Hamlet* makes so many allusions to memory, that the resulting system expresses a theory of memory as something both contained within and constitutive of the self. Polonius advises that particular ideas carried in memory will inform a richly developed character: “And these few precepts in thy memory see thou character”(1.3.58-59). In the same scene, Ophelia remarks to her brother that his words to her are “In her memory lock’d and you yourself shall keep the key of it.” (85-86). The Ghost is possibly the most evocative visual metaphor of memory in the play, for what is a Ghost but a spirit set loose to remind the living of its corporal self? His injunction to Hamlet—“Remember me!” is a command for Hamlet to internalize him, to carry him within, and at the moment of this unnerving instruction from a father now dead, Hamlet is forever changed from the inside out as he describes in his hyperbole on how this memory will occlude all others, as he actively works to change the organization of his brain:

Remember thee?

Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat

In this distracted globe. Remember thee?

Yea, from the table of my memory

I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,

All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past

That youth and observation copies there,

And thy commandment all alone shall live

Within the book and volume of my brain

Unmix'd with baser matter. (1.5.103-111)

“Remember me” itself is a hyperlink in the Renaissance moment it was first written and later performed. The Catholic Mass had previously centered on the moment of sacrifice in the transubstantiation which is followed by *haec quotiescumque feceritis, in mei memoriam facietis* (“as often as ye shall do these things, ye shall do them in memory of me”). This moment was altered in the Common Book of Prayer and the doctrine of transubstantiation itself was under attack through Cranmer's rewriting of the Mass. Key to Cranmer's re-fashioning of services, was removal of anything to do with the word or concept of sacrifice. Faithful Catholics forced to attend the new Anglican services would note the marked absence and some might feel anguish regarding this. One could not hear “Remember me!” as an invocation and not-at

some level, cognitive, sub-cognitive or both—trigger an evocation of the transubstantiation at Mass. Cranmer's alteration of the service embraced the Calvinist doctrine of remembrance without transubstantiation, that is to say, a remembrance of a body not there, a remembrance that marked absence but was not truly present. What is Hamlet's ghost but a literally dramatic representation of a remembrance of a body not there? And, consequently, a reminder of the body not present in the Eucharist, either through acceptance of the doctrine or a horrified on-looker at the murder of Christ's presence through its deliberate removal from the Mass. For a Catholic, who remained faithful at heart, Cranmer's services would feel exactly like a father murdered with no recourse possible.

Of course, like force in physics, every image and/or word evokes its opposite—in the horrifying invocation to remember a murdered father, a body no longer present, there is the even more horrifying spectre of forgetting. To forget, in *Hamlet*, brings a deceptive comfort but also a foulness—as the Ghost describes well: “duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed/That rots itself in ease on Lethe wharf.” Forgetfulness, in the metaphor of Lethe found in classical mythology, as in *Hamlet*, is also associated with concealment, and “Hamlet” shares Old English roots with the word *amelethe*, which refers to Lethe and forgetting. So for the Renaissance thinker, concerned as he was with classical mythology and philosophy, concealment and secrecy is deeply associated with forgetting. Though the relationship between memory and forgetting may be far more complex, the classical understanding of

forgetting (and the related trope of concealment) was that, while bringing release and comfort, forgetting is a crime against self and will ultimately turn a man from a rich, complex human with an inner life to a dull and lifeless vegetable, indeed a rotting one. Remembering is life; forgetting is death.¹⁶ It is then likely no accident that Marcellus notes just previous to the Ghost's entrance with his injunction to remember (in the play's first pivotal *anagnorisis*) that something is "rotten in the state of Denmark." Rotten, rotting=forgotten and/or nefariously concealed. Hamlet seems hard-pressed to remember all the ghost has told him as his machinations on determining the guilt of his uncle and mother begin to muddle his thinking and the Ghost warns him to not forget his "almost blunted purpose" As Hamlet notes in Act 3 Scene 2 "purpose is but the slave to memory."

2.6.1 Interior Consciousness: Thought, Word, and Action

"Thinking makes it so" (2. 2.238)

For Hamlet, thought, word, and action are all suspect, as he contemplates in his "what a piece of work is man" speech in Act 2 Scene 2. The idea that one's outward actions may actually

¹⁶ For a thorough survey of the classical examples of the equivalencies of forgetting and rotting, oblivion, and death, see: Vivian, Branford. *Public Forgetting: The Rhetoric and Politics of Beginning Again*. University Park: Penn State Press, 2010.

be in disharmony with one's inner self, also lends itself to a dramatic illusion of a complex inner life. For, if one cannot rely on the outer actions of a character to tell us who he is inside, then what deep and dark secrets must lie within? Hamlet discusses "outward actions" and "parts one plays" with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern upon the arrival of the acting troupe in Act 2 Scene 2. The theatre is a predominant and widely noted metaphor throughout the play, making the play-within-the-play the prime example of metatheatricality. For Hamlet the actual theatre is a hyper-real mode and unity of thought, word, and action that Hamlet longs for in real life, which he notes with a bitter and reflexively, ironic twist: "[...] Suit the action to the word, the word to the action with this special observance, that you overstep not the modesty of nature" (3.2.16-17). This is only made doubly ironic when Hamlet has several times noted that action, thought, and word have no unity in the world.

2.6.1.1 *Words, Words, Words*

Words help Shakespeare create the dramaturgical impression of characters with rich interior lives. The play is highly concerned with words—their power to reveal and their power to conceal, and, as has already been discussed, the power to conceal may be the one that is most useful to the playwright in creating the illusion of inner life. Hamlet's soliloquies are an example of words revealing the inner life, impressing us with the complexity and contradiction of thought, the motivations, strategies, and ponderings that make up the inner workings of Hamlet's mind. Hamlet is indeed verbose and at manic moments seems to suffer from logorrhea. His partner in

verbosity, Polonius, uses words to occlude meaning rather than reveal it. Like Claudius, Polonius' motivations are hidden and he deceives with almost every word that comes from his mouth. He is rarely straightforward and truthful and is continually shrouding his true meaning with flattery, manipulation, and calculated action.

Ironically, Hamlet turns the table on Polonius's stumbling (over)use of words to keep his true meaning occluded—in the fishmonger speech in Act 2 Sc 2 he uses maniacal double and triple entendres to send Polonius reeling and to give him the false impression that he is both mad and desperately obsessed with Ophelia. The audience can delight in the confounder confounded through his asides, which let us know for once what he is truly thinking: “he keeps harping on my daughter,” and Shakespeare lets us in on it all “Words. Words. Words.” Here Shakespeare underscores the theme of words concealing and revealing a personal interior.

Words are also an index of his self-loathing, representing an inadequacy to express inner passion and torment and proper moral standing as compared to action:

O, vengeance!

Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,

That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,

Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,

Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words

And fall a-cursing like a very drab,

A scullion! (2.2.542-548)

The semantic web in the asides gives us a window into the motive behind the action. The King in Act 3 Scene 1 comments on Polonius' observation that with "pious action we do sugar o'er/the devil himself" (54-5):

O'tis too true!

How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience!

The harlot's cheek beautied with plastering art

Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it

Than is my deed to my most painted word.

O heavy burden! (59-61)

Or further on:

Thus conscience makes cowards of us all

And thus the native hue of resolution

Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,

And enterprises of great pitch and moment

With this regard their currents turn awry

And lose the name of action. (91-96)

Mary Thomas Crane discussed the representation of “subjective interiority” in *Hamlet*, using the words *act*, *action*, *actor* and the Shakespearean neologism *enacture*, as the lexical set framing the play in her unique cognitive linguistic reading of Shakespeare’s plays (133). This device is fruitful in teasing out meaning, particularly when considering the interiority of character depicted. (With the caveat, however, that I am leery of using the term “subject” and “subjectivity” in the discussion of the set of critical problems noted at the beginning of this chapter.) Rather than portray a de-stabilized self as an every day state of affairs, the instability of Hamlet’s self, the vertigo created by his obsession on thought, word, and action both as means of existence and as theatrical artifice, is induced by the disordered world at Elsinore and the rank and “unweeded garden” that grows there (1.2.135). This rot in the state of Denmark creates a Purgatory not only for the murdered King Hamlet but for all who remain behind in the “prison” that is Denmark, just as Hamlet remarks to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (2.2.261).

The destabilized self Hamlet experiences is not a mere existential quandary but a dreadfully wrong, purgatorial state of affairs which he knows he can only set aright through action—yet what action can he take? Which action is the right one? But for Crane, Hamlet’s extrapolations on subjectivity are a footnote to the central issue: his inability to act is not a representation of internal consciousness but a meta-theatrical struggle as a resistant, fictive construct in a play it wants to destabilize: “his concern to define what he has within is, in a

sense, bound to fail because as a fictional character he has no innerself,” an idea she draws from Emily Bartels (118). Crane cites James Calderwood’s argument that Hamlet is aware that he is both character and actor and , consequently, is disturbed by the prospect of being a stock character in a well-known revenge plot, while simultaneously being prevented from taking the action he is expected to take. Crane, however, advances the opposite argument:

Hamlet is initially unable to act because of his resistance to his role in the play, as theatrical character and as instrument of a revenge plot. His concern to define what he has within is, in a sense bound to fail because as a fictional character he has no inner self. [...] he is preoccupied with locating[...] a self for most of the play, [but] in the end he comes to accept his own implication in the plot and to act in accordance with his existence as a relatively conventional dramatic character shaped performatively through his words and actions. (ibid)

Though Crane is certainly not alone in making this argument (in addition to Bartels and Calderwood, Stephen Greenblatt has also noted something similar), it seems to me to be an argument of a very odd and writerly sort; to ascribe a character's knowledge of itself as fictional is a bizarre form of critical magic, or at least a strange manner of speaking. Clearly, there is an awareness on the part of the *dramatist* that he is creating a character that bucks the traditional revenge tragedy formula. Crane notes as others have, that Hamlet’s inward reflections cease at the grave scene, and then he begins to act and behave in a way predictable to his own genre. But

this, according to Crane, again using this odd manner of speaking in which Hamlet is a real construct with a consciousness of his own, is not the character's "religious conversion" as noted by Catherine Belsey (42). No, this is simply Hamlet, as a fictional construct, accepting "his role in a plot scripted by someone else and of a self that is as a result shaped by his actions" (Crane 118). This evasion of authorial intent is even more odd coming from Crane, whose entire *raison d'être*, is to argue against the post-structural deconstruction of the author by locating authorial agency as a cognitive process of a material brain, situated in a social and cultural network.

Nevertheless, Crane performs an excellent linguistic analysis of the words "act," "action," and "actor," so central to the meditations performed in the text of the play. Noting a period of "striking shifts" in the meaning of the words, Crane explains the following:

Around the turn of the century the word *act* seems simultaneously to have been changing in ways that emphasized both purposeful agency and empty pretense. By 1600 the noun *act* had long had as its primary sense 'a thing done, a deed, a performance (of an intelligent being)' (*OED*), encoding concepts of activity and purposeful agency. New at this point, however, were both the use of *act* as a verb meaning 'to bring into action, bring about, produce, perform, work, make, do' and, more importantly, the theatrical sense of the word as both noun and verb 'a performance of a part of a play' and 'to carry out or represent in mimic action.' (119)

After briefly exploring how our contemporary understanding of these words differ slightly, particular in the sense of “violent activity” as in an “action movie,” Crane concludes: “*Act* and *action* thus encoded a range of versions of agency and authenticity.” Crane is also rightly concerned with the measure of action provided by Bright’s *A Treatise of Melancholy* (1586).

Through Bright’s *Treatise*, we see a central theme of Renaissance philosophy, which gave birth to the fulminating understanding of man’s interiority, an idea that Shakespeare was the first to document through dramaturgical device. With the Renaissance came an avalanche of scientific discovery and information, which provided material for new philosophic and theologic understanding of the human condition. As if the rediscovery of the classics alongside the reclamation of the ancient Church fathers brought its own consequent epistemologic impulse, there is a drive amongst Renaissance philosophers to reconcile the wisdom of pagan ancients into a Christian worldview. This impulse, along with the Renaissance penchant for symmetry and order, gave rise to elaborate philosophical endeavors that sought harmony among body and mind and soul, man, earth, and the heavens; as a correlate of this trope, there was a similar injunction for a man to bring his internal machinations into harmony with his exterior behaviors. Bright’s *Treatise* illustrates this general concept clearly; it is concerned with a philosophical conundrum central to Renaissance thought, which might also be understood as a tension between Aristotlean and Platonic philosophies: reconciling a materialistic view of the human condition via chemistry, biology, and anatomy to an idealistic view of the soul:

[...] it was this sense of interior process and preoccupation with the spatiality and direction of agency that strongly influenced Shakespeare. Bright's repetition of *action* to denote the internal workings of the body, soul, and mind had a formative influence on Shakespeare's sense of the relationship between the subject and its acts and thus on his sense of what Hamlet had within. (Crane 120)

Or as Hamlet himself has it: "The body is with the king, but the king is not with the body. The king is a thing" (4.1.25).

Bright is not alone in his contemplation of action; it is more or less exemplary of Renaissance understanding via the ancients of internal life, both biological and psychological (hence his preoccupation with bringing the work of Galen into a "modern" Renaissance English context). His entire *Treatise*, in fact, can be looked upon as an extended meditation on the cognitive schema INSIDE/OUTSIDE, rehearsing the various ways in which external action and internal experience (along with divine influence) impress, shape, and even control each other, as Shakespeare also explores time and again as in Act 4 Scene 1: "[Claudius] There's matter in these sighs, these profound heaves. You must translate. 'Tis fit we understand them" (1-2). Note the inversion of matter and essence: the sigh, indicative of his inner state has "matter"--which has the primary meaning of "significance" or "import," but also of "substance," and material, with an even tertiary meaning, which signifies more from Renaissance medicine as in "pus" or "discharge" (Crystals 277). Similarly, Claudius indicates the rift between inner experience and

outward actions—and failures to act in: “Laertes, was your father dear to you?/Or are you like the painting of a sorrow, A face without a heart? (4.7.104-105).

Consequently, in Bright’s world, no external action of the body comes without a complex orchestration of interior impulse, which in turn is guided by spirits who lead back toward divine sovereignty. Conversely, Bright also conducts a thought experiment on whether external actions can also affect man’s interior and concludes that they can, to a degree, but not entirely. Bright is also concerned with what we in the contemporary world understand as functions of the autonomic nervous system: a beating of the heart, gooseflesh, sighs, tears, blushes, etc. He correctly concludes that these bodily functions are certainly not within a human’s conscious control. Hamlet, (the play and the character) likewise, is also concerned with these functions. Can one counterfeit? Hamlet, also correctly and with great intuition, introduces the actor as a complicating figure for Bright’s Treatise, an issue still contemplated within cognitive science today:

Is it not monstrous that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit
That from her working all his visage wan'd;
Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,

A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing!
For Hecuba?
What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her? What would he do,
Had he the motive and the cue for passion
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech; (2.2.510-521)

For as Hamlet (again, rightly) notes, that contrary to what Bright records in his Treatise, the actor is an example where certainly, the consciousness of man “could force his soul so to his own conceit.” Polonius also notes: “Look whe'e he has not turn'd his colour, and has tears in's/eyes” (2.2.482-483). But it seems that Hamlet views the actor as a special case rather than as a rule for all the rest of man, for he sees Claudius's turning colours as not only a reaction caused by internal forces beyond his conscious control but as a certain index of guilt: “if he do blench/ I know my course” (558-559).

The association with Renaissance medicine and the interior anatomy is repeated throughout as the deceiving outside can lead attention away from a festering and putrid inside:

[Hamlet] Two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats
Will not debate the question of this straw.
This is th' impostume of much wealth and peace,
That inward breaks and shows no cause without
Why the man dies.—I humbly thank you, sir. (4.4.24-28)

As with words, Hamlet (and Shakespeare) are very aware of the potential of actions to reveal or obscure reality. Like Hamlet using actions to feign madness and conceal his true intent, Polonius is keen on actions providing the appropriate cover for their so-called “lawful espials.” Indicating that his daughter should be reading a prayer book when she happens upon Hamlet in the infamous nunnery scene Polonius says: “[...]with devotion’s visage/ And pious action we do sugar o’er/The devil himself.” (3.1.53-55). Hamlet is also very keen on how outward actions may betray or conceal—as he continues to feign madness. And those around him observe it Guildenstern: “...with a crafty madness keeps aloof” (3.1.8). The interweaving of the nuances of “to act,” wedding the idea of acting in every day life with the idea of feigned action in theatrical activity, haunt the text as a permanent confusion, which is both latent, and, at times, (as in the Hecuba speech) explicit. For the King, acting seems a pleasant diversion and one that may sedate a potentially upstart nephew/stepson, as he imagines performance, as in the performance of theatricals, as a container for his volatile emotions; he instructs Rosencrantz and Guildenstern: “...drive his purpose into these

delights” (3.1.29). And the King repeatedly uses the injunction to bringing outward action into harmony with interior experience, as in the probing question he asks of Laertes cited earlier, when he asks if Laertes' grief is but a “hollow” picture. This is a repetition of his first encounter with Hamlet on stage, and completes the equation of Laertes and Hamlet, whereby the final act of the play, Laertes' heated action replaces Hamlet's passivity, much like the equation between Hotspur and Prince Hal in *Henry IV*. Here is that first encounter, where Claudius encourages Hamlet to throw off his outward grief, in order to show proper respect to his father, a cagey twisting of the action one would expect to show his father respect, though, as we will see later, it is not finally violent action but remembering that becomes the ultimate act. Claudius underscores the idea that not only did the Elizabethans conceive of an autonomous interior subject, they saw that subject as defining itself against hegemony even as it remained vulnerable to it, as in Claudius' speech to Laertes:

CLAUDIUS

Not that I think you did not love your father

But that I know love is begun by time,

And that I see, in passages of proof,

Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.

There lives within the very flame of love

A kind of wick or snuff that will abate it.

And nothing is at a like goodness still.
For goodness, growing to a pleurisy
Dies in his own too-much. That we would do,
We should do when we would, for this “would” changes
And hath abatements and delays as many
As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents.
And then this “should” is like a spendthrift sigh
That hurts by easing.—But to the quick of th' ulcer:
Hamlet comes back. What would you undertake
To show yourself in deed your father's son
More than in words? (4.7.107-124)

In fact, the above passage suggests that the State is completely powerless unless it is able to harness the individual into service of it; the fact that Claudius has to persuade Laertes implies that Laertes has autonomy. One does not persuade one over whom one has supreme dominion. The Renaissance as a whole was concerned with inner life—and as the cognitive schema suggests—it is made more acute by the Renaissance obsession with not only that which is within but with the inner life's relationship, indeed *correlation*, with to that which is without. This is why it is false to think of Elizabethans as not having a formed concept of an interior subject; it is

precisely because that subject was destabilized by social conditions that it came more sharply into focus.

3.0 DARK INTERIORS: PRIEST-HOLES, SECRET COMPARTMENTS, AND THE PUBLIC AND THE PRIVATE IN *HAMLET*

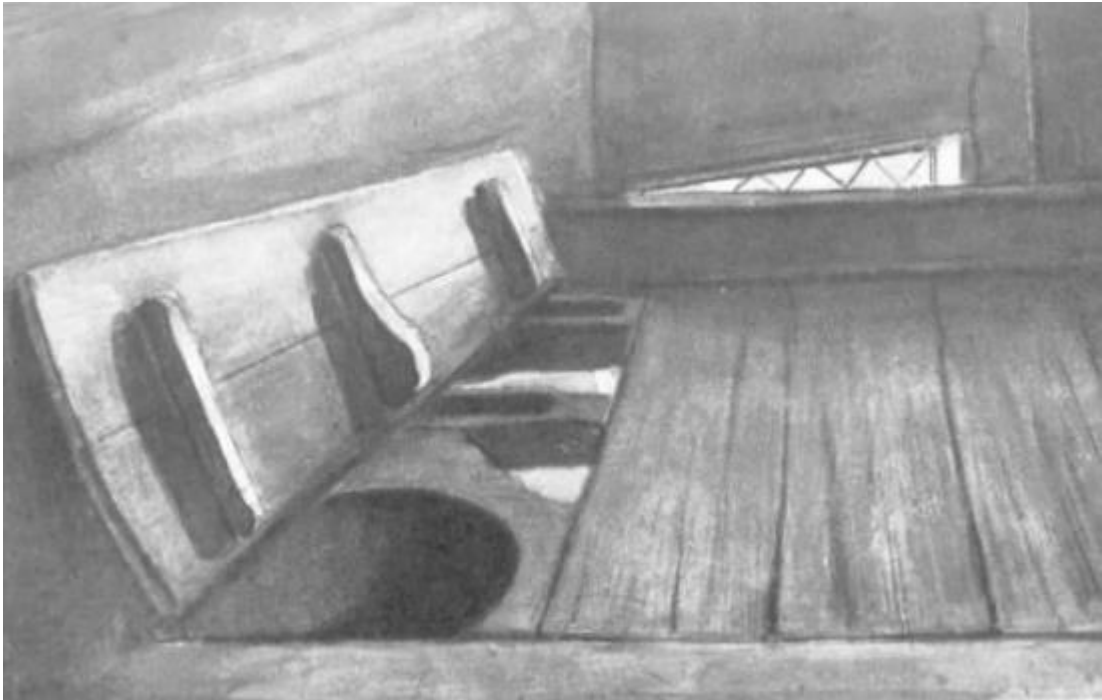


Figure 1: A rendering of an Elizabethan Priest Hole. (Source: Allan Fea, Creative Commons)

In concept, an image schema is a very minimal, basic thing; the skeletal nature of a cognitive image schema helps us to form what are called base-level categories, devices we use in order to organize our sense perceptions of the world around us (Rosch 199-223). Take the image of the container that we are focused on here. It has a primitive logic with no real qualitative accidents and effects. A container is a bounded space. It has an inside and an outside. In this sense, it is almost an absurd notion that an image schema would bring anything useful to bear upon a dramatic text. But that is to mistake the matter. What we are exploring here is both the play and its context and observing how that particular schema manifests in both, as if we were a child first discovering the container in play; then, we are looking at the emotional and dramatic entailments in these manifestations and how the schema blends with other base-level categories. Further, we are examining how these schemata create imaginative tropes that magnify, underscore, and shape the ideas and experiences Shakespeare is trying to represent, as well as how they shaped, underscored, and magnified the social experiences of Elizabethan England.

So, in one sense, looking at a play from a base-level category of cognition is a very peculiar, almost reductive or *juvenile* way of looking at the play. The polysemy in the word “play” is no accident. The simplicity of the theoretical conceit is constitutive of its definition and outlines a theory of dramatic art, grounded in cognitive science, by which I mean, watching a play is a deliberate regression to earlier stages of development: we receive a play like a child at play. I am not saying an audience member or reader is aware that s/he is returning to this base-

level category in perception when s/he sees or reads a play; rather, I'm viewing things at sub-cognitive levels and analyzing what makes a play seem satisfying to the viewer; it is these base-level categories that stimulate the imagination, because these base-level categories are precisely the grist on which imagination first began to turn its mill. To tease this cognitive operant out, consciously, as an act of *critical* play, is a device that opens our dramatic imagination even further, in both aesthetic and critical pleasure. It allows us to become the master player, and that returns a sense of pleasure to the task of looking at a play, and looking at it closely.

Our material reality exists in relationship to our own consciousness; many believe that quantum physics shows that this is so and it is elaborated on in the theory of biocentrism (Lanza and Berman 2-17). Biocentrism explores the way in which the free will of the subjective observer actually controls physical reality. Simply put, biocentrism emerges from a startling discovery within physics: decisions made by an observer can actually change how a particle behaved in the past. Older physics shows us that even the particle is an uncertain thing. It is sometimes a wave, sometimes a particle, depending on your point of view, demonstrating the idea that there are two, discrete substances—our consciousness and our material reality— is, at best, a conceit for thinking about the world, rather than a description of the world.

In a related idea, cognitive psychology shows us that our material reality exists not exactly inside, not exactly outside of our consciousness. It exists perpetually *in relationship to*

our consciousness. Which is to say: consciousness is formed upon our relationship to our physical world as an agent within it (M. Turner 6-7). Our nascent consciousness absorbs our environment, making only blunted distinctions between the self and the objects, features, and people of our environment, illustrated in D. W. Winnicott's "transitional object." A transitional object is an object which the child imbues with intense emotion and desire (12). The object is first literally perceived as a part of the self, and consciousness subsequently forms as we begin to separate and deal with our relationship to it. Though it is a developmental stage we pass through, artifacts of this initial cognitive proclivity persist throughout life, and are the neurobiologic underpinnings to phenomenology's neologism "environorganism" emerging from Merleau-Ponty's proposal that consciousness emerges from the phenomenal body's constant relation to its environment (396).

As Mark Johnson and others have noted, we begin to think and to acquire language by constructing narratives about the physical world around us (xix); thus, in early development narrative identifies both our own animacy and agency, as we begin to understand ourselves as an actor in an environment. We do not lose this essential device, it simply submerges and reemerges, veiled in a seemingly frivolous hunger for narratives that is insatiable; that particularly human appetite persists with a strong associative principle: narrative reminds us of self-discovery. Thus, dramatic structure—a story with a beginning, middle, and end, involving the meeting and overcoming of an obstacle—is not something invented for the purpose of drama; it is the

structure that first allowed us to become fully conscious beings. Dramatic structure—and its likely progenitor in oral tradition, narrative structure—then, as the central mechanism for understanding the world, is *transplanted to* the drama because that singular structure delivers an uncanny verisimilitude; when well done, it resonates with our earliest memories of becoming conscious beings.

American Pragmatist John Dewey once observed in all the animal kingdom, human beings have the longest developmental stage; a bird takes far less time to learn to feed itself than a human infant does. Dewey hypothesizes that this protracted human learning process allows the human infant to learn the skills, but in the process the infant also learns to learn; which leads to a far greater capacity for lifetime learning. Few of us maintain the cognitive plasticity of childhood, though it seems like that cognitive plasticity is a central component to particular forms of genius. We may, however, return to this early activator, through listening to, reading, and watching narratives, not just because it is diverting; the cognitive pleasure so derived is likely a naturally selected trait. We return to that primal state of learning to relearn how to learn, to re-discover our self, our environment, and others and, essentially, rebirth our conscious selves over and over again. Viewed in this way, dramatic structure, is not simply a literary device—it is a mode of being and a structure of thought that is inescapable.

So, understanding drama necessarily includes an implicit understanding of our own mind and consciousness. Considering these early childhood base-level categories and how they were formed not only stimulates our dramatic imagination, it reminds us of this atomic component of consciousness. Thinking about something as basic as a container with an object inside, as well as the related action of *containing* that object, reminds us of a critical truth about our place in reality, not always immediately apparent: our material environment (including our material body) is not a passive thing, nor is it a dead and lifeless thing, it is the means and mode of becoming conscious and forming language.

And so, if we begin to use our base-level categories for looking at a play, we return to that primitive state, and examine the emotions we project out onto the objects of physical existence and to the metaphysical concepts that resemble them. Again, it serves to examine how this works: our primitive dramatic narratives are indeed highly emotional—and enchanted—stories. We move because we are magic, and we use that magic to obtain an object of intense desire on the other side of the room. We imagine ourselves spatially on the floor, we imagine our rattle at the other end of it, and we want that rattle, we desire it. It is this desire that propels us forward, that allows us to move through the obstacle of the space between us and it, and we overcome. We seize the rattle. Now the object of the desire becomes the object of achievement. But then we notice something else singular. It makes noise—and thus the dramatic narrative begins all over again, as we discover our relationship to the rattle, our relationship to the sound it

makes, and how to overcome the obstacle of its silence (M. Turner 22; Mandler 99). The process becomes increasingly complex when, through conceptual blending, we mix and match our categories and elaborate on them, with various degrees of emotional quality.

In this process, the physical world entire becomes imbued—or as we like to say in theatre, endowed—with an inherent emotion, every object contains an imminent futurity. The unseized rattle becomes a rattle filled with the imminent possibility of a rattle that will be seized. Thus, before we can adequately express ourselves through speech, we begin to turn the objects around us into magic objects, beloved objects, objects that allow us to get from point A to point B. The world is our transitional object. Performance theorists have noted that this is what occurs with acts and objects on a stage (Bell 16) (C. Turner 381). On stage inanimate objects become heightened with high-stakes drama, with emotions, with significance; in a sense, objects on stage return our world to that cosmic soup out of which consciousness structures itself and from which we begin to manufacture meaning. It's a rehearsal of the imaginative transformation that once allowed us to become aware. And the process starts with the base-level category and through cognitive blending, becomes increasingly and variously complex.

Let's revisit the logic of the container as a child might understand it for the first time, projecting it onto the domain of reality in various forms and blends, producing multiple understandings of the world. It is something that has an inside and an outside, or something that

is demarcated in bounded space. Key here, at this moment of development: there is also an emotional investment in the entailments of the container; it is, in some sense, implicit to the schema. In this way we can say the container becomes *endowed*. In an endowed container, that which is within creates an internal pressure. The wonder of the child—even if it is coupled with the adult horror of life and death—*needs* what is within to be discovered and released. The longer the contained remains within bounded space, the greater the dramatic pressure inside the container. Boundaries become anxious things, things that threaten, and a new desire also emerges to break those boundaries apart. In this way, things that are contained are variously, private, secret, and by interior pressure and the building tension of desire, filled with violent potential.

As we learn more about our world, we also develop basic schemas about direction and force. Thus, the contained object seems to have tension because of our desire for it to be contained or to be released and set free; but then it blends with direction, force, and ideas of animacy and agency. We begin to imagine the object as something like the self, having animacy and agency, either unto itself or through borrowing our own. Hence, the contained object has force and implies potential counter-forces; what is inside can seem to want to come out, and to push itself out against the imagined will of its container and the will of the people around it. It can seem to move “abroad” or to “ascend” or “descend” in an attempt to be “freed from restraint” (freed from restraint is another base-level schema in the category of force) (Johnson

126). Now, the desire to contain/release someone or something, and the lingering memory of that discovery we made as infants, intensifies the action that works its way into language, as in, to “let a secret *out*,” and makes the idea of limns, both literal and actual, highly invested dramatic spaces in both imagination and in the actual location of the play's settings. They are charged spaces, that in this moment of dramatic play, seem to come alive with that inherent childhood magic once again.

There is a flip side of this emotionally-charged image schema: once the container is subsumed into consciousness, equal to the desire to break open the boundaries is the desire to contain, to repeat that first discovery of the container through one's own agency and animacy. A child playing with a box that contains a ball will delight in opening the container and the discovery of the ball; but he will also delight in putting the ball inside and closing the container. In *Hamlet*, Shakespeare is continually playing on the primitive desire to contain and open the container. By using the details of his stories and the emotional contribution of the audience, he creates high-stakes drama that solicits imagination at the base-level of the child playing *fort-da*; ¹⁷ Thus, characters try to “o'erstep” an imposed boundary; the “plast'ring art” of the prostitute becomes walling something ugly inside a false outside, much like a secret chamber behind a thin plaster veneer of a wall; people who “range” “too broadly” about need to be

¹⁷ Freud's discovery of the young boy playing *fort-da* was referenced and explained in detail in the previous chapter.

contained. Objects may appear to contain secret desires, horrors, and wonder: a letter, a looking glass, a flower, a poisoned cup. A skull. Secret rooms, ensconcing arras, and bed chambers in the play blend with secret passageways, confessionals, camera obscuras, all constellating around this initial wonder of the child discovering the container and containing.

For adults, however, that wonder blends with its opposite pole—horror; like the child, we feel wonder at what lies within the container, we feel wonder that people can make actions and objects disappear; but, as in the game of hide-and-seek Hamlet plays with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern using Polonius's corpse, we also feel *horrified*. We feel horror toward what may be set loose and what we cannot contain. We feel horror, as Hamlet does, at what can be made to disappear: a well-loved court jester, a lover's devotion, a mother's love for a father, a beloved father himself. Parcel to the self-reflexive experience of immersed narrative, we also feel wonder that we can be so horrified, and we begin, through parabolic projection, to match the experience to everyday instances of wonder and horror in our own autobiography. The cultural conditions enveloping both the making and reception of this imaginative play occurred at a point in the English Reformation when containing secrets physically, cognitively, and spiritually was woven into the fabric of existence; well-loved faith, tradition, and figures of public devotion were made to simply disappear. This conspired to make the container image schema heated and thus saturate the society and Shakespeare's text. Hence, the world Shakespeare inhabited was a world peppered with holes, passageways, hiding places, secret dark corners, and boxes, filled

with an inherent, high-stakes, cognitive drama naturally amplified by the conditions of his day. Containers, secrets, insides, outsides, and boxes and objects that one can enter and/or gaze into, all blended together around this Elizabethan obsession of hiding and secret keeping. As we will see, it was an obsession that Shakespeare shared.

As our consciousness forms and we learn physical laws, we increasingly begin to see the world as something terribly separate from ourselves; we begin to see it as something knowable and therefore, less interesting: with that knowledge we lose that sense of imaginal play.¹⁸ As I suggested earlier, the most inventive minds, minds that create and innovate, are those minds that continue in this imaginal play-world into adult life and combine that play with adult knowledge, wisdom, and insight, as in the case of a Socrates, a Leonardo, a Hawking—or a Shakespeare. However, generally, we tend to lose the wonder and playfulness that first stimulated us to imagine the ball and the container as something magic and ourselves as something magic, too. We “know” the ball has no agency of its own. We know it has no animacy apart from our own will to move it. And yet, the mind seems to mark out places in which we can continue to play with these base-level categories and, in moments of crisis,—real crisis, as in the Reformation, or

¹⁸ “Imaginal” means of or relating to images or the imagination (its origin dates back to the 17th century). It was used in both Freudian and Jungian psychoanalysis but became a specialized term through Winnicott, who theorized the imaginal as the liminal space between the child and the object or the other, the transitional, cognitive space between “me” and “not me.” See: D.W. Winnicott.

imagined, as in the world of Shakespeare's play—they pop-up again with all the high-dramatic stakes they had upon first encounter. What stakes are those? The interior drama of understanding, coping, and imagining for a child-protagonist who wished to become master of his own world, or just to *survive* that world. This is why the cliché: “the magic of the theatre” begins to transform from something humdrum and naïve to something very apt.

3.1 CHINESE BOX ENGLAND: PRIEST HOLES, INNER CHAMBERS, AND HIDING PLACES



Figure 2 Chinese Boxes (Source: Creative Commons)

In *Secret Shakespeare*, Richard Wilson suggests that the architecture of England resembled a series of containers nestled inside of one another. Wilson does not suggest that they used the Chinese Boxes as a model, and there is no evidence that Chinese Boxes were even in use in Elizabethan England. Rather, he uses the example of Chinese Boxes to provide an accessible, visual analog to explain how space was conceived imaginatively and executed physically. He relates this image to Shakespeare's biography and to his dramaturgy, suggesting that a dramaturgy of secrecy haunts his plays. He leaves little room for doubt: space and place is very much on Shakespeare's mind in *Hamlet*. In 1949, Francis Fergusson based his interpretation of *Hamlet* on a rhythm of moving back and forth between private and public, and, in a similar vein, William Slights notes the way in which Shakespeare played off scenes of public ceremony against scenes of private conference (Slights 24-25, 28 qtd in Wilson 23). As Wilson suggests, however, this space is not simply broken into a two-part system of public and private. Shakespeare used nuanced, finely delineated levels of privacy. The action passes through graduated levels of intimate conference, traversing through public display, through smaller private meetings, through intimate dyads, and finally to soliloquy. As noted in the introduction, the idea of boundaries introduces the related idea of limns. Shakespeare engages liminal spaces and creates liminal states—beginning with the most liminal of figures: the Ghost who emerges from the theologically imagined limn, Purgatory. In this way, instead of a simple, two-part division between one type of space and another, Shakespeare employs a series of graduated

containers nestled within each other. And each of these containers suggest interiority, enclosure, and secrecy and its formal opposite poles: public ceremony, display, and demonstration, (like theatre itself).

3.1.1 The Great Chain of Being

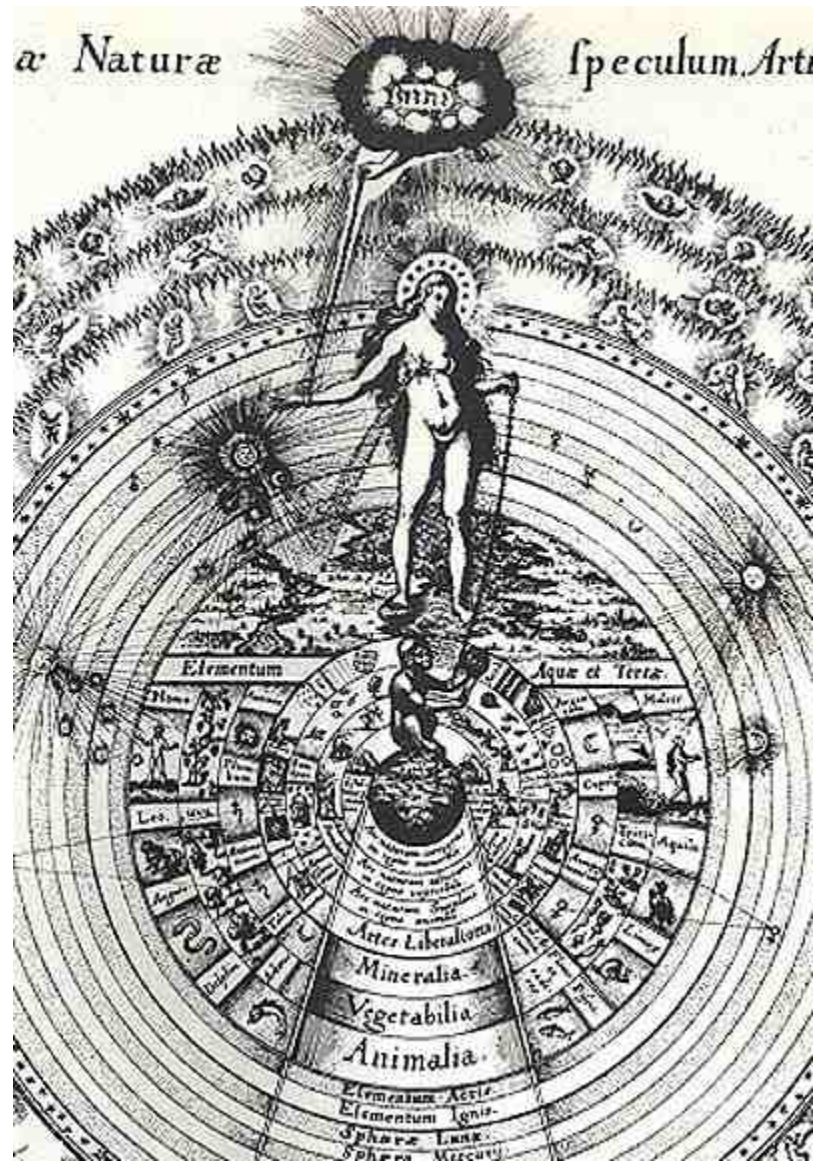


Figure 3 Fludd's Great Chain of Being, 1677 (Source: Creative Commons)

It is worth noting that the Renaissance imagination conceived of reality as a graduated, nested space (see: Figure 3). E.M. Y. Tillyard established the presence of “The Great Chain of Being” in Renaissance thought, and though it has been asserted that this imago was as much resisted as it was accepted (in Stephen Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*), the image of it was introduced and at work, however much it was resisted, contested, or made problematic. Though it was described as a “great chain,” it was imagined and described in the manner of classical philosophy—as a series of nested, concentric circles that are discrete but linked. From the outset, the spatial imagination of *Hamlet* uses literal and imaginative schemata of nested containment. It's established quickly in Act 1 Scene 1, in descending order of size: the heavens; the world outside Denmark; Denmark; Elsinore. Holding in mind the nested box, in the dialogue we have the stars; “[Bernardo] Last night of all,/When yond same star that's westward from the pole/ had made his course t' illumine that part of heaven” (42-44). We have ancient Rome; Horatio tells the history of “the most high and palmy state of Rome,/A little ere the mightiest Julius fell” (125-126). Similarly Horatio narrates the history of Norway's past dealings with Denmark. Then, the image of “sentinels” on a “watch” automatically refers to their status as figures on an exterior limn of the inner box, Elsinore. But that nested reality is threatened by instability, through penetration, invasion, and “eruption” (80). The instability of these nested boxes—Norway: Denmark: Elsinore—is highlighted when Bernardo comments: “Well may it

sort that this portentous figure/Comes armed through our watch” like a phantom passing through walls (108-109).



Figure 4 Henry Fuseli "Hamlet and the Ghost" 1789 (Source: Creative Commons)

As previously discussed, liminality is necessarily implicated in the logic of containers. “Liminal” is derived from the Latin word for “threshold”—and a container, as a bounded space, necessarily has a limn, or a threshold, and is therefore the space just *before* containment that is the most characterized by some degree of indeterminacy. It is what Victor Turner has theorized as the “betwixt and between” of reality and our consciousness of it (“Betwixt” 3). Shakespeare appears cognizant of this quality, and even as he plays with the reality of bounded space, literally and metaphorically, he also plays with the instability of those boundaries and the indeterminacy

of their thresholds. Instinctively, he recognizes that these spaces and states are filled with dramatic potential. For indeterminacy is the very condition of drama; the indeterminacy of the rising action is what defines something as essentially dramatic and it is this indeterminacy that draws the audience's collaboration through cognitive projection.¹⁹ It is the indeterminate space that allows the audience to insert themselves by filling in the blanks, a cognitive action that engages them in a story in which, consequently, they feel they have a stake. That Shakespeare either consciously or intuitively knows this about the drama is evidenced throughout in multiple emanations from limns. For example: Hamlet, Horatio, and Marcellus, in Act 1 Scene 3, stand on the exterior of Elsinore; being neither of the inside nor of the outside, necessarily makes the exterior a charged space. The Ghost itself is the very definition of a liminal figure; it is neither living nor dead, neither in heaven nor hell, only partially present on earth, and as such Hamlet's Ghost is deeply and inherently uncanny (See Figure 4).

Hamlet moves spatially from out to in and then back out again, which Fergusson suggested was a respiration-like rhythm. For the cinematically inclined, it is a dramaturgical dolly-cam effect: moving in for a close-up (Gertrude's closet) and then panning back (to Denmark and Fortinbras encroaching troops) only to find an explosive and destabilizing collision

¹⁹ Lakoff and Johnson have theorized that this specific form of cognitive projection has two modes: advisory projection and empathic projection. The first takes the form of "If I were him I would..."; the second, "I feel for him because this is how I would feel in that situation." (*Philosophy* 281-282)

between outside (Fortinbras) and inside (the death and corruption of Elsinore). Hence, the play unfolds as a spatially and imaginatively delineated nested box with threatened and permeable boundaries; boundaries to be reckoned with for sure, but, also, boundaries filled with the indeterminacy of dramatic potential.

Indeed, the play continually reflects its nested, secret-chamber reality both psychologically and physically, suggesting that there is an inside to every outside; and that inside may have further encapsulated interiors: the heavens, the larger world, Denmark, Elsinore, rooms within Elsinore, compartments within rooms in Elsinore, all the way into the workings of each character's mind. There is not so much an audience but a congregation of voyeurs, peering into Elsinore's secret compartments with a growing sense of wonder and horror and what they glimpse there. Spying does seem to preoccupy Shakespeare the playwright, as the image of peering into interiors from exteriors penetrates other plays, as Charles Prouty has written about, notably, *Much Ado About Nothing* (with the near-homophone of “noting” suggesting itself) and *Twelfth Night*, plays that scholars think Shakespeare may have been working on simultaneously.

Privacy and secrecy provide a system of related containers as the secret and the private open similar but distinct forms of psychic and physical containment. The container schema is an optic for this study, and as such, this schema blends with other base-level schemas, such as force and direction. The play moves in and out of psychic spaces and physical places of containment, and there seems to be force and direction to it; using private scenes and secrets as

separate but inter-related devices provides a dramatic, tension-filled illusion that even when one thinks he's reached the innermost "box" there is still yet more that lay hidden and could be revealed. All of these hiding "secrets" become objects with an uncanny sense of agency, as if they *desired* to be let loose, and therefore carry the illusion of an animate force. For example, a private scene, such as Gertrude's closet scene, can have all the entailments of privacy and intimacy, and still contain a "secret" in the room, in this case, the hidden, spying body of Polonius, which almost bulges behind the arras in its desire to spill forth into the room. It has the feeling of a feed-back loop, where the journey inward turns all inside out and outside in again; this schematic loop is reflected spatially and metaphysically in a web of characters who have rich interiors of almost unplumbable depths. Thus far we are talking about the phenomenal experience of *Hamlet*; the physical landscape of England, however, and the social conditions of that time period, was very much like the world of *Hamlet*, and the physical landscape was also an analog to the psychic experience of containers bulging with drama and bounded by threateningly destabilized thresholds.

3.2 THE PRIEST HOLE



Figure 5 A priest hole discovered in a home in England and said to have once hidden Charles I.

(Source: www.englishmonarchs.co.uk)

The priest-hole is emblematic of the Elizabethan psychic and physical landscape; Elizabethan architecture was an *overwrought* architecture, with curious elements of it expressing an otherwise inexpressible anxiety, grief, and resistance. One such element, the “priest-hole,” referred to secretly in the Latin first as *loca secretoria* and later as *latibula* (connoting “hole”), is invested with the high-stakes drama of hunted priests and the unbearably intimate reach of the State. These secret containers had spiritual, religious, and sacramental endowments, which, when blended with the real threat of death and torture, represented an explosive inner pressure and

grief; here is more evidence that crisis situations—real or imagined as if they were happening as narrative and drama—prompt imagination backward toward base-level categories, the cognitive primitives that formed infant consciousness and made language possible. Evolutionary biology theorizes that this phenomenon—returning to base-level categories and child-like imagination—makes us better equipped to cope with our surroundings and to survive threatening situations (Baron-Cohen). It proposes that aesthetic pleasure (primarily, “imagining”) is a naturally selected skill, one that gives us an opportunity, in comfort, to rehearse these cognitive operants. It is a process which the baby rehearses constantly but the adult *seems* to cast aside. The ability to spontaneously re-enter that state at will, however, prompted by a pleasure-seeking impulse, may be a character trait that makes one more likely to survive threatening situations.

In any event, for many Elizabethans, the schema of containment, became a schema upon which life and death, salvation and damnation, depended. The conditions of Tudor England and the infantilizing control of the populace exercised by the crown reduced people to that imaginal stage of magical thinking. I am not proposing a juvenile regression but a sophisticated adult indulgence in imaginative tropes that allow us to survive and cope with an ever-changing world. That such play is entertaining to the adult, that it involves a pleasure-principle, ensures that we continue its practice even when conditions seem, apparently, safe. Safety, in England at this time, however, was broached by a perpetual sense of jeopardy, particularly as it pertained to social and religious identity. So now, at Shakespeare's moment, these secrets—priests, Mass,

and as explained and documented in the previous chapter, wills and testaments—lived in Elizabethan imagination while the primal concepts of agency and animacy begin to swirl around these topoi as magic forces. Thus, even independent of the state-imposed threat, the secrets in these holes and secret chambers and behind hidden panels begin to feel as if they may burst forward from their own internal emotional, barometric pressure.

This highly endowed, “Chinese Nesting Box,” reality, then, was both derived from and stimulated the imaginative tropes of base-level cognition; as such, it expressed itself culturally in multiple forms. It can be and has been noted in the architecture of England in recusant histories.²⁰ John Bossy in particular, has noted architectural conditions that underscore the multiply contained self in Elizabethan England (21-38). William Slights, for another example, has written about the tension between concealment and revelation in Ben Jonson's dramaturgy, and connected that dramaturgical fascination with the social conditions of his moment; which is to say, an individual living in a reality divided between the personal and the public; as Patricia Fumerton has it, the Elizabethan dramatic imagination was fixated on bringing all that was private into public view on stage (69, qtd. in Wilson). Elizabethan architecture was punctuated by false chimneys, secret passageways, hollow staircases and trap-doors, many designed specifically to hide both the regalia of Catholic Mass and the priests who, if discovered, would

²⁰ For a notable example see: Fea, Allan *Rooms of Mystery and Romance*.

hang for celebrating them. Take this account from the autobiography of John Gerard, a hunted priest in Elizabethan era, for an example of the architecture of secrecy and for the dramatic tension and emotional endowment that came with it:

My hiding-place was in a thick wall of the chimney behind a finely inlaid and carved mantelpiece. They could not well take the carving down without risk of breaking it. Broken, however, it would have been, and that into a thousand pieces, had they any conception that I could be concealed behind it. But knowing that there were two flues, they did not think that there could be room enough there for a man.

Nay, before this, on the second day of the search, they had gone into the room above, and tried the fireplace through which I had got into my hole. They then got into the chimney by a ladder to sound with their hammers. One said to another in my hearing, 'Might there not be a place here for a person to get down into the wall of the chimney below by lifting up this hearth?' 'No,' answered one of the pursuivants, whose voice I knew, 'you could not get down that way into the chimney underneath, but there might easily be an entrance at the back of this chimney.' So saying he gave the place a knock. I was afraid that he would hear the hollow sound of the hole where I was (89).

As Julian Yates has written: “The priest-hole is more properly the structure of secrecy than a secret. It is a mechanism for ensuring that, in all registers (domestic, national, textual) there will remain moments beyond the reach of the searcher, hidden to view. It is an investment in the future, a device that maintains the possibility of secrets even after their finding” (179). Yates records this in a chapter on martyrs and ghosts—explaining the haunted character of such spaces and its associations with martyrdom. He also notes what I note here: these spaces are imbued with what narratologists call an imminent futurity, making them essentially dramatic. The very structure of the priest-hole implies the presence of concealment which leads to an expectation of discovery.

Even leaving aside the threat of torture and execution, there was an impending sense of spiritual peril; it poses the question: if the traditions and rites that ensured personal salvation were dismantled, what would happen to the English soul? As explored in the previous chapter, the Catholic Mass was built upon an act of remembrance through the Eucharist; the Protestant Reformation agenda forced major theological shifts upon this ritual in particular. Protestant precepts challenged the Eucharist and all of the sacramental rites instituted by Rome. As the Magisterium of the Catholic Church deliberately structured these rites, the rituals were all performed with the implicit understanding that they were enacted as a remembrance of Christ's life on earth—but they were also built upon a memorial of religious heritage that provided a hermeneutics of continuity for the Catholic faithful; which is to say, these rituals were enmeshed

with remembrance of the past. With these radical changes came the threat of erasure; not only were new ways established, the old ways were criminalized. Thus, the Catholic populace was deeply anxious about lost memory: the memory of martyrs dying for a belief system that was being quickly dismantled, the memory of the Old Faith, and the memory of Christ himself.

As Peter Burke has argued regarding the “Renaissance sense of the past,” a historical perspective “is impossible when men forget the past” (149). Hence, as Yates has it, this particular historic moment can be imagined as a moment when the past began to haunt the present before it quite had the chance to even become past, because of the ever-present specter of forgetting, (invoked by the Ghost's injunction to “Remember me!”). As will be explored in a few paragraphs, even today the specter of the forgotten English past still haunts England today in these “hole-y” structures as in the case of the Yeomans described below. The past performed and performs as an agent in the culture as surely as Hamlet's Ghost, complete with warnings, and heavily-laden with theological grief and significance. It was a past that emerged begging for resolution, vengeance or acceptance, memorial or forgetting; And, to the point of this chapter, endowed objects/bodies inside containers held an innate sense of drama and grief-stricken anticipation: anticipation of discovery, of boundaries that bulge and threaten rupture, of ghosts let loose, reaping revenge or dissolving into abnegation.

Recusant histories often depend upon the detailed work of Michael Hodgetts, a surveyor who became an historian in his retirement. His professional surveys of what he thinks of as “recusant architecture” have become a seminal text in post-Whig history.²¹ Though the interplay between public and private was by no means new or unique to Elizabethan England, the culture of Catholic recusancy, as archived by Hodgetts, suggests that the public desire to preserve an identity and a collective past, made this schema of existence peculiarly overwrought. The Tudor regime engineered and executed unprecedented politics of espionage and soul-control and sealed England's Catholic past in a seeming tomb upon Elizabeth's ascension; thus the contents of that tomb bulged and cried for release. It was an emotional intensity that emphasized the metaphor of containers as vessels for identity, passion, and belief. “Secrecy,” writes Richard Wilson, “...was itself, therefore, the essence of Elizabethan subjectivity.” Describing the secret rooms, hidden cabinets, and innermost labyrinths of Shakespeare's drama he goes on to write:

²¹ It is not the purpose of this thesis to defend recusant histories or post-Whig scholarship in general; Whig scholarship still regularly takes recusant historians to task for the partiality and interpretative qualities of their texts. Given the obvious features of recusant history explored in this dissertation, I start from the position of the post-Whig historian, which acknowledges that the partiality of the evidence is part of the evidence itself, for recusant history is not the history of the victors but of the history of the vanquished. Erasure, suppression, and alteration are necessary entailments of those histories, and historians who wish to challenge those histories must be bolder than most, or risk further silence. Or as Butterfield has it: “The historian writes under too many repressions if he is dominated only by the fear of writing something wrong” (90).

Thus, it must be significant that Shakespeare grew up in the labyrinth of priest holes, attic chapels, and underground passages that honey-combed houses of the Warwickshire gentry, as the material determinants of an entire lifestyle of self-concealment (23).

Indeed, it must. Regardless of his personal convictions and religious identity, how could a sensitive mind such as Shakespeare's not be influenced? If the playwright is one who specializes in playing within imaginative tropes, in order to return the audience there, just how deeply would such an overwrought architecture affect his fertile, young mind? Though during Mary's reign, Protestants were also hidden in secret hiding-places, Wilson notes that these architectural innovations were raised to a new level under the auspices of Jesuit, Counter-Reformation, ingenuity:

The most complicated were those inserted by Jesuit engineers into the mansions of Catholic neighbours and relations of the Shakespeares, such as the maze of tunnels at Hindlip, the home of the Habintons; the Mass chamber behind panels at Huddington, the base of the Winters; the stack of hides in the Tower at Coughton, the Thorckmorton seat; or the roof chapel at Clopton, the house, in the 1600s of the Rookwoods (ibid).

Wilson via Hodgetts and JA Hilton, credits St. Nicholas "Little John" Owen with this revolution in architectural design. The martyred Owen was arguably one of the most charismatic and gifted figures of the Counter-Reformation. The degree of hatred the Tudor regime felt for

Owen is illustrated in Sir Robert Cecil, protege of Sir Francis Walsingham, as he gloats over Owen's martyrdom as a point of personal victory: "It is incredible how great was the joy caused by his arrest . . . knowing the great skill of Owen in constructing hiding places, and the innumerable quantity of dark holes which he had schemed for hiding priests all through England." (Foley 245). One may credit Owen not only with architectural innovation but with a new mode of architectural imagination that begins to think more thoroughly in three-dimensions. Working crevasses seamlessly into brickwork and using finely shaped stairwells to create vaults for precious human and material cargo, this architectural magician conjured the splintered Elizabethan personality into spatial figuration.

Richard Wilson describes the period as a time of "hermeneutic puzzles" and of a "precocious awareness of the anxieties of discovery and the histrionics of concealment" (24).²² Inasmuch, the physical architecture of England resembled an elaborate and overwrought game of hide-and-seek. Thus, the prominent estates of Catholic England were constructed with "cubiculos" used for hiding priests during the reign of Elizabeth. Cubicles, or private rooms, were not always designed for priests but they often were, representing what Wilson has flagged as an architecture of secrecy. Referencing John Kerrigan on secrecy and "the cubiculo" in

²² For that reason Queer Studies has been interested in this period for its "closeted" existence. See: Allan Bray, *Queering the Renaissance*, Jonathan Goldberg, ed.

Twelfth Night, along with David George on the physical manifestation of secrecy, Wilson explores the way in which this physical setting shaped Elizabethan identity:

And it is in this analysis of the material foundation of secrecy, and the way in which Renaissance culture instituted novel ideas about privacy 'by building and exploring secluded chambers and closets,' that Kerrigan finds clues to the emergent mentality he traces in Shakespeare's ambivalent staging of 'exhibitionistic secrecy,' and... 'appeal to privy space'. For while identity, according to historians, was shaped by the new 'refuges of intimacy' in early modern Europe, and by all those alcoves and *kunstkammers*, by the carrels, commodes, and cubicles that made social separation and professional discretion for the first time physical possibilities, it is within an interplay of secrecy and disclosure, the transparent and occluded, that Shakespeare's drama in fact unfolds. (25)

While the word “cubiculo,” or any secreted space in architecture, was not expressly Catholic, at this moment in history, it had strong associations with Catholic uses. In particular, as already established, cubicles were used for hiding Jesuit priests, a crime punishable by torture and death. The crimes of saying Mass, refusing to take the Oath of Supremacy, or attempting to convert a Protestant were similarly punishable, and the punishment was dramatized—*performed*—in gruesome, public displays of execution and torture laid upon well-loved public figures.

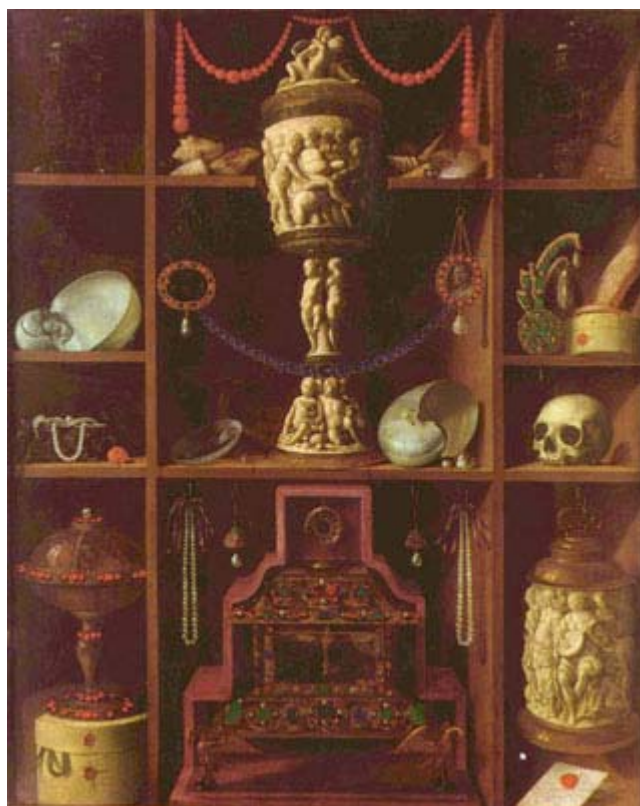


Figure 6 an artist's rendering of a kuntskammer. "KleinodienSchrank" by Johan Georg Hainz, 1666

(Source: Creative Commons)

Wilson's nested box imagery peppers his prose as in the above, in which he figures early modern Europe as a curiosity cabinet, a series of nested “alcoves” “*kunstkammers*” “carrels” “commodes” and “cubicles,” in which spaces and objects fold into each other and become “places” or locations of private identity and seclusion. The “*kunstkammer*,” yet another manifestation of the container schema in the Renaissance, was a cabinet that contained objects for study that did not exist within the bounds of natural categories and were placed in the cabinet

for observation and categorization. Francis Bacon, for example, conceived of his work as a *kunstkammer*, metaphorically, and he, among others, widely theorized the *kunstkammer* as a microcosm containing a macrocosm. It was also thought of as a “memory theatre.” In *Gesta Grayorum*, Bacon layered this container image with specifically theatrical language, from the “memory theatre” idea to the title of the work, “gesta” referring specifically to theatrical gesture. Thus this multi-compartment world—imagined variously as cubicles, carrels, *kunstkammers*, nested boxes—is imaginatively perceived and remembered as a world of secret rooms containing even more interior compartments, to hide the regalia of the Mass, like alcohol hidden during Prohibition; it's a world that contained not only a catacomb of hiding places and virtual tombs but viewing boxes meant for reflection, reconciliation, or to perform as a memory theater.

The architectural hiding-places-within-hiding-places (which might remind one of plays-within-plays) were a thing of genius as accounts of the raids attest. The Queen's officials brought skilled masons and carpenters to the raids who reportedly would examine the structures of the homes and still fail to find evidence of hidden priests, some of whom died from suffocation in tight quarters that did not ventilate properly. Blackfriar's Gate, the property that Shakespeare eventually purchased, as discussed in Chapter 1, was described thusly by a government informer (1585):

Now there dwells in it one that is a very unconformable man to her majesty's proceedings. It has sundry back doors and bye-ways, and many secret vaults and corners. It has been in times past suspected and searched for papists but no good done for want of knowledge of the backdoors and bye-ways of the dark corners. (Pearce 159)

If the relationship between this architecture to Ghosts and hauntings is still not perfectly clear, let's consider it synchronically for a moment. The remnants of this moment in history still surface. As recently as October 2006, *The Blackpool Gazette* reported on citizen Adele Yeomans “taking a claw hammer to” the plastered walls of her Tudor era house and discovering a priest-hole which connected to a secret passage behind a bookcase in her home. The article goes on to discuss how the Yeomans also believe that ghosts inhabited the secret panels in her home, underscoring the imaginative connection between this Chinese Box England, wrongful death, hunted priests, and hauntings. Within this England, Piaget would have had a field-day, as this game of hide-and-seek (called “All Hid” by Elizabethan children)²³ and the idea of object (and bodily) permanence raised architecture to an hysterical art form; under this socio-cultural aegis, architecture was perfected as not merely the shaping of buildings and homes, but as the sophisticated technology of spiritual and physical survival.

²³ See: Singman, Jeffrey L. *Daily Life in Elizabethan England*,

3.3 BORROMEO'S CONFESSIONAL



Figure 7 Borromeo's Confessional (Source: Creative Commons)

Coupled with this nested box existence was the emergence of another box, also brought to England by the Jesuit Counter-Reformation: Borromeo's Confessional. Charles Borromeo designed the confession box around 1550 and it was made mandatory in Milan by 1576. John Bossy has remarked that the Confessional marked the point at which the Counter-Reformation turned culture “away from objective social relations toward an interiorised discipline” (21-38).

Foucault identified Borromeo's confession box as a “Copernican revolution” in man's identity (59 qtd in Wilson 17). Edmund Campion, visiting the countryside, brought the concept of this confession box with him, thus marrying the idea of private, boxed, secret Confession, with Counter-Reformation Catholicism, and fulfilling the desire for the safety of anonymity. Borromeo's Confessional, in concept if not in manifestation, was a way of containing the identity of an English recusant and making the Catholic transaction of Confession impersonal and anonymous, which, as Wilson notes, is exactly what the recusants wanted. The conceit of the confessional box implies a sense of omniscience to the transaction, as if the concealed state of the confessor and penitent conjures, the omniscient presence of a God who sees all. It's a conceit of omniscience and a spatial trope of control over the interior self that would later be co-opted by the state in Jeremy Bentham's prison design, the voyeuristic prison called the panopticon, in which prisoners could be closely scrutinized without knowing they were being watched. A photographic negative of the priest hole and an abridgment of the confessional, it was an imitation he seems wholly unconscious of when he describes his architectural invention, as a “new mode of obtaining power of mind over mind, in a quantity hitherto without example” (31). Nevertheless, Borromeo's original also had imaginative, voyeuristic connotations and a “disinterest effect” later critics would attribute to the style of Shakespeare himself. In this way, the container also manufactures a “human vacuum,” an image applied to the playwright's frustrating (to some) refusal to commit to a single viewpoint. Referencing a quote from Ben

Johnson in which he describes Shakespeare as being “of an open and free disposition,” Wilson writes:

Shakespeare's mysterious vacuousness—the impression he made on contemporaries of transparency and disinterestedness—may come to be interpreted not so much as the signifier of genius but as the historically conditioned self-fashioning of one born and educated at the violent epicentre of the Elizabethan Counter-Reformation. (18)

If, as it seems highly likely, this overwrought association of interiority, hiding, and faith, was present in Shakespeare's mind, and the minds of at least some of his audience, the imagination of privacy, secrecy, and confession together created a spiritual *camera obscura* out of the special world of *Hamlet*.

3.4 THE SPATIAL IMAGINATION OF HAMLET

Shakespeare's spatial imagination, as expressed in *Hamlet*, elaborates on the images of nested containment manifested in Elizabethan architecture; he plays within the tension between containment and release. Further, Shakespeare embraces the paradoxes of containment: when something becomes small and microcosmic, it has connections to the macrocosm, reflecting the dominant conceits of Renaissance thought. Renaissance philosophy conceived of the world as a

cosmology of homologies, as a mobius strip traveling from microcosm to macrocosm and back again, such as WOMB:BODY:HOUSE:COUNTRY:GLOBE:COSMOS. The details of each level are connected to the ones beneath it and below it, and are envisioned as both constitutive of and generative of each other. This figures imaginatively and linguistically in the text. Limns, cells (including bedchambers, prisons, nunnery, and monastic cells), and endowed objects that function as camera obscurae all provided a dramatic shadow-world to Shakespeare's actual one, as a physical world dominated by secret compartments, hidden-rooms, and hunted recusants.

As noted at the opening of this chapter, the container schema translates to “bounded space.” Boundaries can either be strong or permeable, but, necessarily, there is a tension between that which is within and the boundaries of the contained space, a tension that implies the potential for escape or discovery. The imaginative world of *Hamlet* plays intermittently—or as Fergusson has it, rhythmically—with containment and a force of burgeoning release that resists containment. As in Fuseli's engraving (Figure 4), of Act 1 Scene 4, Hamlet's grief—which, if he is said to be actually mad, is the particular form of his madness—is something that threatens to break loose from the corruption of Elsinore and meet the liminal figure of the Ghost on the moors. The release is anticipated and feared for his grief contains an imminent futurity that calls for vengeance and for more death. “The GHOST beckons to HAMLET.”

This scene opens upon the expectation of the Ghost as the characters sit in watch for his return. During their wait, the characters expose the core of Elsinore in description, as they discuss the corruption within it. Even before we know for certain that murder has taken place, we are sure that something is asunder in the heart of Elsinore. Contemplating the revelry that takes place inside apart from them, Hamlet describes the nature of this ribaldry:

This heavy-headed revel east and west
Makes us traduced and tax'd of other nations:
They clepe us drunkards, and with swinish phrase
Soil our addition; and indeed it takes
From our achievements, though perform'd at height,
The pith and marrow of our attribute.
So, oft it chances in particular men,
That for some vicious mole of nature in them,
As, in their birth--wherein they are not guilty,
Since nature cannot choose his origin--
By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,
Or by some habit that too much o'er-leavens
The form of plausible manners, that these men,

Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,
Being nature's livery, or fortune's star,--
Their virtues else--be they as pure as grace,
As infinite as man may undergo--
Shall in the general censure take corruption
From that particular fault: the dram of evil
Doth all the noble substance of a doubt
To his own scandal (1.4.19-41)

Noting that Hamlet here contemplates the nature of outside behaviors and the interior self (as in “the pith and marrow of our attribute,”) one can further note that he is also contemplating within homologue: the nature of Denmark as it is figured inside of Elsinore. It is a world from which Hamlet, in his contempt of it, would desire release. He describes the corruption within as a “mole” in nature. Language is always both univocal and polysemous. He means, ostensibly, a birthmark, but one cannot avoid the layered meanings of the word “mole,” which include a burrowing animal underground, and a spy. Hamlet expresses deep dissatisfaction with this state of affairs, and one might easily imagine here an intensifying desire for escape; he has already expressed this squelched desire in the previous scenes, where he must remain disgusted, filled with contempt, but silent as in Act 2 Scene 2 soliloquy “O, that this too, too solid flesh” Hence, when the Ghost “beckons,” the dramatic gesture is a catalyst for the dramatic action of the play,

which can be described in the terms of our dominant schema as “turning inside out”. Hamlet then becomes the very “pith and marrow” of Denmark, the attribute of their character, ejected by the “mole of nature” stewing in corruption within Elsinore.

To beckon means “to make a mute” gesture, but also has shared roots with the word “beacon” and as such one can think of the Ghost as a (in)vocation toward the release for which Hamlet cries out. It is a desire for release, as aforementioned, already keenly figured in Act 1 Scene 2 in the “too solid/sullied flesh” soliloquy, in which he reveals “that which passeth show”: a deep and abiding contempt for his mother and uncle's actions in the wake of his father's death. But it is a loathing that he must hold within, for “break, my heart, I must hold my tongue” (160). In the moment of beckoning, he goes from a sullen solipsist, a whore “unpacking his heart with words,” limning the court with his hermit-like brooding and melancholy, refusing to take responsibility for his position, to willingly entering a chain of events that will enact a metamorphosis; he will grow from an inward, grief-stricken, cowering man-boy, into a man fully engaged in outward shows of social (the play-within-the play) and political action. The tension of his contempt, grief, and vacillation, creates the potential energy that makes his visit out to the moors to commune with the Ghost intensely dramatic. It may be unwise, it may be rash—but it is, in fact, inevitable that he should go. His grief and contempt demand it.

Returning, then, to the beckoning action of the Ghost: contemplating the dangers of following, Horatio evokes brain-as-container and figures deep contemplation as a dynamic motion from inward to outward and back again: “Think of it./ The very place puts toys of desperation,/Without more motive, into every brain/That looks so many fathoms to the sea./And hears it roar beneath.” In this piece of text, Horatio also “toys” with the image of a small idea, inside the mind, leading to an opening abyss without boundary that threatens to lose the contemplative in its vastness. In classic Shakespearean wordplay, playing upon then image of a fathoms deep sea, Hamlet replies: “It waves me still.” Here, Hamlet ignores the danger of contemplation thrusting him into unbounded territories and plunges forward, reinforcing his overarching desire to be freed from the bounded space of Elsinore.

Next, the stage direction provides the necessary bookend, the equal and opposite action to the beacon of the Ghost, as Marcellus and Horatio try to contain Hamlet within the limn of the castle exterior: “MARCELLUS and HORATIO try to hold HAMLET back.” As the law of physics tells us, Marcellus and Horatio thus turn Hamlet's kinetic energy into potential energy; so that when he breaks free of the Elsinore box, he is filled with an even greater kinetic energy than had he merely *wandered* out to meet the Ghost, a dynamic pointedly illustrated . Were they to succeed in keeping the hero contained within the liminal boundary of Elsinore, there would be no play to record. Of course, Hamlet does break free of the limn and enters the feared outer range of moors, from which Horatio fears he will be thrown. This region of cliffs Horatio references

are beyond the immediate exterior of the castle where Hamlet will gaze at a phantasm from the heavenly limn of purgatory. When Marcellus intones the well-known “Something's rotten in the State of Denmark,” and Horatio replies: “Heaven will direct it,” we now have a complete reference to the homologies referenced at the opening of this section, each layer of the Hamlet onion, reminiscent of the concentric circles illustrated in the picture of the Great Chain of Being (Figure 2). From Heaven to Denmark, to the wilderness beyond the exterior of Elsinore, to Elsinore's exterior limn, to reference to the activities on the interior of the Castle, to the interior of the body.

3.4.1 *Secrets*

The robust recusant culture of Elizabethan England made the society one of secrets, which necessarily evoked the container schema. The word secret is drawn from Old French *secret* meaning hidden, concealed, or private. Notable, perhaps, is that this same Old French word was also used to refer to a stage trick known only to the creator of the stage effect, such as the flowing of Christ's blood from the side of Christ. Shakespeare emerged from the countryside of England, where medieval mystery and miracle plays used these effects before the Elizabethan regime suppressed them. Greenblatt writes:

Protestant reformers were understandably hostile [to the mystery cycles], for they wished to dismantle the traditional Catholic culture and rituals out of which these pageants arose, and they campaigned hard to put the performances to an end. But [...]the civic pride and pleasure in them was intense, so they lingered, in the teeth of opposition into the 1570s and 80s. In 1579, when Will was fifteen, he and his family could still have seen them performed at Coventry. Something of their power—their way of constructing a shared community of spectators, their confidence that all things in the heavens and the earth can be represented onstage, their delicious blending of homeliness and exaltation—left its mark upon him (*Will* 37).

So, it is reasonable to think that young Shakespeare would have encountered this particular usage of the word secret; but still more probable is that Shakespeare was fluent in French and knowledgeable about theatre. Even more straightforward, is the Latin *secretus*, set apart, withdrawn, or hidden. The idea of a secret is “that within which passeth show,” and necessarily implies that the secret is something contained within something else; a society riddled with secrets is a society with mysterious innards that threaten with the possibility of escape. As demonstrated, the architectural landscape of Elizabethan England was both derived from and underscored this cognitive schema, causing it to first heat up and then saturate cultural expressions. It is both example and reinforcing feature of a prevalent social metaphor.

The secret chamber defines the world of *Hamlet*; it does so figuratively in imagination, but it also does so, literally, using bedchambers as a metonymy for secret chambers. The character's inner secrets are displayed in secret-chamber scenes, which are either actualized, as in Gertrude's bedchamber, or evoked, as in Ophelia's report on Hamlet's mad visit to her bedchamber. Other manifestations of "secret chambers" come in the form of cells: prison cells, nunnery cells, and, by implication, monastic cells. In other texts, Shakespeare uses "cell" to describe where Friar Laurence and Prospero live and still further within *Hamlet*, specifically, Hamlet's Ghost is "in the cellarage." The word "cell" entered the English language roughly about the 12th century. It is from the Latin *cella*, for small room or hut, which also is related to the Latin, *celare* which means to conceal. Though it comes to mean rooms in general, its earliest usage was usually attached to a monastic cell and therefore had an intense association with interior prayer and reflection. The word begins to shift in the 16th century however, and begins to include "prison cell" in its associative meanings (Barnhart 113). One might propose that this happened with more than a sense of irony as those who once inhabited small rooms dedicated to prayer and communion with God were precisely those who ended up in prison cells at that time.

The cell or prison permeates *Hamlet* as a multiply realized metaphor. Shakespeare was a lover of paradox; he rarely examined an image or a metaphor without also imagining its contradictions. For example, Fortinbras uses the word cell in Act 5 Scene 2: "This quarry cries on havoc. O proud death,/What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,/ That thou so many princes at

a shot/So bloodily hast struck?” (5.2.364-367). Here Shakespeare has Fortinbras imagining death as a cell, a tiny container that is, paradoxically, as big as eternity. And it seems that it is “prison cell” that Fortinbras means here, looking at the context, though I'm sure the ironic, double-entendre of the monastic cell for prayer and reflection may have crossed Shakespeare's mind—and certainly, we know, through the concept of parallel processing that it must have, sub-cognitively. Ditto for his audiences.

Evocations of prisons abound in the text. The Ghost uses the metaphor of a prison to discuss his spiritual containment within the theological realm of Purgatory: The watch waits for Hamlet as they listen to the revelry inside Elsinore while poised to listen for the possibility of encroachment in their perch on the outer limn of Elsinore. And the Ghost tells Hamlet: “But that I am forbid/To tell the secrets of my prison-house, I could a tale unfold whose lightest word/ Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood” (1.5.13-16). Later on in the text, Hamlet refers to the “prison” of Denmark, asking Rosencrantz and Guildenstern who “sends them to prison hither”; under questioning, Hamlet remarks that Denmark is a prison, to which, Rosencrantz, replies, “Then the world is one” (2.2.233). Which leads to the very explicit Chinese box description of the world as a place punctuated with prison cells “a goodly one, in which there are many confines, wards, and dungeons, Denmark being one o' th' worst.” (266).

During the play-within-the-play, the Player Queen remarks: “An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope!” and further on still, Horatio reads Hamlet's letter describing that he is held “prisoner” aboard the ship to England. Prison and being imprisoned would evoke in the audience the memory of imprisoned Catholic recusants. While today prison is viewed as a form of punishment in end form, in the Elizabethan era, the prison was frequently a temporary holding place between the prisoner and torture and, eventually, execution:

The greatest and most grievous punishment used in England for such as offend against the State is drawing from the prison to the place of execution upon an hurdle or sled, where they are hanged till they be half dead, and then taken down, and quartered alive; after that, their members and bowels are cut from their bodies, and thrown into a fire, provided near hand and within their own sight, even for the same purpose (Harrison 98).

Therefore the image of the prison, at this point in history, was necessarily imbued with a sense of imminent suffering, pain, and death.

The direct reference to prison permeates the text but the imago of a prison makes up a significant part of the dramatic ether; the bedrooms of both Ophelia and Gertrude also function as physical monastic cells in which revelation and inner scrutiny take place. In these two rooms, all that is held within threatens to burst out. In Gertrude's chamber, this threat of burgeoning release is the most heightened, and is represented in Hamlet's mad behavior, elicited by the

Ghost's only interior visitation, a strict boundary violation, hitherto in tact. It is as if the Ghost—a liminal figure of a spirit released from its body—appearing in a space previously uninvaded disturbed the unity of mind and body in Hamlet himself, momentarily making his feigned madness real. Furthering the double entendre and polar image of monastic cell and brothel cell, adding the layer of confessional, within the scene Hamlet demands that his mother “confess herself to heaven” and to “repent what's past” (3.4.151-152). The scene overflows with images of whoring and illicit, incestuous sex, then Hamlet exits demanding that his mother live “the purer” and not go to “mine uncle's bed,” essentially requiring that she confess her sins, find absolution, and then live as chaste as a nun (161-162).



Figure 8 Fuseli's engraving of Hamlet in Ophelia's bed chamber (Source: Creative Commons)

Ophelia's bedroom is evoked only through report, but it is done so upon bursting into a room of private conference in Polonius' house. Ophelia spills forth with the report of Hamlet visiting her bedchamber, in a moment of horrified confession. Hamlet is a man come undone, his tormented insides, burgeoning toward a macabre sort of release:

doublet all unbraced;

No hat upon his head; his stockings foul'd,

Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ancle;

Pale as his shirt; his knees knocking each other;

And with a look so piteous in purport

As if he had been loosed out of hell

To speak of horrors, he comes before me. (2.1.79-84)

His head and leg exposed, his outer clothing seems to dissolve under the pressure of his interior anguish. The form of this entire scene is itself a nested box. The report of Ophelia's secret bed-chamber contains Hamlet's private revelation to his lover; Ophelia reveals this to a father in a private room in his house and he, then, brings it to a larger scene of conference with the King and Queen—thus we have a nested box of horror and intrigue, that through its interior pressure cannot be contained and must burst forth. The scene recounted by Ophelia foreshadows the pivotal bedchamber scene between Hamlet and his mother, in a horrifying inverse; in Ophelia's room, Hamlet willingly shows his interior state to his lover and the confrontation with

that inward show induces a horror in Ophelia. Conversely, the scene in Gertrude's bedchamber has Hamlet asking his mother to look inside herself and see what is within to feel that same horror so that she might bring herself to repentance and redemption. Gertrude's bed-chamber is a small room within Elsinore that contains a secret compartment behind the arras, a bed, and a mirror, all of which are evoked linguistically as containers holding secrets that threaten to let loose.

At the scene's opening, Polonius asks Gertrude to drive her reproof inward to Hamlet's private conscience: "Look you lay home to him" (3.4.1). Polonius is suggesting that she put her motives into Hamlet's mind, to "drive the point home" in contemporary parlance. It is a suggestion of psychic incursion, one that seeks to supplant whatever Hamlet has within that threatens the state. The stability of the corrupt rule at Elsinore is hinged upon keeping things tightly contained and, as suggested within the container schemata described at the opening of this section, things contained are imbued with a tension, as things that wish to escape and wreak havoc. Polonius' describes Hamlet's actions as ones that are ever expanding and threatening to break apart the compartmentalized existence within Elsinore, and his moods as things stretching and reaching beyond bounded space in a contentious and threatening manner. For example, his "pranks have been too broad to bear" (2). Describing his pranks as "too broad" is again a spatial figuration of action; his "pranks" stretch outward in width and defy containment; they lack

appropriate boundaries; then Polonius himself is bid to “withdraw” to the arras--and Hamlet turns the scene around on his mother.

As a foil to Polonius, who suggests that she drive a point deep into Hamlet in order to bind what is there, Hamlet suggests that his mother look at what is within and set it free. It is a moment where the one who seeks to entrap finds herself entrapped: “[HAMLET]: Come, come, and sit you down; you shall not budge./You go not till I set you up a glass/Where you may see the inmost part of you” (20-21). Unlike the unholy trinity of Claudius, Gertrude, and Polonius who seek to replace what they suspect is within—the truth of King Hamlet's death—with a false exterior, Hamlet uses Gertrude's glass to do what Aristotle once described: to reflect nature. Hamlet seeks to move inward to uncover, the unholy trinity seeks to move inward to control.

The interpenetrative action that began with Hamlet spying on the spy in the previous scene comes to full force, as the bounded space of secret, compartmentalized hiding is penetrated, when Hamlet plunges his sword through the arras. He moves the arras aside and reveals what is therein hid. As part of the mystery of the container, he is surprised, experiencing both wonder and horror at what he finds there. Hamlet cries out to the dead body of Polonius that he is an “intruding fool,” and the idea of bounded space is revealed as illusion and illusion only, as it turns out to “be made of penetrable stuff,”(37) as Hamlet imminently describes Gertrude's heart. As a result, Gertrude's unseeing eye is turned inward into her “private parts”:

“Thou turn'st my eyes into my very soul,” she cries, at which point, the second endowed object in the room is evoked as its own container, as Hamlet directs Gertrude’s attention to the “enseam'd bed” (104) she shares with Claudius.

“Enseamed” in Elizabethan usage, meant a saturated, “greasy,” seam on a garment, but it could also mean grease or fat, as it is used in *Troilus and Cressida* when Ulysses says to Agamemnon “the proud lord/That bastes in his own seam” (Crystals 389). The way in which this meaning evolved will be discussed at some length in chapter 5; for now, suffice to say that the multiple meanings of the word were evoked. The obvious root of the word comes from sewing as in “seam,” which causes a double vision of the bed as a closely wound cocoon with greasy innards. The root association is undoubtedly for sewing, but that spins off into multiple, polysemic associations for seam therein contained: greasy human flesh, for example, as well as what a seam actually does, as in binding things together. Thus, here, Hamlet describes an unnatural and evil binding of two things that should never have been so bound. There are those who have marked the word as also referencing seminal fluid and “ensemened” and “enseam'd” would have almost no detectable phonological difference between them. Further, Hamlet accuses that there she is “stewed in corruption” (105), like a beast carcass contained in a cooking vessel, simmering in a soup.

The idea of penetration, exhausted by Freudian analyses of this scene, automatically becomes an entailment of a containment schema; if a containment schema is marked with boundaries that have an outside and an in, such boundaries can be threatened by becoming porous or by being violently penetrated, as when Gertrude cries that Hamlet's words "like daggers enter in my ears" (108). It is here that the Ghost, first spotted on the outer edges of Elsinore, makes his uninvited appearance, and penetrates the secret-most space of Gertrude's bedchamber.

3.5 THE CAMERA OBSCURA: THE ENDOWED OBJECT AND THE GAZE

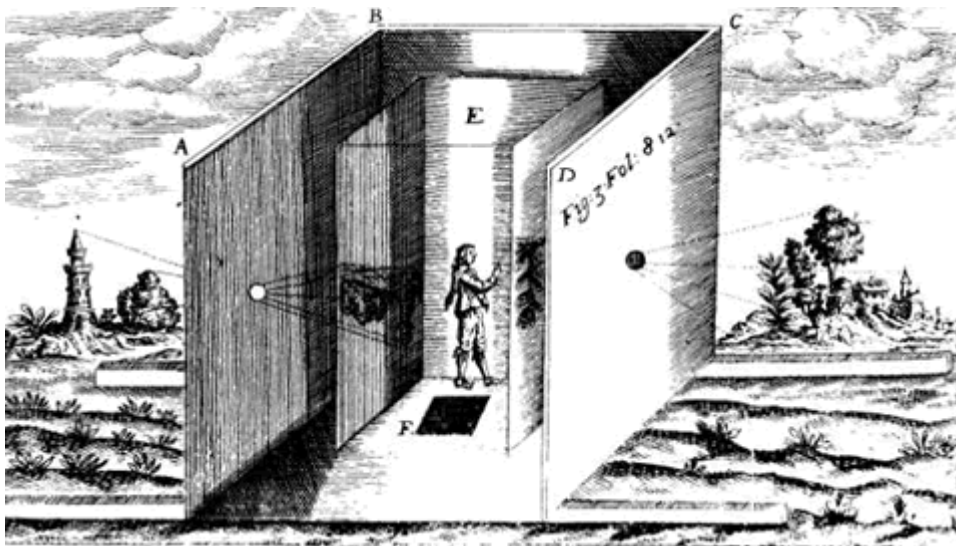


Figure 9 Athanasius Kircher "Ars magna lucis et umbrae" 1646 (Source: Creative Commons)

Recalling the darkened box and the confessing soul in its interior, and the penetrating interior gaze explored in the previous chapter, the camera obscura is an optic for contemplating the endowed stage-objects in *Hamlet*; these props function as confessional analogs, in which secrets are variously revealed (in letters, for example) or concealed (as in the poison cup). Johan Kepler gave the camera obscura its name in the early 17th century, contemporaneous with the writing and performance of *Hamlet*. The device is rather emblematic of the “age of discovery” which expressed itself through a desire to extend the eye and visual culture to every corner of the cosmos:

After Galileo's virtuoso display of what was possible with the aid of an instrument, Kepler finished the task with his quantitative analysis of why the telescope could do what it did. When combined with Kepler's mechanization of sight in *Ad vitellionem paralipomena* (1604) and the revelation that the human eye could be compared to an instrument, namely the camera obscura, the way to the great optical era and its pursuit of instrument aided perception was opened. For if our very eyes are instruments, then as Galileo instructed, we must determine the rules under which they operate, distinguish between deceptions and reality, and resolve to make informed observations. (Huerta 21)

Though it wasn't named until Kepler, descriptions of it and how it functions reach all the way back to Aristotle's *Problems*, a text with which Shakespeare is not only familiar, but which he

obliquely and directly references throughout the body of his work, perpetually marking his preference for not only scholasticism and casuistry but for Aristotle in particular (Simpson and Bowden 34-36). Camera obscura like instruments are on record as astronomical tools through Roger Bacon and Leonardo da Vinci describing its use for drawing. It is likely that Shakespeare had come upon some description of it, if not the actual device itself. Also worthy of note is that Shakespeare was familiar with Robert Greene's play, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, which features a magical mirror that reflects things happening at a distance. The mirror also performs a penetrative function in Greene's play: looking into the mirror, as in Grimm's *Briar Rose*, allows the gazer to see the secret doings of others.

The camera obscura—from the Latin for dark box—was literally a darkened box with a tiny opening into which one peered and in order to glimpse the vast outside. It could be small and portable enough to be hand-held, or it could also be a large box, (Figs. 11 & 12), into which a person stepped in order to gain vision—like Borromeo's Confessional. The confessional, then, is a metaphysical emanation of this visual culture, where one peers inward at the smallest points of the self in order to glimpse eternity.

There are additional metaphysical correlates to the paradoxical camera obscura, but, for now, we can simply observe that this “secret chamber” served as a breed of the container metaphor using bounded space for deep seeing. It provides an example of Marshall McLuhan's theory of media as extensions of man. McLuhan thought of media as extensions of man's

sensory capacities (7). In this case, the media of the Renaissance was an extension of vision—from the visual medium of text to the more radically visual camera obscura and telescope. The telescope, although it had not yet reached England while Shakespeare was writing *Hamlet*, is related in genus and species of metaphor, and the influence of visual culture profoundly shaped Shakespeare's consciousness and thus, his plays; for one example, it seems to be the very device of the soliloquy, the act of a minute introspection, in which the character expresses his conscious interior through the examining of one small piece of his experience. The soliloquy, in Shakespeare, marks off a psychic interior closet, and punctuates larger scenes of private conference and public display. It suggests gazing deeply into a small object in order to see the universe, which is deeply enmeshed in the sense of a self, contained: solitary and minutely focused.

The periodic opening of the inner compartments of the characters, also creates a sustained illusion; if the character's interior is revealed, intermittently, its concealed presence is implied when it is absent. Hence, it creates an expectant desire in the audience for those voyeuristic moments when the closet is flung open and we can see what is within. It is a dramaturgical device that creates the illusion of characters with almost unfathomably deep interiors, and their interiors become the object of the audience's desire. Like the child at play, delighting in the object in the box each time the top is removed, the alternating display and concealment of these dramaturgical interiors enhance our desire for them to be revealed.

Returning to the camera obscura, the carefully chosen and deeply endowed objects featured in *Hamlet* each represent a miniscule point of containment that could be gazed upon in order to see the larger vision at work in the play. These objects include Hamlet's letters to Ophelia, the letter from Hamlet to Horatio, flowers or "remembrances" that Ophelia hands out in her mad scene and two others worth noting in some detail Yorick's skull, and at the very last, the poisoned cup.



Figure 10 Hamlet with Yorick's Skull, Henry Selous, c. 1868 (Source: Creative Commons)

In the graveyard scene, famously, Hamlet holds Yorick's skull aloft and gazes at it as he contemplates, not for the first time, the oblivion of death. It is an open and willing contemplation of death, knowing what it is and not fearing to look into that particular abyss. He gazes at the

skull, as it is variously depicted, holding it aloft, looking deeply into its empty eye sockets, holes through which he glimpses eternity. He extends a meditation on holes—deep absences into one must peer or else stop up, lest what is inside leak out and fester: “Why may/ not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander till he find it stopping a bung-hole” and further on: “Alexander returneth into dust; the dust is earth; of/earth we make loam; and why of that loam; whereto he/ was converted, might they not stop a beer-barrel?” (5.1.178-180, 189-192).

Gertrude provides a foil to this image, as she unwittingly tilts the poison cup to her mouth and, in so doing, unavoidably gazes into its bottom before she drains the draught. The cup, which we know is poisoned by something that Claudius has placed within it, is a cup that contains death, but it is, as I say, an unwitting and physical encounter with death, as opposed to the multiple direct, intellectual encounters with death Hamlet invites and expresses textually. The cup, then, is a container for that which must be eventually encountered and dealt with, regardless of an individual’s willingness to do so. And indeed, the graveyard scene foreshadows this one; the link between the cup and the skull is deepened, once one considers the Clown’s remark that Yorick had “poured a flagon of Rhenish on my head once” (5.1.156). (It is the same Rhenish that the members of Elsinore are drinking in an unsavory show of debauchery in the wake of King Hamlet’s death, discussed by Hamlet and the watch in Act 1, Scene 4.) In this way, the smallest points of spatial imagination are constantly referencing the largest one. The mirror, the glass, are small points of containment which, if greeted with the appropriate focus of

the will, that lead the imagination toward eternity. The largest box in our nested schema, can be viewed through the smallest.

Another small unit of containment is introduced in the manner of the “remembrances” Ophelia intends to return to Hamlet, wherein his love is feelingly noted and made concrete. Hamlet's rage against Ophelia to get to another hiding place—the nunnery, which may have the intended double meaning so thoroughly discussed in the history of *Hamlet* criticism. It is difficult to really decide which meaning—convent or brothel—Shakespeare had in mind, but I do not think it unlikely that he intended both. Either way, in our consideration of the architecture of England at the time, the similarity, indeed, the *doubling* of monastic and nunnery cells, with the cells of a brothel gives one pause. It suggests the twinning of sexual secrecy with spiritual secrecy—something illustrated well within the double pair of Gertrude/Claudius and Hamlet/Ophelia. The cells of the monastery or nunnery survived from medieval time, in which nuns often slept in single rooms built to fit only a straw mattress on the floor. Brothels in Elizabeth's time did have singular houses with cells within them, they were often white-washed buildings called “stews,” evoking Hamlet's description of his mother's bed as a place where she “stewed in corruption.” But even more appropriate to our discussion, after Henry VIII closed the brothels and his son Edward re-opened them, many of the brothels were housed in secret rooms and compartments within taverns, often in backrooms and beneath false floorboards. So in the time of Shakespeare, a knock on a wall or a floorboard could reveal a priest or a prostitute

depending on context—and both of them had socially embedded allusions to and collusions with theatrical activity (Salgado 51).

3.5.1 The Cracked Egg

One final image alluded to in the text is the Cosmic Egg, which figures in several spots. A brief allusion to an egg metaphor is easy to dismiss but several placed throughout calls for some notice and suggests a deliberate invocation. The Cosmic Egg is an archetype found in nearly every culture, and it is a motif which thinks of the world as having hatched from an egg and also all of creation remaining contained as within an egg, echoes of which can be seen in the Orphic and Pythagorean traditions (in which the cosmos was a shell and the earth its yolk) as well as the Medieval Christian tradition that sought to absorb these ideas into a Christian mythos. It was named particularly in medieval literature through St. Hildegard of Bingen, who in her mystic writings noted the cosmic egg of creation. The text of Hamlet evokes this image in several places, as in “hatching” and “cracking” which delivers the simultaneous notion of something being destroyed and something else, perhaps, struggling to be born. Horatio's exclaims over his dead friend's corpse: “Now, cracks a noble heart” and it echoes a previous reference to “hatching” and a more precise reference to an egg delivered by Claudius. The illusion that Ophelia was the cause of Hamlet's “antic disposition” has shattered and Claudius fears the

expansive and threatening reach of Hamlet's behaviors; he imagines Hamlet's conduct as an egg about to crack from interior pressure and let loose its "dangerous" vapors on Elsinore :

[...] There is something in his soul/
O'er which his melancholy sits on brood,
And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose
Will be some danger (3.1.165-168)

Thus, when Fortinbras enters the scene of the Act 5 massacre, and Hamlet's heart has cracked wide open, he enters with an eye that seeks to penetrate into the heart of the corruption that lay within it; his entrance line is "Where is this sight?" (400). He enters the camera obscura figured in dramatic space, enclosing it with military force, in order to hear its confession. It is more than just the fact that Fortinbras and his troops eventually arrive inside; it is also a psychic journey that the audience has traveled with the dramatist and his characters. Fortinbras travels ever inward, across, and through, collapsing the nested spatial reality of *Hamlet* and seeking to collapse the bounded space of secrecy. His physical arrival mirrors a psychic one; a penetrative gaze leads his physical encroachment as he enters the scene with an eye and a mind that seeks to reveal the secrets therein hid. His speech is notable as he opens with the metaphor of death as a container small and encapsulating enough to be called—yet again, as referenced earlier—a cell:

“This quarry cries on havoc. O proud death,/What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,/ That thou so many princes at a shot/So bloodily hast struck?” (5.2.364-7).

3.6 CONCLUSION

And so, here in the manifestation of secret compartments, priest holes, and even in brothel cells, nunnery cells, and Borrromeo's confessional, the physical landscape of England took on the entailments of the containment schema to a large degree, and that was indexically linked to the conditions of the Reformation/Counter-Reformation. Additionally, the camera obscura provided a contemporaneous artistic and scientific object, and added to the metaphor of the confessional—the dark box in which a long inward gaze would enable one to see the vast outside. These physical objects and structures were both emanation of and an accomplice to this schema in Elizabethan England; they were both influenced and influencing. It provides further example of how socio-cultural conditions of the time period—the Reformation/Counter-Reformation in England—heated this schema to the point of cultural saturation. We can witness this in the language of the play, hinged upon the statement that Hamlet has “that within which passeth show,” and thus sets in motion both hermeneutic and proairetic codes that drive the narrative of the play.

4.0 TEXTUAL INTERIORS: THE TEXT AS CONTAINER FOR HIDDEN MEANING AND AS DISGUISE

It is useful to understand the brain as a pattern recognition machine. As Elkhonon Goldberg writes:

In a larger scheme of things, the culturally molded mind, introduced by Vygotsky and Luria, leads to a very important corollary for understanding the biological machinery of the mind: The brain comes pre-wired for certain kinds of pattern-recognition [...]. That means that the brain must have some capacity, in fact huge capacity, to store information about various facts and rules, whose nature are not known in advance but is acquired by learning through personal experience or derived from culture (104).

Hence, the temporal lobes are adept at categorizing, classifying, and identifying patterns; it does so in order to organize the environment for the mind in a way that the mind will find most useful. Indeed, the brain does not only organize the world and detect patterns for utility, it seems to crave doing it; it seeks patterns in complexity for amusement, yes, and it seems that it also provides a tension-release from existing in a world that defies organization in its seemingly infinite variety. There is a peculiar way in which the Renaissance experience underscored and

enhanced this cognitive proclivity, for the art, philosophy, and literature of the time were preoccupied with the Ptolemaic view of the universe, which was one of ordering existence; it conceived of the Universe as a code, and the Renaissance man as author of his own codex.

Watching theater offers an opportunity for cognitive studies to explore the ordering and deciphering in a particular mode. Rather, it is ordering and deciphering in multiple domains simultaneously; the theatrical experience is multi-modal, with the brain ordering, and deciphering various visual, auditory, and linguistic cues, arranged by the directors, designers, and actors, for their decoding. Contrary to Oscar Wilde's famous epigram that all art is "useless," Geoffrey Miller, Elkhonon Goldberg, Steven Pinker, Joseph Le Doux, and Antonio Damasio have all proposed a theory of art, grounded in evolutionary biology, that implies receiving, appreciating, and understanding art is a form of cognitive enhancement. This is not the same thing as saying that our drive towards art is, by itself, adaptive. But it does imply that we can understand the cognitive components of art reception through the unifying concept of evolutionary theory: natural selection.

The major faculties of the mind, with their feats no robot can duplicate, show the handiwork of selection. That does not mean that every aspect of the mind is adaptive. From low-level features like the sluggishness and noisiness of neurons, to momentous activities like art, music, religion, and dreams, we should expect to find activities of the mind that are not adaptations in the biologist's sense. But it *does* mean that our

understanding of how the mind works will be woefully incomplete or downright wrong unless it meshes with our understanding of how the mind evolved (Pinker 174).

Linking to the thesis of this chapter, I wish to underscore that envisioning the language of a drama as a container that was meant to be unlocked with an activity of detecting patterns and “decoding” was particularly acute during the English Renaissance. I don't propose that this is the only or defining feature of theatrical reception; only that it is a part of all aesthetic experience and it was particularly a *conscious* part of Elizabethan theatre reception. The individual brain deciphers its environment in everyday life; as Goldberg explains it is pre-wired to do so. There is also, however, the theatrical frame, which heightens the sense of encoded information. For within the theatrical frame, the brain is made alert to the notion that it is being asked to decode in a *specific context* to derive pleasure and meaning. In this way, the human mind begins to imagine the play and its text as a container, with a variety of hidden meanings contained *within* it. The mind begins to imagine itself as the key to this chest, and sets to work at opening it and setting its spirits loose.

This may have been even truer for the Elizabethans and Jacobeans than humans in general; children of the Renaissance, Elizabethans/Jacobeans viewed art and literature as a form of divinely inspired code. Consequently, the intricacy and cleverness of the code contained therein was conceived as a marker of its greatness. Again, we see a compelling intertwining of the political with leisure activity. Cryptography was known to be an ancient form of

entertainment and protection, a well-known monastical pastime, and the special purview of artists. Dating back to the medieval era and setting a well-known and acknowledged precedent of art enmeshing with cryptography, Chaucer's *The Equatorie of the Planetis* was written in cryptics. Phillip Sidney and Edmund Spenser are examples of Elizabethan artists who, uncontroversially, used code in the expression of dangerous social ideas. And then there was the endurance of the medieval four-fold mode of interpretation of the Bible. Based on the modes of interpretation used by the Patristics, this exegetical tradition involved a four-part interpretation: literal, allegorical, typological, and moral. It resulted in the reception of text as a polyvalent object, that could be seen in entirety from different aspects that included literal interpretation, symbols, types, allegories, and moral applications (Ebeling 38). In short, it accepted that a text was intended to deliver multiple meanings and the reader or receiver was intended to decode the many layers of meanings contained within it. Hence, the Renaissance mind understood code as the device of the almighty himself, who encoded meaning in the design of all things, including his divinely inspired texts. For the Elizabethan mind, code was simultaneously sport, art, and divine communion.

But cryptography was also the apparatus of sedition; Mary Queen of Scots was executed for her conspiracy to murder Elizabeth I; the primary evidence entered in the matter was encrypted documents decrypted by agents of the Elizabethan regime. Although both sides of the religious civil upheaval used code, and Elizabeth herself was markedly interested in code as a

avored pastime, at this particular historical moment, code was also the cause of “Bloody Mary’s” execution; code had long standing popularity among monks, and its prevalent use amongst recusant writers writing from exile gave code a decided Catholic—and therefore perilous—flavor. The art-as-cryptography paradigm embraced by the Elizabethans was an extension of the Judeo-Christian belief in the natural world as being God’s cryptography. Though rarely explicitly expressed as a strict doctrine, evidence of this world view can be seen in most of Renaissance thought (see: Northrop Frye *The Great Code: the Bible and Literature*).

Science and philosophy, which, like the secular and the sacred, were not really discrete as they are today, provide allegorical and analogical maps of the physical and spiritual worlds, seeing most things as having a divine corollary or a hidden meaning that teaches us about the divine. In this way, Renaissance ontology and cosmology were almost animistic wherein all things in nature, including physical objects were seen to be living in some way and as an extension of divine meaning (Asquith 21).

Literature and art did not escape this world view—on the contrary, their mimetic function was to mirror the grand design of God and, inasmuch, its merit could be indexed against it (Sidney). Therefore, good literature and art were judged by their ability to contain multiple meanings—only more pleasing and delightful the more it could contain/conceal. Good literature, then, was also like a set of Chinese boxes—a term used by Clare Asquith in describing not physical architecture, like Richard Wilson in the previous chapter, but textual architecture—with

meanings wrapped within codes, codes enshrouded in puns, and puns embedded in allegories of allegories (170). That such twists and turns within the codes brought further delight *and* provided a unique escape hatch for recusant views, was more than just an irony—it was downright convenient to both artists and Catholic survivalists alike. The Elizabethan/Jacobean penchant for cryptograms transformed sport into grave matter when state sponsored censorship made code not only a signpost of aesthetic excellence and superior artistry but a necessary device for “dangerous” viewpoints.

The idea of Shakespeare as a crypto-Catholic (perhaps most famously proposed by GK Chesterton in *The Thing: Why I Am a Catholic* in 1929) is an idea that comes in and out of fashion, yet in light of the explosion of “revisionist” history concerning Reformation England in recent years, reconsidering the notion becomes not only more interesting but increasingly well-founded. Those committed to reading with a universalist extremism on the one hand or with a post-Derridean erasure of author on the other, may find such notions disturbing, but it does not reduce or preclude multiple possible readings; no, implying that there are textual interiors to Shakespeare’s work is simply to say that he definitively conceived of his texts as having interiors deftly and purposely engineered, and to acknowledge that all texts have interiors that are sub-cognitively nascent. In the case of Shakespeare, as we have seen so far, interiors were consciously and sub-cognitively linked to the life-or-death struggle for soul control all pervasive during the age. Though critics have railed against what they see as a 1-to1 mapping of recusant

codes onto Shakespeare's work because it closes down to very narrow, positivist readings of the text, that is to mistake the matter. These texts remain multivalent and they resist such direct mappings precisely because they would be easy to decipher and would not enable the author to hide within; this is exactly what I propose Shakespeare does. This demonstrates and explains Shakespeare's versatility and a peculiar, genius for operating within polysemy—it was generated out of a necessary survival mechanism for an artist living under an authoritarian regime. Thus, he learned to craft codes within codes and meanings within meanings that rested upon credible deniability, and therefore included a variety of contradictory meanings. Such a maneuver was a means of textual disguise and fashioned an authorial “priest-hole” to allow for ranging expression and relative safety at the same time. It was an exercise I think he enjoyed immensely because his euphoria in punning and polyvalent meaning translates through the work; who has not noted his playfulness in words to the point of excess? There is a feeling of giddy release within the catacombs he constructs from polysemic webs. Thus, encoding was an Elizabethan preoccupation and pastime *and* a Catholic survival scheme. Catholics seized upon a dominant cultural mode and torqued it toward their own uses—but the prevalence of these codes also provided the necessary “cover” in a pleasing ambiguity.

Inasmuch, this “credible deniability” leaves very little left that is concrete but much that is delightfully compelling, in light of the growing body of evidence, well-covered in previous chapters, that Shakespeare was living in a Catholic majority rather than a Protestant one. The

most recent, thoroughgoing argument for Shakespeare's crypto-Catholic tendencies (and the most highly criticized) has come from Asquith's *Shadowplay*. Asquith first began to consider the double speak of Shakespeare's plays while living with her British ambassador husband in 1980s Soviet Union. With KGB "watchers" present during a night of Chekhov, she detected a crafty and fairly palpable doublespeak going on between audience and players, one that only existed within the confines of such state-scrutinized performances (xii).

Language, as philologists have often noted, is a form of archive. Exploring evolving etymologies as JRR Tolkien did in creating a mythical history of the Earth to replace a lost one, unlocks hidden meanings and lost knowledge. Asquith, without aid of cognitive psychology, accurately documents the way in which language in England at this point in history became heavily laden with double and even triple meanings as the political drama gave way to the "drama of the soul" within the believing English Catholic. Shakespeare's language in particular is steeped in the "mystical and theological inheritance threatened by the state religion" (66). Thus, has language become both expression and receptacle of a faith that, in being suppressed, may be forever lost. Adducing Robert Person's writing in particular, she proposes that England was caught within a fraught family romance with a temporal mother (Elizabeth) and a spiritual father (God as manifested in the Old Faith) (49). A flawed and angst-ridden Mother set against an idealized, disembodied Father has obvious implications for a reading of *Hamlet*.

Clare Asquith figures strongly in this chapter for her singular work in raising ambiguous metaphor to the level of code (a discussion of the difference between simple metaphor and code will follow). I do not adduce her work out of complete acceptance of the entire allegorical map she charts within Shakespeare's corpus—there are points at which Asquith sails to the outer-reaches of conjecture in order to emerge with a consistent code; a necessary—if easy to dismantle—tactic in overcoming the problem of lost histories. Rather, it is Asquith's central idea that attaches itself to the spine of this thesis: the social conditions of Elizabethan England resulted in heating the container cognitive schema, and this saturated the culture. In the case of cryptography and the social-religious doublings of Elizabethan life, Shakespeare, it will be shown, was dealing in tropes that provided a textual container; by that, I mean a text with imagined interiors in creation and reception, an interior with hidden meanings roomy enough for both spectators and the writer to hide their respective identities within it.

Several critics are uncomfortable with the core assertion of a Catholic subtext in the writing and thus seek to marginalize Asquith. There is also the crisis of audience; is she writing for literary critics or historians? Is she writing for an academic or a more general audience? According to Asquith herself, she attempted to write for a more general audience than is typically included in academic work—therefore she is subject to vague expressions such as, “research has shown” and “scholars agree,” etc. It is an attempt to write about her thesis without creating an overburdened text for a more general audience. However, it does leave her open to

critical assaults from the academic establishment, some of which I will take up here in the introduction to this chapter.

A common point of resistance to Asquith's work is that it leads to very narrowly conceived, positivist readings of the plays that do not gibe with the history of criticism that has amassed for them. However, this elides that fact that Asquith freely acknowledges that these texts stand alone as works of art, even outside of their historical context:

Critics who were hostile to *Shadowplay* mistakenly supposed a conflict between Asquith's allegorical reading of Shakespeare's work and the traditional and literal reading. But it is not a matter of choosing between two alternatives. The allegorical reading is not offered as the 'true meaning of Shakespeare's plays'. If we ask what discipline it comes under, it is history as much as it is literary criticism (Waterfield 5).

Another common criticism is that her personal commitment to Catholicism blinds her and makes her ill-suited to examine Shakespeare objectively:

Shadowplay is dominated by its author's clearly passionate personal commitment to the Catholic faith. She is enterprising and imaginative, and one would like to see her bring these qualities and the assiduity of much of her historical research to some future and more appropriate study of the poet and martyr Robert Southwell, or perhaps Sir Thomas More. The Shakespeare book, however, simply will not do (Barton).

What Barton implies is that, as a Catholic, Asquith is ill-equipped to study anyone but clearly Catholic authors, which is a troubling form of criticism, to say the least. Barton, in the above, like several other critics, points to obvious inconsistencies in her theories—but Asquith addresses this pointedly in her own book:

...he set himself an almost impossible task. His plays would be seamlessly organic: every detail of the plot material, from first to last, would serve a dual purpose. Seen from the right angle, they would act in the same way as a pun—perfectly clear, yet perfectly deniable (31).

Pat, complex allegories that announce themselves, as in Sidney or Spenser, destroy the carefully crafted self-erasure and undoing planted in the texts, planted precisely *because of* the social conditions of Shakespeare's moment. Asquith's argument supposes that for every allegorical element clearly flagged, there is also an ambiguity and an inconsistency to enclose the identity of the playwright and further conceal his encrypted message. To understate the matter, both the work and the responses to it are troublesome. On the one hand, the criticism demands that the code clearly announce itself, with no inconsistencies or ambiguities, when the historic facts show that the “codemaker” could not. Asquith's response to that criticism, however, uses both the evidence and the counter-evidence in support of what becomes a neatly-enclosed, self-proving, tautology.

Leaving this problem aside for a moment, we turn to David Wormersley, who has provided the most scathing critique of Asquith's work. He rests his argument upon this:

Some Elizabethan writers were suspected of harbouring Catholic sympathies (such as, for instance, John Stow), but Shakespeare is not one of them. Many Elizabethan writers fell foul of the authorities because of the heterodoxy of their work, but again Shakespeare is not one of them. Of course, nothing is more suspicious, and therefore more conclusive, than the complete absence of evidence.

Wormersley's polemic against Asquith is an odd one—he seems to accept the post-Whig historiography upon which Asquith builds her work, lavishing praise upon Haigh and Duffy in particular as “subtle” historians. But a thorough understanding of the evidence Haigh and Duffy present includes the knowledge that we are dealing with a history of erasure, and that evidence is only partial at best. The “complete lack of evidence” would be the case, of course, if Shakespeare had escaped punishment from the law. Wormersley asserts the very issue in his own critique--“many Elizabethan writers fell foul of the authorities” which poses the question: what might an artist writing under such conditions do if his personal history and perhaps his personal beliefs, might lead to punishment by law? How might such an artist handle imagery and metaphors that are rife, in a culture that is trained to look at art as a puzzle to be decoded? If, as Greenblatt, Haigh, Duffy, Wilson, Milward, and McCullough (among others) have all attested, Elizabethans were forced to live double lives as private Catholics and public adherents

to the state religion, how would such doublings manifest as in the reception of popular art? Even Wormersley concedes: “It is certainly the case that much Elizabethan literature delights in esoteric or hidden meaning.” If this is so, what might an author of that culture do with loaded metaphors and imagery? And how might he use those devices to escape punishment or discovery?

Using invective and *ad feminem* attack, Wormersley further asserts that she is a careless and “banal” scholar. He takes her to task for asserting that Shakespeare was writing for “a brotherhood of dissident writers,” and for her undocumented generalizations, such as:

Elizabeth's personal fondness for poetry, drama and music was largely responsible for the flowering of all three art forms in England towards the end of the sixteenth century (qtd in Wormersley 26).

He points to the lack of evidence for such a thing. Perhaps Asquith, though writing for a general audience, should have been more scrupulous in documenting her assertions. However, in her defense, these statements, to anyone cognizant of the time period, are hardly controversial. Wormersley implies only a vague contention with post-Whig history, which supposes that there was a Catholic majority in England during the Henrican revolution and Elizabeth's ascension and that the populace had a significant faction of resisting Catholics up to and including the Jacobean era. As if he intuits he cannot fully support this contention, he slips into high praise of the post-Whig historians she uses, and asserts that she serves them poorly. So, it is unclear whether he

finds post-Whig interpretation insupportable or supportable. But I suppose his extreme skepticism of “revisionist history,” which one might also call *restorative* history, extends to the idea that recusant culture might cultivate a sensibility in writing to express and preserve their resistant position. That a brotherhood of dissident writers existed in England, one might find corroborated in the work of Eamon Duffy, Christopher Haigh, Diarmaid MacCulloch, Robin Wells, and Allison Shell, to name but a few. Might, then, a playwright have been writing in secret allegiance? It seems that it is at least a tenable hypothesis.

Asquith extends her argument in order to detect what she sees as the established codes that Shakespeare used, not only to denote his personal beliefs but to archive what occurred under the Tudors in England. Grounded in a history of dissident writing and a respectable body of post-Whig scholarship, Asquith's work concurs with Stephen Greenblatt, who, as a mainstream Shakespeare historian, accepts the Catholic context of Shakespeare's England and decidedly accepts that Shakespeare's family was Catholic, though he speculates that Will eventually became a secular humanist. Two conclusions—Greenblatt's and Asquith's—divergent but defensible, each with some degree of scholarly speculation, emanate from one agreed-upon historical context: the suppressed Catholic culture haunted England as a double to its top-down enforcement of English Protestant culture, and Shakespeare arose from this suppressed Catholic culture. Describing the “vicious, murky world of Tudor religious conflict” Greenblatt writes:

Stratford had nominally become Protestant, like the rest of the kingdom, when in 1533 Henry VIII—bent on getting a divorce and on seizing the enormous wealth of the monasteries—had himself declared 'Supreme Head of the Church in England.' Officially, England had decisively broken away from Rome. But in matters of religious belief, families in early-sixteenth-century England were characteristically fractured, and many individuals were similarly fractured inwardly (*Will* 89).

Greenblatt, like Asquith, in using the term “fractured,” to assert the same doubleness that Haigh, Duffy, and Ackroyd have all noted, and also, writing for a general audience, fails to footnote any of his assertions. For this has, slowly but surely, become the dominant and accepted understanding of English history. It has been slow to penetrate literary studies, and the mainstream of Shakespeare scholarship still has a large collection of scholars who consider post-Whig history “revisionist.” However, Greenblatt's easy acceptance of the post-Whig thesis in his popular biography of Shakespeare simply marks that the field is finally reaching critical mass in literary studies as well.

This chapter uses the code provided by Asquith's survey of dissident writing and recusant literature to examine these tropes in *Hamlet*—I will apply some of these codes to the text in order to test it and examine how he works them into the fabric of *Hamlet*, not to demonstrate that all the aspects of Asquith's code are correct; I believe that was and is Asquith's job and will let the reader decide for him or herself whether she does the job well. I apply the codes generally,

codes which I accept as dominant tropes within recusant culture, and will also provide fortifying evidence for this thesis, which poses the question: how did the cognitive schema of containers, insides and outsides influence *Hamlet*, Shakespeare, and his audiences? This chapter is looking specifically at the metaphor of a textual interior, the idea of a text with hidden meanings that can be contained or released at various moments, and at an author who, understandably, hides within those textual interiors, and similarly allows his own beliefs and prejudices to pop in and out. He slyly alludes to dominant codes, and thus creates the illusion of textual depth by hinting and tempting the audience with hidden meanings. Asquith's codes provide convenient examples of this, from extant recusant codes, documented in surrounding historic support. Again—she is singular in raising Shakespeare's art from simple metaphor to the level of code. Other writers, particularly Peter Milward, have done this work with images and metaphors. But the insistence on at least the possibility of code, provides stronger support for the thesis of this chapter.

“Code” colluded with the apparatus of resistance and sedition in England. In this way, I will show that Shakespeare's Catholic context enmeshes with a veritable obsession with secrets, hiding, disguises, appearances and disappearances in the text, as is explored in the preceding chapters.²⁴

²⁴ Another note on the resistance to Asquith—throughout, I have relied both on Asquith and Richard Wilson; though, Richard Wilson figures only briefly in this chapter, the two sources are concordant on the same points as Asquith and Greenblatt: Shakespeare's cultural and familial context were undeniably Catholic. Like Greenblatt, Wilson stops short of asserting a solid allegiance to Catholicism, and in terms of Catholic codes, several critics have pitted Wilson against Asquith because they come to radically different readings on certain “Catholic” elements of the play. Because this chapter, and this dissertation as a whole, doesn't set out to prove all of Asquith's assertions, just the general tenor of them, and the plausibility of some of her more seemingly radical claims, it also presumes no contradiction between Asquith and Wilson.

This chapter will gloss a brief history of cryptography in Western culture, provide examples of the use of cryptography as sport and sedition in Elizabethan England, and examine the particular use of specific codes in Catholic recusancy and the Counter-Reformation. Applying this discussion to a textual analysis of *Hamlet*, the chapter will address the following questions: In light of Asquith's work, how precisely do Shakespeare's texts function as objects with textual interiors? Are there any oblique or explicit references to "secrets" contained within the text? What "double meanings" are most compelling in Shakespeare's texts?

4.1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF CRYPTOGRAPHY

The history of secret writing goes back to the beginning of writing itself. There is historic evidence for secret writing in Mesopotamia, and the Egyptians were ever-fond of encoded writing in cuneiform as both written text and visual art, the deciphering of which seems to have been conceived of as an entertainment. Julius Caesar, another subject Shakespeare wrote about, was a documented codemaker; Suetonius Tranquillus wrote of Caesar, that anything confidential he wrote in cipher (Pincock 13). Medieval higher-learning was saturated with the idea of codes as medieval monks studied Biblical and Hebrew ciphers (Friedman 221). It was well-known amongst those who read medieval texts that religious writing and secret writing had a shared

history. In addition to the medieval four-fold mode of Biblical exegesis, monks were fond of ciphers for study and amusement and they were particularly interested in the Atbash cipher, the traditional Hebrew substitution cryptography found in the Old Testament, and the interest of *gematria*, a method of Torah analysis that “assigns number values to letters, adds them up, and interprets the results” (Pincock 29). This interest in cryptography and divine scripture bled through to the Renaissance as part of their medieval and classical fascinations: “the Renaissance knew from its study of such classic texts as Suetonius that the ancient world had used ciphers for political purposes” (Kahn 106).

Renaissance scholars were also familiar with the use of code during times of upheaval in the Church. In particular, code and cipher were widespread during the Great Schism of the Roman Catholic Church. An English Renaissance scholar, artist, and citizen would have a very contemporary example of cryptography on the brain—that is, the case of Mary, Queen of Scots. During her imprisonment Mary used a method called “frequency analysis”²⁵ to communicate with her allies. Anthony Babington, one of Mary's faithful subjects, secured the talents of a former seminarian named Gilbert Gifford. Gifford, however, was a double agent, working for the father of modern espionage, Sir Francis Walsingham. Under Walsingham's command, Gifford delivered Mary's encrypted communications with Babington into the hands of England's

²⁵ Frequency analysis uses the frequency of letters in written language to crack codes.

genius codebreaker Thomas Phelippes. Phelippes cracked the codes used by Babington and Mary, and it was this code-breaking feat that led to Mary's condemnation. For the Elizabethans, code—and code-breaking—was as a reminder of the trap into which Mary Queen of Scots had fallen. Due to its association with both medieval monasteries and the fall of the Catholic figurehead, code had an indexically and inescapably “Papist” character to it. That another form of code floating through Europe, was developed by Alberti, and known as “Papal encryption,” only added to that flavor.

Renaissance artists and architects were known to encode their works, not simply as a metaphoric understanding of art-making but quite literally, as in the example of the Rosslyn chapel in Edinburgh, whose hidden codes still intrigue amateur and professional historians.²⁶ Thus, cryptography for the Elizabethans was a mode of cultural warfare, a pastime, and a predominant metaphor. The Renaissance worldview envisioned nature as a code that the Renaissance man (with both his art and his blooming scientific mind) could crack. Blaise de Vigenere wrote in the mid-sixteenth century:

All nature is merely a cipher and a secret writing. The great name and essence of God and His wonders -- the very deeds, projects, words, actions, and demeanor of mankind -- what are they, for the most part, but a cipher? (qtd in Kahn 146).

²⁶ See Roderick Martine in the bibliography.

Shakespeare was not alone in creating a textual container to allow for significantly resistant discourse within Protestant England; to be clear, codes provided a secret-chamber in which such discourses could hide. What Asquith proposes is a way of reading a text that is narrowed by her own sensitivities to the material; many of her readings may be countered point by point. However, the larger issue of whether or not the writer and his audience were ready to receive plays as a coded discourse for interpreting current socio-political circumstances remains compelling and, for this study, at least, highly relevant. Regardless of the consistency of individual points of interpretation, whether or not the playwright considered himself to be writing in code, and whether or not he had pointed ways in dealing with certain widely accepted tropes of such discourse, remain viable questions. Because as post-Whig history has demonstrated over and over, when the English top-down Reformation was enacted (decidedly different in flavor from the populist Reformation in Germany), it created a bifurcated religious culture in England; it necessarily also created a secret, dissident Catholic culture. It is reasonable that the rebellious factions would turn to codes in order to express themselves, resist, and hide. Cyndia Susan Clegg, via Annabel Patterson, in *Censorship and Interpretation* has recorded that these codes were not only existent but that they were in wide use and were in a sense implicitly and covertly “authorized.” Clegg uses Patterson's concept of “linguistic indeterminacy” which explains the way in which dissidents’ discourse provided cover for themselves in order to hide:

Renaissance literary studies has been engaged of late in a lively reappraisal of interrelationships of literature, politics, and culture in early modern England. At the same time that this enterprise has embraced the new by grounding its rereading of early modern texts in post modern theory, it has been remarkably remiss in failing to reconsider those 'old' assumptions that shaped political and historical studies—particularly with regard to print studies. (xi).

Clegg goes on to write that Annabel Patterson's book *Censorship and Interpretation* proposes that Elizabethan texts manifested “a *code* of discourse accepted by both authors and the state that allowed religio-political discourse *to be contained* by linguistic indeterminacy” (ibid). I would add to Patterson's argument that this indeterminacy contained competing discourses and it may remind us of our discussion of liminality in the previous chapter. If we think of the discourse in England as controlled from the top-down, and we imagine that the regime sought to contain contested discourses by sanctioning them, there would emerge indeterminate spaces within such discourses that exist on the limns of both Protestant and Catholic categories. This coincides with what Richard Wilson and Stephen Greenblatt have asserted about the Shakespeare family's religious identity—the Shakespeares, living in what Greenblatt has called “The Great Fear” were neither Catholic nor Protestant; rather, they were forced to be both as a means of survival. That others go a step beyond and assert that William Shakespeare—and his family—were not “betwixt and between,” but that one identity was a cover for the other, is simply a

matter of degree, and is frankly, for our purposes, irrelevant. The idea is that the actions of the state, once breaking a national allegiance to the Catholic Church in Rome, necessitated bounded discursive spaces that provided safety and cover.

It may seem that the idea of “indeterminacy” is contra-indicative of the idea of a “code”—but I assert that it is not; I assert that indeterminacy is a *quality* of these codes, and that must have been to some degree indeterminate in order to even exist. I further assert that the Elizabethan regime was not unaware of these codes, which they sought to appropriate and thus sanction. This is corroborated by the infamous statement of Elizabeth I upon the performance of Richard II: “I am Richard II, know ye not that?” (qtd in Campbell 191). This enabled Shakespeare to be even more daring in his expression of them, confirming what Anabel Patterson implies: the appropriation of Catholic codes by Elizabeth’s crown was a subtle way of sanctioning their use with impunity.

So the ultimate idea that Asquith advances, aside from her particular, specific readings of certain figures—for example, she is convinced that Hamlet represents Phillip Sidney, and I am not so convinced—is that code is the means and mode, not only of resistance, but of Catholicism *and* of Renaissance poesy in general. That Protestant ideas were sanctioned by the state and did not need to be so elaborately encoded almost goes without saying; so, this chapter will explore cryptography in general, the idea of codes in art and literature, and a specifically recusant code

used by a league of dissident writers active in England and writing in exile. The ultimate thesis is this: Shakespeare at least dabbled in codes that he was highly aware of and made them ultimately ambiguous and indeterminate as a means of survival. In this way, he created texts with interiors that allude to deep hidden meanings, and that provided an interior within which his final identity and position could be hidden but still, perhaps, slyly, expressed.

As noted in the introduction, if the Renaissance had a particular fascination with codes, Renaissance Englishmen were exemplars of this fascination. Clare Asquith describes late 16th century England as “addicted to hidden meanings,” writing further:

Codes, devices, and punning allusions were everywhere—in street songs and ballads, conversation, poems, plays, woodcuts, portraits, jewelry, costumes. Like the famed Rosslyn chapel described above, architects in England were also interested in building meanings and codes into their structures, like Sir Thomas Tresham who built a triangular lodge as a symbol of the Mass and the Holy Trinity (20).

Queen Elizabeth delighted in word play and puzzle cracking, particularly when contained in poesy and saw it as the mark of fine art; she enjoyed it even more particularly when it was flattering to her, as in the case of Sir Walter Raleigh, who represented Queen Elizabeth in his poems as Cynthia, the moon goddess, and himself as the Ocean (Trevelyan 93). And then there was the matter of Sir Phillip Sidney, the most admired poet of the age. In *A Defence of Poetry*

(1595), Sidney wrote that double language was the essence and art of poetry; he, in fact, defined it as “wanton shows of better hidden matters” (qtd Asquith 21). Thus, a generation of poetry enthusiasts began to envision themselves as decoders and poets as encoders. The Catholic humanist ideal of *poesis* was to encode an image of the divine, and gave allegory a heightened value in this scheme of art making. This idea was under attack in Protestantism, which insisted on a return to direct *sola scriptura*, and decried all forms of literary and visual image making as pagan idolatry (Elkins 87). Consequently, hidden codes in literature were under government scrutiny in the Tudor era, as hidden codes became synonymous with Catholicism and subversion not only literally in action, but figuratively in theology; as Patterson implies, however, and a later quote will show, Elizabeth was a bit more tolerant and perhaps secretly permissive of the use of these codes as a release-valve in her England. However, undeniably, code was the preferred method of monarchical subversion:

Little by little a picture emerges of a self-consciously artful community of intellectual writers engaged in an exhilarating and often risky cat and mouse game with the state authorities. Robert Chester describes his fellow poets, Shakespeare among them, as men who possessed 'an invention freer than time'. [...]Disaffected writers who wanted to reach a wider audience turned to a medium that was at once more accessible and more hazardous—the popular theatre (Asquith 23).

It serves this conversation to make a distinction between metaphor and a code. A metaphor is an analogy—it is a projection of the features of an article of one domain onto another. It is *like* a code but it is not, itself, a code. A code, however, is a “structural system in which signs reveal a specific paradigmatic, syntagmatic, and analogical architecture.” A code, then, “allows an individual to construct appropriate messages with the resources of that code” (Danesi and Perron 93). Code is closer to semiotic theory, whereas metaphor is grounded in the biological realism of cognitive science. Codes fit de Saussure's definition of arbitrariness—metaphors, grounded in spatio-temporal experience, do not. So to link metaphoric language to code, is to create a bridge between Shakespeare and his culture, and to witness how his dramatic language was influenced and influencing. To suggest, as Asquith does, that there was a dissident culture that used codes, and that Shakespeare was aware of and used those codes, is to suggest that Shakespeare consciously entered into a lexicon of religious metaphors in order to communicate about current cultural and social issues and, perhaps, alter them through protest and survival. What I suggest is that Asquith's argument can never be strong enough to provide evidence to convince all people that it was absolutely so; furthermore, searching for a deductive argument may cause one to miss the prominent inductive one.

On cryptography in general, Shakespeare was largely silent, but he does talk about interception, as cryptology expert David Kahn notes in his study of the history of cryptography. In a gesture likely stirring an uncanny sense of familiarity for Elizabethan audiences,

Shakespeare has Henry V intercept letters and catch the traitors in their midst with these intercepted messages. As Kahn also notes, there is not historical evidence of messages and interception in Holinshed and Hall, so this action was drawn from the dramatist's imagination (781). While the presence of intercepted messages is not a direct reference to cryptography per se, again we must recall the recent history of England; the populace would likely all remember, discuss, and have absorbed the fact that Mary Queen of Scots had been executed based on intercepted messages that were written in code. We also must remember the familiarity all grammar school English boys would have with Julius Caesar's penchant for encoding, through studying the *Gallic Wars* Certainly the interception of encoded messages was a prominent marker of political and social jeopardy.

Of relevance here, is an odd, earnest preface written by the editors of the First Folio (1623) in which Heminge and Condell write:

And there we hope, to your divers capacities, you will finde enough, both to draw, and hold you: for his wit can no more lie hid, then it could be lost. Reade him, therefore; and againe, and againe : And if then you doe not like him, surely you are in some manifest danger, not to understand him. And so we leave you to other of his Friends, whom if you need, can bee your guides : if you neede them not, you can leade your selves, and others. And such Readers we wish him.

Here we are directed toward the anxiety implicit to the container image schema—could something be so thoroughly hid as to resist revelation and thus, disappear? It is interesting to note, as Asquith did, that the reader is urged to read him again and again, and to seek guides for understanding. Heminge and Condell were dealing with a new culture of print technology which seeks to justify itself in validating reading and re-reading plays whose performed life is ephemeral. Their argument can be read as simply a defense of printing a Folio. But, still, one wonders about the intensity in such a plea, and why the plays were deemed worthy of finding print and being read and re-read, in the first place, if not to preserve something worth being archived, imbued with a sense of urgency. As in all of these examples, the evidence begins to take stronger form when viewed contextually in a web of such curious allusions. Asquith compares this with the plea for close attention in Sonnet 23 where Shakespeare seems to use the language of courtly love to double with Catholic ceremony, which he indicates with “the perfect ceremony of love's rite;” corroborating the theory of courtly love as a Catholic trope as expressed in multiple theories, notably by Dennis de Rougemont in *Love in the Western World*.²⁷ Here also, Shakespeare begs the reader to read and to read closely: “O learn to read what silent love hath writ.” Not only is there a call to pay close attention but the reference suggests another point

²⁷ Asquith's claim that courtly love doubles with Catholic ceremony is reinforced by De Rougemont in *Love in the Western World*, counters claims that courtly love was a humanist rebellion against Catholicism, and demonstrates the way in which Catholic mystics of the 16th century readily used the rhetoric of courtly love, naming in particular St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross. Rather than a rupture with orthodox tradition, the language of courtly love has a hermeneutics of continuity with the Old and New Testaments, particularly the Song of Songs, which looks at the divine from a secular point of view, and makes erotic love an analogy for the love of the Creator for the created and vice versa (161-165).

in Tudor history: the Carthusian order of monks were known to live the “way of silent love” and were one of the many religious houses under attack during the reign of Henry VIII. The first Catholic martyr under Henry VIII was John Houghton of the Carthusian order (Cockburn, King, and McDonnell). Adding to her argument for hidden messages, Asquith calls attention to Shakespeare's punning and suggests a pun on the last published Catholic in England, Sir Thomas More:

His 'books', says Shakespeare, 'plead for love and look for recompense/More than that love which more hath more expressed” But a pun makes sense of the phrase: “More than that love which More hath expressed”. The reference is to Henry VIII's martyred chancellor, Thomas More, whose writings were not proscribed but who wrote the last openly Catholic works before the Reformation, pleading the cause of a faith for which Shakespeare pleads with even more intensity (29).

As in the case of Heminge and Condell's preface, any single one of Asquith readings stands vulnerable to attack, but the critical mass and layering of the references gives one pause. In this case, Asquith further notes that both the preface and the sonnet make much of a “form of secret writing that requires effort in order to be understood. Both express the fear that the technique may prove almost too successful” (30). She describes the craft of Shakespeare's encoded history of England as one that always contained double meaning yet simultaneously

concealed itself in that credible deniability referenced in the introduction: “Seen from the right angle, they would act in the same way as a pun---perfectly clear, yet perfectly deniable.” In this way, writes Asquith, “his plots and characters, however, complex, would have equally complex shadow identities” (31). There is, according to Asquith, a “master key” to his encryption. He uses the terms “high” and “fair” to indicate Catholicism, and “low” and “dark” standing in for Protestantism. This was a simple key well-known to the class of recusant, dissident, and exiled Catholic writers in England at the time.²⁸ Protestant plays, sermons, and literature, used the image of the fair, scarlet woman to represent the Roman Catholic faith, in contrast to the reformers had a tendency to wear all black. The Book of Common Prayer was dark and dour with no gilt lettering or red printing. Asquith also notes:

A Protestant poem published in 1573 entitled 'A sonnet written in praise of the brown beauty' praises a dark woman in clearly sectarian terms—she is contrasted with a fair, 'pampered' beauty whose 'glittering' clothes and 'too much red' complexion 'in thralldom binds the foolish gazing eyes'--'thralldom' a common thrust at the authoritarian Catholic Church and 'gazing' a hit at credulous Mass-goers (32).

²⁸ The Elizabethan regime went through periods of amnesty in which dissent could be openly expressed, and this key was in use and further, sanctioned, Protestant artists also used these markers, which gives them their double character. This key can be found in Spenser's “Shepherd's Calendar,” Dryden's “The Hind and the Panther. Further on in time, clear usage of this same key can be found in Tennyson.

4.2 CRYPTO-CATHOLIC KEY

4.2.1 *High/Low Dark Fair*

If there is a code—particularly a code of *indeterminate* signifiers, whose indeterminacy is enhanced by their ability to be co-opted by other codes—a key to that code is essential; Asquith proposes that Shakespeare used high/low, fair/dark markers, as “a key compass-bearing from which alert readers and spectators can work out the rest of the shadowed plot.” Does this key appear in *Hamlet*? Asquith writes:

The most condensed version of the high-low, dark-fair image comes in *Hamlet*, when the furious prince forces his mother to compare the portraits of her first and second Husband. Old Hamlet is like the sun god, or 'like the herald Mercury/New lighted on a heaven-kissing hill' (3.4.58-59) and he demands 'Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,/And batten on this moor?' (3.4.66-67)--'moor' a pun on the dark looks of Claudius and low-lying land, the opposite to the fair mountain (34).

Thus, in *Hamlet* the results of this key are clear—Hamlet's Ghost is a Catholic Ghost. It is a distinction with which one could hardly disagree, given that he emerges from Purgatory, is disturbed and ill at rest because he was refused the sacraments, and actually is a dead spirit communing with the living, all three strongly figured Catholic tropes important to the aggrieved

Catholic culture. Claudius and Gertrude are the corrupt Protestant state. Are there further examples of “fair” in the text outside the one's Asquith discovers? Examination of the text reveals that Horatio also refers to Old Hamlet as “fair” when he first encounters his ghost in Act 1 Scene 1: “What art thou that usurp’st this time of night/Together with that fair and warlike form/In which the majesty of buried Denmark/ Did sometimes march?”(1.144-47). I suggest that further evidence of the key that Asquith proposes is that its use is often marked. “Fair and warlike” are not descriptors that go together and it seems to make the descriptors more emphatic.

A skeptic might find it easy to dismiss the key—except that in order to do so one must focus on single isolated details. For it is the accumulation of references and evidence that gives Asquith's argument the most weight. In particular, Asquith has been attacked for suggesting that “fair” is used consistently in *Hamlet*. Anne Barton pointed to the “sable-silvered beard,” the mixed dark and light facial hair on the Ghost as described by Horatio, as evidence that she is off the mark. Asquith doesn't provide her best defense of this, in my opinion, when she answers her; in a public response to Barton's unfavorable review in the *The New York Review of Books*, Asquith asserts that the interweaving of light and dark in the beard was meant to represent a time of Protestant and Catholic co-existence. This is an informal response so one gives breadth, but it does appear to give credence to the old adage: “torture the words long enough and they'll confess to anything.”

While Asquith's explanation is a possibility, perhaps, I think the better defense is the more obvious one. In the sense of Ockham's razor—all things being equal, the simplest explanation tends to be the one most likely to be true. This striking example of dark and light mixing together, as well as the later description of the King as the “old mole,” the odd mixture of “fair and warlike,” highlights that when he is repeatedly called “fair” in the text, we aren't discussing his looks. One might even suggest that it is Shakespeare, not Asquith, who is truly inconsistent in his description of Old Hamlet, if he repeatedly has a character described as fair, who then also is described as having a beard that is “sable”. So we have two possibilities—either he is randomly inconsistent or he is talking about something other than looks. Could he be, instead, describing an essential quality or character? Though Asquith argues that hair color was, indeed, important in this code, and perhaps, in the later plays it was, it seems that in *Hamlet* in particular, that the use of “fair” is distinctly used to describe something other than a character's physical appearance, which, to my mind, indicates a hidden depth of potential meaning. By contrasting his dominant descriptors with notes of his actual appearance, it flags the descriptors as having a more than literal meaning.

Furthermore, one of the central mysteries of the play is the ambiguity of the Ghost's nature—though the Ghost will eventually emerge as a clear Catholic Ghost, it is at first compellingly ambiguous, and intentionally so. A Protestant interpretation would demand that the Ghost be demon. For Protestant theology asserted a direct contradiction of Purgatory and of

a communion between living and dead—if the Ghost is truly who he says he is, he would be evidential proof of Catholic theology. We know how that story unfolds. Claudius confesses in what he thinks is a private moment that he is guilty; it would seem that the Ghost comes speaking truth. That Shakespeare mixes references to dark and fair in the early parts of the play adds to the mystery of the Ghost's true nature, which would be a point of fixed interest for the audience, who were still struggling to appropriate the shift in theology enacted in the Reformation; and still struggling to determine: Who was right? The Catholic priests or the Protestant ministers? To present the Ghost as having a marbled beard with a mixture of black and white, was simply to enhance the hermeneutic code at the heart of the Ghost's appearance: Be he ghost or be he demon?

The question of the Ghost as demon or Ghost as actual Ghost would be a highly charged and tension-filled question. It cannot be stated too strongly: whether one was Protestant or Catholic, whether one was in agreement or resistant to either, the theological shifts were profound; as one example, the shift away from Catholic theology toward Protestant theology altered the way the Elizabethan confronted death, mourned their dead, and considered the possibility of communion between the living and the dead. Recalling that Shakespeare was dealing with the recent deaths of his own father and his son, the question has a double-charge.

That these questions are present in *Hamlet* is undeniable—what is slightly less undeniable is what position on it Shakespeare was taking. One solution for the historian is to not take a position on it at all. Stephen Greenblatt has treated the subject of death and spirits in Elizabethan England at length in what he calls “the 'poetics' of Purgatory and the struggle over its existence in England” and it is a subject we will explore more fully a little later on in this chapter (*Hamlet* Greenblatt 4). Greenblatt is not interested in labeling the Ghost either Catholic or Protestant—it is a dispute that he distances himself from critically, as he concerns himself with the imaginative elements of the work. In *Hamlet in Purgatory*, Greenblatt takes a savvy critical distance, whereas Asquith is less careful but, consequently, more forceful. In his later popular biography, Greenblatt will go on to say that Shakespeare casts the mantle of his early Catholicism aside in favor of secular humanism. What I assert is Asquith's general proposition that there is a systematicity to the allusions, images, and semantic webs that Shakespeare chooses, and that is what makes the term code apt; whether isolated, individual details bear it out is less important. What makes Greenblatt's arguments sensitive and conscientious, however, is that he can't help but note the very indeterminacy that I argue is a distinct *quality* of the codes that Asquith is trying to define. They have an indeterminate quality out of necessity; but that indeterminacy diffuses *in moments*, particularly when there is a key. This is exactly how Shakespeare is successfully able to create the illusion of a text with depth and a text that disguises the playwright and the dissident discourses in which the audience wishes to participate.

Where else does the word fair appear? Shakespeare's choice of settings, Denmark actively, and Norway and Wittenberg indirectly through reference, are choices that point directly to aspects of the Reformation of which most in the audience would be cognizant; Wittenberg's obvious connections to Luther hardly need go noted; it would be like referring to Afghanistan in a play today, without wanting to associate what was being enacted with the conflict in the Middle East. Norway and Denmark had similar if slightly less glaring associations; in Act 2, Scene 2, Voltimand, the ambassador from Norway, comes with “most fair return of greetings and desires.” What could “fair greetings” from Norway mean? In the Lutheran Reformation, Denmark and Norway were early converts to the Lutheran faith; there, as in England, it was a top-down move, instituted, enforced, and controlled by the monarchy, over a resistant populace. As in England, there was an active and popular force of resistance at work in the country (Gjerset 193). It is unclear—that is, it is indeterminate—what a decided use of fair greetings would mean in this context, though we know that there were underground Jesuits within Norway during the time period, and that messages from there were delivered throughout the Catholic counter-Reformation underground. Thus the use of “fair” in connection to a contested front of the Reformation joins with other references to “fair” in building an argument for an intentional use of the term.

Furthermore: Denmark was no less heated in terms of the schism in Europe. A play set in Denmark and making references to Norway would have “considerable topicality” “after the

execution of Queen Mary and during the negotiations for the marriage of her son” (Bullough 18). The first Protestant coronation in Scotland occurred on the 17 May 1590 when Anne of Denmark was crowned Queen of Scotland. She was married to James VI of Scotland, who required a marriage in order to preserve the Stuart line. The events leading up to this momentous coronation are worthy of note because they were very much present to the public consciousness; ten days after an odd marriage by proxy, Anne of Denmark set sail for Scotland to assume her crown. But the ship was forced to take refuge in Oslo. There was great national drama and romance around the event, as James issued a decree for public prayer and fasting for his stranded child-bride, and wrote tomes to her, notably comparing themselves to Hero and Leander. Eventually, James set out and seized her himself to bring her back home. In this event, we have an overlap of the Reformation in the figure of Anne's being the first Protestant coronation in Scotland, and the locations of Denmark and Norway included in the story.

Further, the Jesuit Fr. Abercrombie, before her marriage to James, succeeded in converting Anne of Denmark privately to Catholicism, though she had been raised a Lutheran. James VI presented his bride for the highly symbolic crowning of the first Protestant queen of Scotland—but it went amiss. She caused public scandal and eventual marital estrangement when she refused to participate in Anglican communion at her coronation. It is quite certain, then, that at least, sub-cognitively, there was some association between “fair greetings” from Norway, and the Lutheran reformation abroad. It is also certain that the very setting of Hamlet itself would

evoke memories of the stranded Protestant Queen who, though she would mark the first Protestant coronation, would refuse to take Anglican communion and continue to estrange and embarrass her husband the king with her outwardly Catholic manner and proclivities (Wilson 275).

4.2.2 Fair Virgin (Queen)

When considering the word “fair,” Ophelia immediately comes to mind.. Again, it is the repetitions of the word and the semantic web around her that is the most compelling, not any single use of the word “fair” by itself; and it is the example that gives most credence to the idea that I assert here via Patterson and Clegg—the coded tropes were made even more indeterminate through their co-opting by the Elizabethan crown. It is a “fair thought” to lie between her legs. Hamlet calls her again the “fair Ophelia” in the graveyard scene, and Laertes repeats the term “fair” again, when he describes her “fair” and “unpolluted flesh.” And when she is driven mad, she is divided from her “fair” judgment. This key opens a reading of Ophelia as an emblem of Catholic belief driven to distraction and death by the machinations of the state. Though one might argue that it is Hamlet, not the state, that is the more immediate agent of her death, it is truly Hamlet's division from her that drives her mad. Since the earliest Christian writing, the Church in the form of the faithful has been described as the bride of Christ with God as its

waiting lover. Ophelia's lover is divided from her—his true love for her is an impossibility, there is no union between the faithful lover and his faith.

It is misleading to think that these keys stand alone as evidence or to think that is what Asquith is proposing. Asquith is requiring the application of the key and then careful thought on the part of the reader. The word “fair,” for instance, in reference to Ophelia enmeshes with the latticework of religious allusions surrounding her, particularly the heavily laden equation between Ophelia and the Virgin Mother/Virgin Queen trope. As well, her death has strong, evocative resonance with the aborted Catholic funeral rites under the new Protestant prayer book.

First to consider are the Virgin/Mother Virgin Queen tropes: Shakespeare cloaks Ophelia in the language of English Catholic Marian devotion. Hamlet's letter to her is addressed: “To the celestial and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia” (2.2.109-110). These terms associated with the Virgin Mary Cult, which still persisted in underground form.



Figure 11 Sandro Botticelli, "Madonna del Magnificat" c. 1450-81 (Source: Creative Commons)

“Celestial” refers to Mary as she was depicted in the Book of Revelation and, thus, in iconography of the Blessed Mother, dating back to the 11th century and quite likely before that. She was (and is) often depicted with a celestial body back-grounding her head, and as in the above picture painted by Botticelli, as being crowned with a crown of stars. She was referred to as the “*Regina Caeli*” or “Queen of Heaven,” which was quite literally imagined as queen of the heavenly bodies. In the 1930s and 1940s, E.C. Wilson and Frances Yates, uncovered a now popular historic trope concerning Elizabeth: that there was a conscious decision to assume the

images of the Cult of Mary into a new Cult of Elizabeth, both solidifying the attack on Roman Catholic idolatry and consecrating the new ruler of Protestant England. By concealing himself within the deliberately doubled meanings of the tropes, Shakespeare could both flatter the Queen and question her appropriation of these Catholic tropes.

That the allusions would have a similarly schizophrenic reception in the audience is clear. Seeking to supplant the Blessed Mother in the hearts of the faithful with images of Elizabeth, Wilson and Yates (who wrote contemporaneously with Herbert Butterfield) detected what has now become a more common understanding of the period in post-Whig history: the populace, far from receptive to this move, was greatly disturbed. Yates and Wilson called it a “sixteenth-century idolisation [sic] of Elizabeth” that appeared to upset the popular majority as it was perceived as “sacrilegious” (295). Helen Hackett did a thorough exploration of the substitution of the Cult of Elizabeth with the Cult of Mary. What she discovered is that the Cult of Elizabeth, borrowing from the suppressed Cult of Mary, only came to light after the demise of the proposed marriage between her and Francis of Anjou (1578-1582); Hackett asserts, however, contra Yates and Wilson, that the appropriation of these images was a direct substitution. Instead, Hackett asserts that it was a deliberate use of nostalgia for these lost images in order to bolster the public around a “Virgin Queen,” who, it seemed, would not marry. Interesting as these analyses may be, the point here is that the invocation of the “celestial” Ophelia would have double resonance—what Asquith would say is a shadow—wherein appropriated images of the Virgin

would simultaneously invoke the Blessed Mother and, necessarily, the Queen and the complicated feelings one might have toward the substitution of the one for the other.

To seal this allusion, Shakespeare couples “celestial” with “the idol of my soul.” Mary was often the target of Protestant resistance to Roman Catholic idolatry, and, commonly, it was her images that were defaced and vandalized. Most of our historic knowledge of the geography and history of the time period is owed to the surveyor, John Stow, who recorded *A Survey of London*, first in 1598 and then again, in expanded form in 1603. But that the Elizabethan regime used a toothless bid at nostalgia in order to bolster a declining Queen does not sit well with either Protestant rage or Catholic horror at the still current replacement and desecration of the images of the Virgin running rampant in the cities and the countryside. As an example of Marian scandal and vandalism, here is Stow's record of one such event:

of Iune, in the night, the lowest Images round about the said crosse (being of Christ his resurrection, of the virgin *Mary*, king *Ed.* the confessor, and such like) were broken, and defaced, proclamation was made, that who so would betray the doers, should haue 40. crownes, but nothing came to light: the image of the blessed virgin, at that time robbed of her son, and her armes broken, by which she staid him on her knees: her whole body also was haled with ropes, and left likely to fall

After a series of attempts to either repair or replace the statue, which long stood defaced at the head of a very trafficked and public highway in Westcheape, eventually:

Notwithstanding the said crosse stode headless more then a yeare after: wherevpon the said counsellors in greater number, meaning not any longer to permit the continuance of such a contempt, wrote to *William Rider* then Maior, requiring him by vertue of her highnesse said former direction and commandement, [that] without any further delay to accomplish the same her Maiesties most princely care therein, respecting especially the antiquitie and continuance of that monument, an ancient ensigne of Christianitie, &c. dated the 24. of December, 1600. After this a crosse of Timber was framed, set vp, couered with lead and gilded, the body of the crosse downward clenched of dust, the scaffold caried thence. About 12. nights following, the Image of our Lady was again defaced, by plucking off her crowne, and almost her head, taking from her her naked child, & stabbing her in the breast, &c. Thus much for the crosse in west Cheape.

Thus the implicit point Asquith makes is clear; there is great room within such doublespeak for hiding, providing a perfect example of how this text emerges as something with a deep interior, in which meaning may be hid, yes, but further, in which the author may completely hide his own identity and point of view.



Figure 12 "The Ditchley Portrait," Marcus Gheeraerts, c. 1592

As a foil to Ophelia—we do well to briefly consider Gertrude. Hamlet's mother commits foul deeds and takes “the rose” from the “fair forehead” of an “innocent love,” and again

Shakespeare uses a double image, lest we mistake the use of fair as a casual use of a common adjective. The rose was a strong symbol of Catholicism and the Virgin Mary, who was known as “Rosamunde” or the Rose of the World, and also the “Mystic Rose” and the “Spotless Rose.” Again we have the Elizabethan doubling of this image, which was also thoroughly absorbed by the Elizabethan regime, where Elizabeth is seen in portraits, carrying “The Thornless Rose.” Further, Shakespeare also uses “fair” to invoke the idea of Catholic words and Catholic writing and the way in which the enemy to the Catholic “fair” can appropriate Catholic imagery. King Claudius incites Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to manipulate Hamlet in order to discover the slain corpse of Polonius by commanding them to “speak fair,” to pretend that they are speaking his language. Hamlet twice describes the dispatches sent to order his death as being writ “fair.” Again, this is all meant to be taken within the context of a matrix—I do not propose that single instances of text are evidence of a code; only that certain examples begin to link together and *suggest* a code, attempting to deliver multiple meanings through a deliberate use of them. That they came loaded and doubled within the propaganda of the Elizabethan regime, demonstrates the idea of textual interiors and textual disguises; it is also worthy of note that often these loaded terms are marked by a repetition or coupled with other similarly charged terms in parallel.

4.2.3 The Death of Ophelia

The impact of “fair Ophelia's” death and burial is crucial to the code. It is linked to Asquith's key, and graves and burial are noted “flashpoints” in recusant codes: “The loss of traditional ceremonies and the ban on Catholic burial in churchyards was a major sectarian flashpoint, explored in *Hamlet* and *Cymbeline*” (290). Katharine Goodland, in “Obsequious Laments” documents the shift in theology around death, burials, and grieving. Quoting a sermon by Matthew Parker (1587) she demonstrates the marked change in mourning practices under the shift from a Catholic to a Protestant England. Goodland quotes Parker: “it is both unseemly and wicked to use any howling or blubbering” around a grave site or for a dead person “unlesse we desire to be accounted creatures rather with beastly nature then furnished with the use of reason” as one example of the Protestant attitude toward mourning (51). Though there were varying degrees of repression surrounding traditional Catholic mourning, Goodland documents that open shows of grief were criticized as “heathen” and “Popish” (53). One immediately thinks of Hamlet's unabashed outward show of grief, his “trappings and suits of woe,” which Gertrude and Claudius directly criticize. What responses would this evoke in an audience that was undergoing a social transition when the customary shows of grief were under attack? More to the point, in the context of this contested social ritual, we are compelled to consider Laertes' and Hamlet's flamboyant show of grief around Ophelia's grave as resistant and seditious.

Even more subversive still, Laertes leaps into the grave and clutches his dead sister's corpse. When the funeral rite was re-written in 1552 the entire ceremony shifted dramatically from grief, mourning, and contemplation of the corpse, to a more “reasonable” focus on the now absent person who is in heaven with God. The body of the dead is negated in the new, Protestant ceremony; as Eamon Duffy writes: “the service is no longer a rite of intercession on behalf of the dead, but an exhortation to faith on the part of the living. Indeed, it is not too much to say that the oddest feature of the 1552 burial rite is the disappearance of the corpse from it” (*Morebath* 475). Because Shakespeare chooses a Catholic past—he is able to use the question of Ophelia's suicide as a stand-in for the state sponsored “maiming” of rites in Reformation England. Through an excessive show of grief and an almost lascivious embrace of the body, he is able to establish bold signifiers of the Catholic past still in transition toward the Protestant present. Again, it is completely cloaked in deniability. For it was a Catholic Denmark in which the play takes place, providing the perfect escape hatch, almost as convenient as the plot of Gonzago.

Here, in Ophelia's death and burial, we have a moment when the indeterminacy diffuses and an unmistakable identity pops its head to the surface. Indeed, if we think of the pointed shift away from the corpse toward the “maimed rites” of Protestant burial, and the case of Ophelia's funeral, which was preceded by a Hamlet in deep contemplation over the remains of Yorick's remains, it seems that here Shakespeare thumbs his nose at the entire Protestant establishment, before leaping into another secret-chamber of deniable culpability. Thus, Ophelia is not simply

called “fair” a number of times, she is not simply enshrouded in the double iconography of Virgin Mother/Virgin Queen, given the conditions surrounding death rituals in England at the time, her burial would have been uncanny and would have borne an inescapable emotional charge. Further:

The theme of “maimed rites” carries considerable historic resonance. The “maimed rites” observed by Hamlet are what an Elizabethan Catholic would have found familiar. It has been rightly argued that formally the scene presumes the propriety and fullness of a traditional Catholic funeral on several counts. When the priest suggests the uselessness of “charitable prayers” he is rejecting a distinctly Roman Catholic practice, since prayers for the dead were said as part of the traditional Catholic funeral rite and were under attack by the reformers. (Beauregarde 106)

Thus, Asquith's argument, which is easy to ridicule on a single usage of a word as common as “fair” becomes more compelling when the layers of reference surrounding characters known as fair are fully extrapolated. She could be, perhaps, faulted for not taking as much care to spell out these multivalent references that surround the code she identifies, like emphatic parentheses. But Asquith was concerned with tracing a historical narrative through the entirety of Shakespeare's work; here, focusing on one text, there is more room to explore.

4.2.4 Prisons

What other code words in Asquith's glossary appear in *Hamlet*? Undoubtedly, those who were secretly Catholic or even outwardly recusant, would feel an empathic connection to and anxiety about imprisonment, as the domain of their inner experience is projected onto the outer experience of publicly Catholic recusants and martyrs. If the audience is trained in reading art and the theater as a code to be unraveled, Catholic members of the audience would note the repeated image of prisons and confinement as was discussed in the previous chapter at the level of imagination. What associations did Elizabethans have for prisons? Prisons would undoubtedly trigger memories of Mary Queen of Scots, who was twice imprisoned, first for her impolitic and hasty marriage to the Scottish Earl of Bothwell and then, infamously, by her sister Elizabeth, leading to her public and high-impact martyrdom. Many of the nobility with demonstrable Catholic allegiance were put on house arrest or confined to a very small radius of travel outside of their estates. Most of the audience would have also have heard of Wisbech Castle. Built by William the Conqueror in 1072, Wisbech was used exclusively for imprisoning Catholics in the Elizabethan era. There was a group of Jesuit priests incarcerated there, some 33 priests known to the public as the “Wisbech stirs,” and it would also become the primary holding place for the treacherous leaders of The Gunpowder Plot (Shell 133).

The various prisons, confinements, and spiritual bondage the Catholic populace encountered, made those with Catholic sympathies begin to feel their mother country itself was a prison, or as Catholic Priest John Pisbush wrote in a letter: “England is one vast prison for all who profess the faith” (qtd in Asquith 155). In this way, mentioning “prison” was a way of contacting the phenomenal and actual experience of Catholic England. Referring to his murder as he lay sleeping, which not only took his life unjustly but prevented him from receiving the appropriate sacraments appointed for death, the ghost is illustrated as robbed of proper Catholic sacramentality, an inescapable emblem of the disenfranchised and “unhouseled” English Catholic, and he warns: “that I am forbid to tell the secrets of my prison house” (1.5.13-14)--a double reference to the forbidden Catholic realm of Purgatory and to Catholic imprisonment. In Act 2 Scene 2 we have Hamlet describing Denmark as Fr. John Pisbush described England: “Denmark is a prison” (2.2.233). The court spy Rosencrantz counters this observation by trying to persuade Hamlet it is not so, that it only seems that way to him due to Hamlet's own error and personal failing, ending with Hamlet's bitterly ironic comment: “O God, I could be bounded in a nut shell and count myself a king of infinite space.” Here Hamlet is identifying the phenomenal prison, the prison as it is felt but not necessarily sensed, the feeling that the court's touch on his soul has become so unbearably intimate that he can no longer move or breathe without feeling confinement.

4.3 CONCLUSION

The Elizabethans took encoding and deciphering to be constitutive of art and art-making. Elizabeth and her court were aware of dissident codes, and sought to co-opt them, to both defang and implicitly sanction what they knew they could not fully stop. Now I want to suggest two disguises that Shakespeare appears to signify in cultural codes—remembering that codes are, by definition, a “structural system in which signs reveal a specific paradigmatic, syntagmatic, and analogical architecture.” A code, then, “allows an individual to construct appropriate messages with the resources of that code.” Shakespeare, aware of the matrices of both Elizabeth's codes and recusant codes, does what Greenblatt suggests: he plays both sides of the coin, he appeals to both Catholic England and Protestant England, suggesting at times that he is one or the other or both. Asquith only takes this apparent doubling and ambiguity and builds an argument for one being false and the other being true.

It is tempting to leap to a singular reading of *Hamlet* here, which places fixed values on each of the linguistic points of *Hamlet* and delivers an ultimate “read” on its creative elements. But that is not the point of this chapter. The point, made with the assistance of Clegg and Patterson is that there were not just one code but competing codes within the tropes of Elizabeth's England; the codes at play were present within recusant writing, and even the most public writing, which was co-opted and thus sanctioned by the Crown in self-defense.

Shakespeare, associated as he was with a recusant and Catholic past (supportable), if not also a firm present identity (plausible), began to view these tropes as a system for creating texts that had the appearance of depth and manifold hidden meanings, as well as providing a textual interior in which he and certain factions of his audience could hide. It is notable here that there is structural irregularity to *Hamlet*; the First Folio editors seemed to think whole sections entirely dispensable, and yet, there seems to be “method to the madness.” Seemingly irrelevant material begins to suggest itself as highly relevant. But this is indicative of what I believe is the indeterminate characteristic of *Hamlet* when it comes to the tropes identified as distinctly Catholic or Protestant. It's this indeterminacy that make many react to Asquith viscerally, in that she seems to reduce his dramatic language to univocality when, intuitively, we experience Shakespeare's language as the quintessence of polysemy—a device that may have been not only a point of cognitive play, of Elizabethan aesthetics and taste, but also a point of surviving state censorship. Asquith may elide the indeterminate quality of the codes she identifies a little too much; however, I believe she understands the indeterminacy in terms of what she repeats as a “deniable culpability.” As John Klause has said, regarding TS Eliot's infamous assertion that *Hamlet* is a failed play: “A less ambitious play, one that told nothing more than it was able to mean, would have been a success” (148).

In the coded system of *Hamlet*, the only marker that assumes the tropes of Catholicism uncomplicatedly is the Ghost who indisputably stands-in for a Catholic past that sits precariously

in the balance—and here Asquith's crypto-key rings true: his associations with the “high” and “fair” markers, his return from Purgatory, a theologically Catholic realm, and his presence as neither living nor dead spirit make him unmistakably Catholic. In which case, Hamlet is presented with the conundrum of what to do about a dead father who is erased and cannot be properly remembered. Shakespeare complicates the schema a bit—constructing a strongly-figured textual interior that at once suggests hidden meanings and provides cover for the playwright. Through the doubling of Ophelia and Gertrude, he is able to create both positive and negative associations for both the tropes of the Elizabethan appropriated code and the original (and resistively, persistent) recusant codes. Hamlet, as has been suggested earlier, is a martyr to the Catholic memory that haunts Elsinore and to the corruption that led to his father's death. It seems that Fortinbras provides the memorial that will surreptitiously amend the prohibition against enacting such decidedly Catholic memorials. Remembering as well, that the Protestant theological changes prohibited prayer for the dead, and yet, we have Horatio praying for him at the moment of his demise.

As Greenblatt's position attests, the academic mainstream slowly moves toward consensus on Shakespeare's Catholic circumstances as virtually indisputable. As well, consensus is developing for the predominantly Catholic atmosphere of Elizabeth's England, if not on the subject of Shakespeare's own convictions. The issue is opaque. Why would the dramatist that we know, who seems to dabble in and have opinions on everything under the sun, suddenly fall so

mute on the most contested subject of the day? There seems to be something there that hides, and momentarily peeks out, as I suggest in this chapter on “textual containers” and “textual disguises.” It is something unique to Shakespeare, as Peter Ackroyd describes the nature of this textual disguise in contrast to his contemporaries: "Despite the myriad allusions to the old faith, Shakespeare in no sense declares himself but he does demonstrate more than passing familiarity with Catholic ritual and practice. It must be said that there are a large number of friars and nuns, handled with gentle circumspection, within his drama; his contemporaries, in contrast, tended to treat them as an object of scorn or obloquy" (473). Which further underscores the conceit of this thesis thus far—a cognitive schema of interiority became excessive in Shakespeare's England and thus, saturated the culture. Shakespeare both influenced and was influenced by these cultural markers and thus the psychic experience of interiority, the architecture of secrecy, and now the textual experience of contained and hiding discourses, dominate the body of his work and in *Hamlet* in particular.

**5.0 GUTTING: THE PUBLIC PERFORMANCE OF DISEMBOWELING AND
*HAMLET***



Figure 13 Engraving of Jesuit John Olgilvie being disemboweled from Matthias Tanner, c. 1675

This work began with the idea that one particular cognitive image schema, INSIDE/OUT, was an example of a saturated phenomenon in Shakespeare's England; as such it became an “excessive metaphor” and found multiple social expressions that influenced Shakespeare and his audiences profoundly. Chapter 2 explored how the self was conceptualized as interior, independent of the state, and therefore figured a spatial, embodied locus of resistance within the social matrices surrounding the subject. The idea of looking inward and being in control of what was “inside” the self was an idea that had social, political, and theological entailments. Chapter 3 examined how the basic-level schema of INSIDE/OUT blended with the secret self and generated imaginative tropes concerning space and place, which manifested in an architecture of secrecy, with secret rooms, trap doors, hidden compartments, confessionals, and “priest-holes,” mapping a secret, resistant inner life during the English Reformations. Finally, Chapter 4 asserted that the Elizabethan period imagined texts as having interiors that could and should, for artistic pleasure and expression of resistance, contain hidden meanings, and thus opened an indeterminate discourse in which the playwright and his audiences could hide. This chapter examines an intensified breed of this primal metaphor, in an unusually clear and explicit presentation. If the self is interior, if it is held apart from the state, and can thus form a resistance against social power, if that then manifests in a culture of secrecy and hiding, then the escalating tension and drama found its most violent expression in what Jody Enders calls a “theatre of cruelty,” which was a general metaphor for a contained truth extracted from a suspect. That violent expression—

meaning both, “expression” as in to express an idea but literal “expression” as in being squeezed out—contains a particular, evocative manifestation of the INSIDE/OUT schema: disemboweling. Disemboweling is not exclusive to Reformation England; it is, however, an example of how this metaphor was particularly excessive at that moment in history.

Basic-level schemata back-ground human imagination and are therefore, universal and transhistoric. Specific historical and sociological conditions, however, act upon the schemata in linguistic, physical, and imaginative modes and can and will manifest in cultural performances. In times of social crisis, in conditions of sustained jeopardy and trauma (both threatened and actual) it may be that this influence becomes unusually heightened; in this sense, we can say that the schema of INSIDE/OUT, blended with the social disruption of the Henrican Reformation and generated a particularly clear culture of secrecy in Tudor England based on the INSIDE/OUT schema. Chapter 3 introduced the way in which schemata of direction and force also acted upon and through the idea of a secret as something contained, imbuing multiple cultural performances of “secrecy” with an illusory animacy and agency, making it feel as if these secrets would seep out, burst out, or be dragged out by force. These implicit entailments drive the hermeneutic and proairetic codes of *Hamlet*; there is no story if the Ghost's secret and Hamlet's secrets don't threaten to “out” or if they are not experienced as autonomous agents that may, by the force of them, explode out onto the stage in front of the voyeuristic eye.

Hamlet is a drama in which the protagonist struggles to make order of a disordered world. Generally speaking, a drama of this breed connects to the mind's desire for symmetry, balance and order, and the disordered state of affairs captures our attention as we seek for it to right itself (or be righted). The secret to the uncanny cogency of *Hamlet*, however—why it works, why it persists—is the urgency with which it was written, the need that underscored the writer's own position and the position of the English subjects for whom he was writing. The Tudor English subject was immersed in an inherent, unavoidable, and atmospheric drama: a repeating narrative of secrets held and then dragged out into the open, destroying the secret keeper in the process. It was what Victor Turner called a “social drama,” and this particular social drama drove Shakespeare's England. The burgeoning tension implicit to a society built upon division and secrets propelled its subjects into an uncertain, uneasy future. Turner defines social drama as: “an eruption from the level surface of ongoing social life, with its interactions, transactions, reciprocities, its customs making for regular, orderly sequences of behavior.” Turner asserts that social drama occurs at moments of societal conflict, creating disharmonious social processes. He divides the social drama into four stages: 1) breach 2) crisis 3) redressive action and 4) reintegration (*Dramas* 83). In breach, a more-or-less stable social order is upset and becomes de-stabilized, creating a novel, liminal social state. In crisis, this breach widens itself in expression and those charged with re-establishing the social order (or resisting the new order) are challenged to cope with it and will do so in cultural performances. In redressive action, various

means and modes of social performance are presented for healing the initial breach. Finally, in reintegration, the opposed social group is either re-integrated or a permanent schism is enacted, separating the oppositional group permanently.

Elizabethan England makes the ideal case for Turner's analysis of "social dramas." The performance of *Hamlet* occurred at a point between redressive action and reintegration of the recusant Catholic culture in Shakespeare's England: the Tudor dynasty enacted the initial breach in creating the Church of England. The period leading up to Elizabeth I was an emotionally charged period of crisis, in which the various cultural performances these chapters have explored so far (conceptions of the self, architecture, the culture of secrecy, and the expression of contested discourse in codes) manifested as a point of resistance to the Elizabethan new order. The Elizabethan regime immediately began redressive action, aimed at reintegrating Catholics into the new state; the co-opting of Catholic language was the most prominent redressive action, as explored in Chapter 4, where I demonstrated (via Patterson and Clegg) that the competing codes of religious, philosophical, and aesthetic expression at work in *Hamlet*, were tropes recognized as transgressive and then pre-emptively co-opted by the Elizabethan court. However, the recusant culture sought to maintain a secret schism, a way in which they could remain faithful Catholics but still be loyal subjects. Looked at in one way, the character Hamlet lives on the edge of reintegration and schism, and in (eventually) serenely accepting his state of affairs, chooses schism through death, tying that choice to the hopeful act of memorial, as performed in

Fortinbras' ritual memorial and Horatio's memory. The source of his serenity is that he has done as he was commanded to do: he has remembered his father. It can, perhaps, be characterized another way: the performance of the last scene of *Hamlet* can be looked at as a social ritual designed for reintegration. It performs a public mourning of the English Catholic self, and provides solace through memorial. I suggest that both meanings were present rather than either/or. Regardless, *Hamlet* emanates from the inherent liminality of social drama, which is to say, a social order betwixt and between two states of being. In so being, it illustrates what Turner has described as the eufunctional ability inherent to cultural performances. An eufunctional performance contributes to the overall good of the society, beyond the immediate function of the performance ("Frame" 479).

Turner frequently used Stephen C. Pepper's concept of "root metaphors." Root metaphors are metaphors that take on a deep cultural resonance and become part of the processual aspects of social activity. It moves a metaphor from an individual example within a framework to a structural component of that framework (*Drama* Turner 26). This is what I mean when I imagine the cognitive schema INSIDE/OUT as a novel and excessive phenomenon saturating the culture. Turner/Pepper's root metaphor becomes compellingly accurate in this chapter on disemboweling, for here is the most evocative example of the INSIDE/OUT; it is the most evocative because it moves from the realm of imagination to the physical human body. The individual psyche, the physical architecture, and the discursive spaces of Elizabeth's

England, all colluded imaginatively with evocative emotional experiences: fear, life and death, theological passions, martyrdom, secrets. The cultural performance of disemboweling is starkly delineated because it draws all of these elements into an actual, material focus rather than a mere imaginative one in a public and dark acting out of a powerful root metaphor. Once we explore how this played out, we will see how this metaphor worked in the Shakespearean imagination in particular; but its original form, the actual performance of disemboweling, will remain in the foreground, as it must. The contemporary reader is so far distant from the actual practice of disemboweling, it is easy to dismiss it as an imaginative element and not an actual one. It was both—and the “realness” of the practice of disemboweling is central to its imaginative power. I suggest that the imaginative power of disemboweling provides the strongest evidence that INSIDE/OUT was a saturated metaphor, because it was a root metaphor as Pepper described it, where a feature of an over all framework, actually becomes constitutive of the framework itself. Which is to say: INSIDE/OUT is always a feature of cultural expression, but it became rooted in the frames of cultural expression in England in a particularly evocative manner.

One might object to the idea that the audience or Shakespeare was literally thinking about disemboweling while making or watching the play. But as we understand via cognitive science, our brain does not need conscious focus in order to incorporate our experiences, memories, and fears at sub-cognitive levels. They are there informing our practices, social activities, and our

language even if we aren't aware that it is so. Thus, for an Elizabethan who knows that disemboweling is a real threat, that it happens, that it may have happened to someone s/he knew or knew of, that s/he may have actually attended a public disemboweling, just as s/he attended a performance of *Hamlet*, there would necessarily be a full-body response (involving limbic, autonomic, enteric, and neural systems) to a word like “guts,” for example.²⁹ Furthermore, this marked a particular social moment in Europe where artistic and scientific fascination with the interior anatomy of the human form reached an unprecedented height, which simply reinforced the macabre fascination and sometimes sadomasochistic obsession with innards.³⁰

Disemboweling provides an optic through which to examine the play through a concrete and peculiar (to us) social performance. It is its macabre peculiarity that makes it so useful, because it allows us to look at the cultural period through the lens of its own terms. It is the nature of metaphors that they persist, because they are always more or less present and more or less “true.” However, historical moments are not discrete entities or stable structures; they are processual. Similar to the persistence of a given metaphor, the processual elements of the “social drama” are always more or less present, more or less true; societies are always in various stages of conflict. The first Henrican revolution heightened the conflicts of breach, redressive action, and re-integration within England, extending a long and heightened social drama that is

²⁹ This was likely enhanced by the doubling of theaters for bear-baiting rings, enhancing the associative experience of audiencing theatre and violence.

³⁰ See works cited Hillman, David. *Shakespeare's Entrails*.

unusually clear and distinct in its characteristics. This root metaphor manifested prominently in Elizabeth's England as a feature of its particular, rather heightened social drama and, consequently, this root metaphor is profoundly embedded in the linguistic webs of *Hamlet*, which may give us a clue about what precisely was on “Shakespeare's brain.”

There is an odd habit of scholarly self-effacement, in which Shakespeare scholars can suddenly become painfully self-aware of their own focus, and question whether or not their intense scrutiny of historical texts contradicts how the common man of a given era experienced a work of art. This scholarly self-awareness might lead one to question the meta-theatrical component of surrounding cultural performances, and determine that such scrupulous analysis is bringing the argument to an even further “meta” level of abstraction, in an attempt to reduce the significance of these components. However, the idea that meta-theatricality—even meta-meta-theatricality—is not constitutive of theatrical reception is a wrong-headed idea; it includes a “presentist” chauvinism in looking at people of an “other” time and “other” culture. As Kathleen Ashley has attested, however, “Turner's research had shown that all human rituals are already 'meta'” and therefore, self-reflexive; as such, “reflexivity is not just a feature of a sophisticated post-modernist,” it is, in fact, “the normal condition, even part of the *function*” of all human rituals, including participation in a theatrical event through making or receiving a play:

This may have been one of Turner's greatest insights: that there never were any innocent unconscious savages, living in a state of instinctive harmony. We human beings, are all

and always sophisticated, conscious, capable of laughter at our own institutions, inventing our lives collectively, as we go on playing games, performing our own being. This is our specialization as animals, our nature. The true naivety is the naivety of modern or postmodern intellectuals who believe they are inventors of social criticism, existential insecurity, and metaperspectives. The mainstream culture they attack is actually more self-aware than they are, because its rituals of reflexivity are older and more finely tuned than theirs. We simply have to relearn how to do them properly (155-6).

Part of that process of “relearning” to do these rituals “properly” is to reconstruct the surrounding cultural performances, in order to imagine what it was like to be in an Elizabethan audience. And, indeed, a society in the throes of a social drama, which can only have been experienced as a crisis, even if that crisis mode was oft times repressed to varying degrees, would not be living in a state of “instinctive harmony” with the social institutions, rituals, rites, and customs of their time. When the moral and structural basis of the society is disrupted, as English society was during the Henrican revolution, it would make all things, even existence itself, seem suddenly odd and uncanny. It is what political and moral philosopher Hannah Arendt has described as the novelty of phenomena. Even the question “to be/or not to be” emerges from this vertiginous sense of the uncanny.

Having imagined what it was like to be a person living in Elizabeth's England in psychological, architectural, and discursive terms; we will now re-member our Elizabethan ancestors, as people living in a culture of physical fear and public torture.

5.1 THEATRE OF CRUELTY, DRAMA OF FEAR

The Elizabethan audience lived in a theatre of cruelty and a fear-enhanced drama difficult to relate to from a position of comfort. Jody Enders, in *The Medieval Theatre of Cruelty: Rhetoric, Memory, and Violence* considers the rhetorical performance of torture and the idea of truth, and we see that root metaphor, INSIDE/OUT strongly at work. Enders explores torture as an imaginative schema in which the truth of a person's treason and transgression existed as an object hidden within the human body :

Even though intuited in advance, that truth was thought nonetheless to be hiding somewhere inside another person, upon whose body a torturer, judge, or questioner might intervene violently to squeeze it out, all the while casting himself as the victim (28).

Enders asserts that the history of torture has always included the entailments of drama. Drawing upon writing from classical and medieval periods, Enders concludes that it is always accompanied with spectatorship and hence: “murder, torture, and violence, it seems, have perpetually functioned as theater” (48).

For certain, this was true in Tudor England. Though there were prior Catholic martyrs, the drama of Tudor torture may be said to begin with John Houghton. Houghton was a monk of the Carthusian order.³¹ Henry VIII ordered the public “hanging, drawing, and quartering” of those who refused to take the Oath of Supremacy.³² Houghton asked that he and his house be exempted from the Act of Succession (1534) on the grounds that they were a religious house and not a royal one; he and his procurator were arrested for their defiance and placed in the Tower of London. They were later convinced that signing the documents did not present a conflict with their Catholicism, and they signed and were released. However, Henry VIII, worked in degrees of totalitarian action; the next to arrive was the Act of Supremacy. Houghton and several other priors pleaded for exemption. In answer, Thomas Cromwell ordered their arrest; Houghton, along with several other Catholic objectors, was sentenced to hanging, drawing, and quartering. They were so executed on May 4, 1535. The practice of drawing and quartering was considered a violation of Christian doctrine, which demanded respect for the dignity of human bodies; consequently it was a sentence reserved only for the most heinous acts. Dissection was also in the process of being negotiated, (permission to use dissection was granted by Henry VIII in 1540) and it was determined that only murderers could be used for dissection (Sim 9); so the

³¹ We will recall here from the previous chapter that the Carthusian order is the order known to be following “the way of silent love,” and is perhaps referenced in Shakespeare's explicit and implicit pleas to hear what “silent love hath writ”

³² The Oath of Supremacy was a document people were asked to sign acknowledging Henry VIII as the supreme head of the Church of England (and thus enabling and legalizing his divorce from Catherine of Aragorn).

public act of drawing and quartering would have serious moral implications and add a dimension of theological horror to the physical revulsion.

People so sentenced were placed upon a frame and dragged through the streets to the place of execution. The condemned would be hung from a gallows, short of death. While still living, the prisoner would have his entrails drawn from his body in front of the audience, and his genitalia would be removed. Then, while the convicted person still lived, his innards and genitals would be burned in front of him. Finally, the body would be beheaded, cut into parts, and the dismembered head and body parts would be sent to various parts of the countryside, to be hung as a warning to subjects entertaining treasonous activity and as an advertisement of State power over the mind and body. William Harrison (1534-1593), chronicler of Elizabeth's reign wrote:

The greatest and most grievous punishment used in England for such as offend against the State is drawing from the prison to the place of execution upon an hurdle or sled, where they are hanged till they be half dead, and then taken down, and quartered alive; after that, their members and bowels are cut from their bodies, and thrown into a fire, provided near hand and within their own sight, even for the same purpose.

Ender's intuition that rhetoric, drama, and torture commingled in the Medieval and Renaissance periods is particularly apt here; the performance of torture, witnessed by an audience and by the condemned him/herself (as in deliberately holding his/her flaming entrails

up before their eyes), suggests that public torture functions not *like* drama but *as* drama. Consequently, the presence of public torture created a strong associative principle in Elizabethan audiences. The implication of mirror neurons (discussed in Chapter 2) in the act of witnessing ensures that witnessing such events would have multiply realized effects on the audience, who would identify with both torturer and victim. There may be conscious favoring of one identification over the other; but even if one is dominant the other exists sub-cognitively in latent form. Such identifications are implicit not only to receiving fictional narratives but to cognition in general (Gerrig 81, Wollheim 54).

The idea that the human body is a theater, as suggested by William James, seems to have persisted throughout history within the imaginations of those who studied human interactions and physical processes. Charles Darwin described fear as a dramatist would or an actor might portray it:

Fear is often preceded by astonishment, and is so far akin to it, that both lead to the senses of sight and hearing being instantly aroused. In both cases the eyes and mouth are widely opened, and the eyebrows raised. The frightened man at first stands like a statue motionless and breathless, or crouches down as if instinctively to escape observation. The heart beats quickly and violently, so that it palpitates or knocks against the ribs... That the skin is much affected under the sense of great fear, we see in the marvelous manner in which perspiration immediately exudes from it... The hairs also on the skin stand erect;

and the superficial muscles shiver. In connection with the disturbed action of the heart, the breathing is hurried. The salivary glands act imperfectly; the mouth becomes dry, and is often opened and shut (290).

Neurobiologists study “fear-related” information and have uncovered the way in which cognition is affected by a “fear-regulated feedback loop” (Dudai). The memory of standing in audience to torture enacted on convicts, in the same fashion that they would attend a play, created a strong, embodied association in Elizabethan audiences. It is implicit even without direct reference, but with oblique and direct linguistic reference to these practices the impact would be redoubled; insofar as they trigger cue-dependent fear states, the result would be “nootropic,” which is to say it would provide cognitive enhancement. Things witnessed in fear create a heightened state of perception, and it has a sort of contagion amongst a group of humans, such as that which makes up an audience; it is communicated through multiple forms of neuronally mimetic transactions from body to body and is even communicated through scent (Chen 771-781). Through feedback loops, that heightened state of alertness and perception is transferred to situations which are similar to the initial fear state; this likely, in some cases, contributes to the reception of saturated phenomenon, which makes an art object or language web appear rife with meaning and significance. In the introduction to the chapter, I explained that the public display of torture created in audiences a cue-dependent fear state; Shakespeare drew upon this, consciously or sub-cognitively in multiple ways, not the least of which is in biologically realist descriptions or the

fear state that would match Darwin's: "distilled almost to a jelly [Horatio]" (1.2.215). Eyes start from their sockets, skulls are "chapfallen," and hair stands on end like a porcupine's quills.

Fear is a neurobiological process that involves sympathetic and parasympathetic responses at neuronal levels. As the work of Paul Ekman has documented, witnessing another in a fear state can induce that state in the observer—through the involvement of mirror neurons, watching a person who is afraid can generate a feeling of fear in the witness. A study on the cognitive effects of botox treatments demonstrated just how clearly this relationship exists not only in making the emotions of another intelligible but in actually experiencing those emotions oneself. People treated with botox have impaired facial expressions. Without the ability to move the facial muscles not only were those treated with botox less able to experience emotions, they were less able to read those emotions in others. The typical interaction occurs between two individuals. A person makes a facial expression and the face of the witness imitates those facial expressions microscopically—it is that microscopic activation of the facial muscles that gives the witness the interior marker that allows him/her to identify what the other person is feeling. When a person's facial muscles were damaged through botulism poisoning, the person was less able to experience the emotion him or herself and far less able to identify what other people were feeling. Key to this study was its effect on language in particular. The authors of the study write:

Whereas contemporary theories of cognition characterize language comprehension in terms of abstract symbols of thought and rules for their manipulation, recent behavioral and neuroscientific evidence suggests that comprehension of words and sentences describing actions, perceptions, and emotions involves a mental simulation that calls the same neural systems used in literal action, perception, and emotion (Havas, Glenberg, Gutowski, Lucarelli, and Davidson).

The authors determined that facial paralysis induced by botox inhibited not only the reception, but the processing of emotion in actual encounter and in hearing or reading descriptions of the encounter. This applies to our understanding of just how fear states are implicated in the perception of fiction; that dramatic fiction involves both language and simulated action intensifies this effect. When one hears the description of a person in a fear state, that fear state is mirrored in the individual hearing it at a suppressed level. This is what enables them to make the description intelligible and aids the creation of an empathic mood of fear. If a social group has lived in witness to the performance of public events designed to instill fear, the recent memory of those states would enhance those processes in a feed-back loop. We arrive at a cue dependent state that is enhanced by actual events and social context.

Richard Schechner employs exercises in actor training that induce vulnerability and exposure, in order to break down the fear and resistance such states would generate in an actor. One such exercise involves an actor on all fours like a table on the ground. A second actor lies

with her back against his, the first actor's back, so that the core of the second actor's torso is torqued outward much like a bow. A third actor holds the exposed actor's arms so that no protective posture can be taken in guarding the core and that total stretch is enhanced. It induces fear precisely because the viscera or center is exposed. It's an offering of vulnerability to the actor community within the ensemble, an act of trust. Not merely coincidentally, the photographic negative of this experience is the posture of one who is going to be disemboweled; the opposite of trust is performed publicly, as the body is brought into this public position to be exposed and thus disemboweled. It is an act that reifies the notion that the individual is vulnerable and exposed to the State and consolidates the power of the state over the body. This is the psychological impact of the posture; however, it also has sympathetic and parasympathetic involvement through the adrenal system. The solar plexus is stretched and exposed and it stimulates the system of ganglia housed there; these ganglia are enmeshed within the adrenal system, which is the system that stimulates the "fight or flight" response. It is this biological reality that inspires the metaphor, "fear in the pit of the stomach" for, quite literally, the ganglia most responsible for fear responses resides in the peritoneal cavity. This has been examined in a concept that Michael Gershon calls "the Second Brain," meaning that the enteric nervous system involvement in the anatomy of the viscera, quite literally acts as a second brain, controlling the executive and imaginative functions of the mind.

Shakespeare was a man living in a time when the viscera were forcefully laid open in an imaginative and horrifyingly actual enactment of the state controlling the fear centers of the populace. Witnessing or hearing such events described necessarily triggers a response in the audience that includes a microscopic engagement of the viscera, the ganglia in the solar plexus, and the entire enteric nervous system as the body seeks to, in fact, imitate what it sees and/or hears described; it is not surprising, then, that Shakespeare seems to write, “enterically,” if you will, describing not only viscera and entrails, as David Hillman has observed, but describing fear-states repeatedly in starkly realistic and material terms. Ranging from simple reports, as in Ophelia reporting: “O, my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted!” (2.1.85) to the common expression of fear experienced as one's insides liquifying as Horatio describes in his report on the appearance of the Ghost: “thrice he walk'd/By their oppress'd and fear-surprised eyes,/Within his truncheon's length; whilst they, distilled/Almost to jelly with the act of fear” (1.2.202-5).

Hannah Arendt has written about the public exportation of torture, fear, and murder, as the opposite of power. If hot and cold are distinctions of temperature, big and small are distinctions of size, then power and violence are distinctions of presence: “Power and violence are opposites; where the one rules absolutely, the other is absent. Violence appears where power is in jeopardy, but left to its own course it ends in power's disappearance” (56). Shakespeare demonstrates the threat of the individual to the state through the deceptively effete thinking and emotional authenticity of Hamlet. For it is not only Hamlet and Elsinore's subjects who are

“affrighted”—the state is affrighted as well. It is this fear that inspires violent action; as in Act 4 when the King states: “You must not think/That we are made of stuff so flat and dull/That we can let our beard be shook with danger/And think it pastime” (4.7.32-35) or earlier in the play when Claudius also asserts: “For we will fetters put about this fear,/ Which now goes too free-footed” (3.3.26-7). By the eruption of violence at the end of the play, Shakespeare represents that very vulnerability as the source of the King's fear, which manifests in an appalling freedom to perform violence. The terror of exposure and the forced revelation of the vulnerably embodied human being appears in the final scenes of the play, where Hamlet announces to the King in epistolary form: “I am set naked on your kingdom” (4.7.49-50). It is a moment of astonishing vulnerability, which has the intent and effect of terrorizing the terrorist.

The Elizabethan theater-goer already has a softly figured feed-back loop between theater and torture before the content of the theatrical experience is enacted. In the case of *Hamlet*, this softly figured feed-back loop becomes stronger; the tropes introduced by the play were strongly Catholic tropes, the very issues which might lead one to the torture theater as protagonist (or antagonist, depending upon your point of view) in the first place. The direct and indirect references to disemboweling and torture in the play blend with the initial feedback between torture and theatre, creating an unusually high-stakes drama. The concept of the feed-back loop illustrates a literal transaction between brain and body as described by Antonio Damasio in *Descartes' Error*. Damasio argues for the inclusion of “feelings” and/or “emotions” as part of

cognition proper. Combating the Cartesian distinction between “mind” and “body,” which asserts that emotions are bodily states and reason is exclusively of the mind, Damasio argues that feeling states are a part of cognition, and as such, emotions participate in reasoning. The example of Phineas Gage, a brain damaged patient who had severely impaired affect, demonstrated to the neuropsychological community that affect has a distinct impact on the ability to reason effectively; from this clear case-study, Damasio builds the argument that emotions are involved in mental states as constitutive of these mental states, not as a phenomenon discrete from mental states altogether. He favors the aforementioned model William James submits for the body as a theatre:

One of the criticisms leveled at William James concerns the idea that we always use the body as theater, for the emotions and feelings are operated precisely in that manner, from mind/brain to body, and back to mind/brain. I believe also that in numerous instances the brain learns to concoct the fainter image of an “emotional” body state, without having to reenact it in the body proper. Moreover, as we have previously discussed, there is the activation of neurotransmitter nuclei in the brain stem and their response. There are thus neural devices that help us feel “as if” we were having an emotional state, as if the body were being activated and modified. (156).

The as-if loop is always enacted in theatrical reception. Its collusion with “as if” in the creation and reception of the work, is one of the keys to theatrical efficacy. It is not that the same as-if

sequences don't occur in film or written texts; as the botox study attests, and recent fMRI studies indicate, this is at work even in the passive act of reading a text (Dehaene). However, it is the proximity of the real body to the spectator that adds another layer of interchange between body and body (Berrol). This basic fact about theatre reception (the neural impact of body to body exchanges and the “as-if” phenomenon) in general commingles with the idea that Elizabethans attended torture in the style of theater. Consequently, this as-if phenomenon persisted in audiences and re-enacted itself whenever they attended the theater. Conversely, the theater replicates itself when spectators attend a public torture and execution; so what we have is a heightened, emotionally charged state that makes cognitive play more likely. For what occurs in heightened fear state is a speeding up of our usual mental processes; the processes become heightened, our perception becomes more acute, and our verbal and aural creativity becomes maximized; this is an evolutionary off-shoot of our ability to survive hostile environments and perpetual threat. Hence “the brain becomes overdetermined to sense, store, perceive and mobilize in response to threatening information from the internal and external environments” (Goldstein qtd in Robbins 59). Threatening information stored in memory inserts affect on “higher” and “lower” cognitive states through what is called a neuronal cascade; and again these cascades can be triggered in greater and lesser degrees through “cue-dependent” scenarios (ibid). This heightened “as-if loop,” perceptual state has a measurable effect on verbal fluency in

particular, which includes both the creation and processing of semantic webs that start to present themselves in an almost unbearable polysemy.

As Paul Ricoeur has written, polysemy is the necessary accident of natural language, and he makes a careful distinction about univocality and polysemy; neither use of language, univocal nor polysemic, precludes the presence of the other (65, 73). It is my suggestion that one is usually dominant while the other is latent, but the polysemic potential of language becomes heightened in the presence of nootropic (cognitive enhancing) states. That Shakespeare was a master of polysemy seems self-evident; that all of England was in a state of social crisis that created a collective cognitive state ready to receive that polysemic *jouissance* may be less so, but it is the natural outgrowth of imagining the man in his context.

Hence, the persistent allusions to disemboweling in *Hamlet*. I arrive at this discussion after having traced the entailments of containers in psychological, architectural, and textual modes in the surrounding culture, which was a liminal culture, highly anxious and unsure about the character and fate of its Catholic past and Protestant future. I have connected these modal markers to specific linguistic choices in the text. In this final chapter, I will examine the practice of disemboweling as it figures in *Hamlet*, remembering that audiences were in a cue-dependent state that made the reception of even vague allusions heightened and that these allusions would collude with the Catholic tropes introduced and explored in the text. As described in earlier chapters, metaphor is the preferred mode of cognition, it is pre-linguistic, and it is the device that

makes language possible. As shown, it is *physical* process, born of an infant body beginning to discover itself in time and space; so here we are examining the most physically realized metaphor: the body as container--and as a container, subject to violent rupture and opening, as “that within which passeth show” may be pulled out for all to see. Disemboweling is, perhaps, the most intensely figured containment trope.

5.2 DISEMBOWELING AND HAMLET

David Hillman has noted that Shakespeare seems preoccupied with “corporal innards,” he too, characterizes this as a feature of the play's liminal qualities: “From the opening moments of *Hamlet* with Francisco's command to a muffled figure in the night: 'Stand and unfold yourself,' a persistent concern is with what cannot be seen, or known, what is beyond a threshold or 'bourn' (1.1.2) (3.1.79) (78). Hillman connects this preoccupation with entrails through Nietzsche; for Nietzsche's concern with spiritual or metaphysical truth must begin—and in a certain sense end—with the body. Also, quoting Coleridge, Hillman underscores that *Hamlet* is also unusually oriented toward the physical body and through it, sensation: “the entire play..is a tragedy the interest of which is eminently *ad et apud intra* [toward and about the inside]”(qtd 180). Like the demand for the Ghost to unfold himself, Hamlet imagines himself as a prostitute, unloading his unseemly insides by “unpack[ing] my heart with words” (2.2.614).

Indeed, there is a persisting linguistic play about the interior of the body, from the very first scenes of the play, as Francisco is “sick at heart,” and Hamlet describes a “vicious mole in nature” (1.1.9, 1.4.26). The arteries and veins are evoked as “the natural gates and alleys of the body” and “the arture” (1.5.74, 1.4.92). The tension between the outside and inside examined in Chapter 2 implies that the rotting of the inside demands a collapsing destruction of the outside; further, both inside and out are corrupted and de-stabilized; neither the “exterior” nor the “inward man/Resembles that it was” and we are perpetually asked to consider the idea of a man hollowed out, through grief, injustice, and deep disenchantment (2.2.6-7). The King asks Laertes if he is “like a painting of a sorrow,” “a face without a heart” (4.7.123-24); Osric and company are described as being so hollowed out that they collapse like bubbles (5.2.208); and the Player King describes “a hollow friend” (3.2.231). The metaphor of skinning and tanning, related to Shakespeare's family profession, excavates this trope even further toward its uncannily absent quick. Hamlet asks: “Is not parchment made of sheepskins?” while one of the clowns quips about a particular corpse: “his hide is so tanned with his trade that he will keep out water a great while” (5.1.116, 5.1.175-6). And Hamlet is described as an empty shell of a man who is vacated of his sanity; he is, for example, sent to England to “recover his wits there” (5.1.115-116).

The innards trope extends to a matrix of images and words focused on alimentary processes, and on food and diet, in particular, as a natural and immediate example of internal biological processes. Shakespeare ponders—or perhaps obsesses—over what happens to the food

inside the body Horatio says: “for food and diet to some enterprise/That hath a stomach in't” (1.1.11). Pointedly, there is revulsion and disgust for all things alimentary. Act 1 further uses gluttonous imbibing and ingesting as metaphors for the corruption of Elsinore. Hamlet bitterly describes how “the funeral baked meats did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables” and Hamlet describes to Horatio the excessive drinking and feasting of the wedding/funeral sarcastically noting: “we'll teach you to drink (deep) ere you depart” (1.2.187-8) (1.2.175). He describes his mother's passion for her father as appetitive: “why, she would hang on him/As if increase of appetite had grown/By what it fed on.” (1.2.147-9). Similarly Hamlet describes the King Claudius as a glutton and a drunkard:

The King doth wake tonight and takes his rouse,
Keeps wassail, and the swagg'ring upspring reels;
And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down
The kettle drum and trumpet thus bray out
The triumph of his pledge (1.4.9-13)

And Hamlet further describes how the outside world witnesses what he does: “They clepe us drunkards” as he describes the fallen nature of Elsinore as a “dram of evil” (1.4.21,39). There is a barely contained pessimism about life and material reality, crammed into references to eating and bodily functions in general: “if his chief good and market of his time/Be but to sleep and feed” (4.336-37); or the Player Queen: “nor earth to me give food” (239); or Hamlet: “He took

my father grossly, full of bread” (3.3.85). It's not hard to imagine, knowing the scenes of disembowelment that played out in London, the source of this public fascination with the alimentary canal.

In general, the biological functions of the inner body are seen in negative terms; hell and nature are described in a distastefully gustatory fashion; “though hell itself should gape,” evoking the image of damnation as a chasm-like maw, waiting to feast on man-flesh, and it weds itself to the vomiting image Hamlet uses to describe the appearance of the Ghost, as a “sepulcher” that opened “ponderous and marble jaws” “to cast thee up again”(1.2.266), (1.4.53-56). Gertrude describes death as passage through an alimentary canal, “passing through nature to eternity,” which is similarly reflected in multiple images of the decomposition of the body as a digestive process: “for if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a god kissing carrion” (1.2.75), (2.2.182).

More generally, things are described in terms of specific foods, “twas caviary to the general,” and ideas are “well digested” (2.2.461,464); words are described in terms of edible substances: “sallets in the lines to make the matter savory” (466-7). Animals and their digestion are persistently evoked, variously in fish, maggots, carrion, dogs, and a bit of zoological variety: “...of the chameleon's dish. I eat the air, promise-crammed. You cannot feed capons so” (3.2.99-101). An animalian consumption haunts the play as surely as the ghost does, as men, animals, and meats become food, taken into the inside of a monstrous body to be broken down in the

consuming and turned to baser matter. The King, describing the brewing mischief stirred by Polonius' murder, intones that Laertes “feeds on his wonder” (4.5.96). Even the ocean is described as appetitive by the Messenger in Act 4 “the ocean, overpeering of his list, /Eats not the flats with more impiteous haste” (4.5.110).

The overall effect of public torture and disembowelment manifests in peculiar obsessions and reversals of usual container schemata. The container schema manifests in various breeds that link themselves together as they mirror each other. There are two interlinked schemata that form very early on which have been noted as BODY-AS-CONTAINER and BODY-IN-A-CONTAINER the former related to both respiration and breathing (Geiger and Rudzka-Ostyn 315) . The latter, in a system of what Lakoff and Johnson have called “axiological dynamism,” is related later with the idea and sub-cognitive memory of being in the womb but first with our experience of the body going into and coming out of containers. Eventually, this enmeshes with consciousness of death and being interred or entombed (Lakoff 271). These schemata are discussed in terms of axiological dynamism because of the associations of value assigned to the various schemata. Eating and breathing are seen as “good” where excretion is seen as “bad”; largely the comfort of containment in early childhood assigns a positive value on the BODY-IN-A-CONTAINER, though later, the knowledge of being contained after death complicates the schema. Hence, it's dynamic. In *Hamlet* we see a reversal of the usual assignments. Eating and breathing (or both as in feeding on the promise-crammed air) become negative; the containment

of death is longed for, the comfort of woman as encapsulating womb-space has been contaminated through Gertrude's actions. Consequently bawdy expressions about woman such as Fortune's "private parts" start to proliferate. This is doubled in the bawdy that emanates from the impossibility of Hamlet and Ophelia's relationship, reaching an embittered repartee with Ophelia before the play-within-a play, and later in Ophelia's mad song about being "tumbled" before she is wed.

Shakespeare equates the alimentary processes of the body with lower social classes of human beings: "But I am pigeon-livered and lack gall/to make oppression bitter, or ere this/I should have fatted all the region kites/ with this slave's offal" (2.2.605-8). But he also sees this horrific, undeniable hyper-realism concerning the body as destabilizing social distinctions, with death as the grand equalizer of all mankind. The obsession with food and with decomposing corpses becomes a set of homologies that link itself to hiding and secrets, where all that is concealed is actually consumed and decomposed into nothing. During the macabre *fort-da* over Polonius' corpse, Hamlet quips blackly that Polonius is "at supper" "not where he eats but where he is eaten." "A certain convocation of politic worms" eat his body, work is an "emperor for diet" and "we fat all creatures else to fat us and we fat ourselves for maggots." It is the same for the beggar and king alike, Hamlet muses: "your fat king and your lean beggar is but variable service—two dishes but to one table. That's the end" (4.3.22-28), which links itself to another obtrusively alimentary image in the oft quoted: "a man may fish with the worm that hat eat of a

king and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm,” a construction reminiscent of the nested containers explored in Chapter 3. Lest we miss the meaning, Hamlet explains that he creates the image “to show you how a king may go a progress through the guts of a beggar” (4.3.30-33).

Even as there is a meditation on the inside of the body, a vast re-arrangement of the usual axiological dynamism of the BODY/CONTAINER tropes, there is an accompanying and equally persistent anxiety about that body being broken down, through decomposition and through dismemberment, even as Hamlet expresses an esoteric longing for death. As for images that concern corporeality, *Hamlet* emerges as an anxiety-ridden text compulsively indexing the permeable and leaky body, which decomposes like “sun kissing carrion.” Aside from the graveyard scene, which effects an extended morbid meditation on decomposition and “rotting,” Hamlet also describes aging men to the elder Polonius as seeping fluids: “their faces are wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum” (2.2.215-8). The anxiety is not limited to the slower processes of leaking, “dissolving into a dew” or gradual decomposition; it also fixates on the body violently broken into its constituent parts, as in the act of quartering. Isolated instances of such metaphors could easily be dismissed, or attributed to archaic form of speech, but a critical mass emerges when looking at the play entirely. Hamlet literally mentions quartering as a disordered manner of thought: “A thought which, quartered, hath but one part wisdom” (4.4.44-45). Horatio answers the call to him in the darkness at the limn of the castle that it is not simply him but “a piece of him” (1.2.19). Hamlet, speaking to Osric, insists that to

list Laertes virtues would be “to divide him inventorially” (5.2.126). Calling attention of the relationship of a body to its parts, Laertes describes Hamlet as a head who rules a body of parts, and as head of that body he “carves” for himself a choice in mate (1.3.23-5). This is echoed in the King's words to Gertrude on Polonius: “he hath found/The head and source of all your son's distemper” (2.2.57-8). Brains are things that bandy about free of their body, or that can be beaten to a pulp: “O, there has been much throwing about of brains” (2.2.381); “About, my brains!” (2.2.613); and “cudgel thy brains” (5.1.57). Laertes asks that he “might be the organ” to the King's plot against Hamlet. (4.7.79)

Following the dismembered and quartered body to its most dominant physical image leads once again to the graveyard scene, as the Clowns joke over a sordid collection of rotting and decaying body parts, one of which, as we know, Hamlet will hold aloft and gaze into. Most compelling is the gravediggers' discussion of a dismembered Adam: with a heraldic pun one of the Clowns asks, “could he dig without arms?” (5.1.35-40). One might note that this could be a deeply ironic pun for Shakespeare, who, living in the wake of his father's death, must have been considering his pursuit and success in obtaining the Shakespeare family coat of arms. The fear of quartering and dismemberment reverberates in the text, and the imagery is “o'ersized with coagulate gore” (2.2.487). Specific images of violent dismemberment are evoked through phrases like “in mincing with his sword her husband's limbs” (2.2.514).

Torture is literally evoked multiply in metaphor: “the whips and scorns of time,” (partially) in jest, as when Hamlet would have actors “whipped for o'erdoing it” as their over-acting is described as tearing “a passion to tatters, to very rags” and “split[ing] the ears of the groundlings” (3.1.78), (3.2.10-14). There is a repeated image of violence against the body: “nor shall you do my ear that violence” (1.2.178); Laertes :“Keep my name ungor’d” (5.2.265); the Player King: “of violent birth” (3.2.212); and again “the violence of either grief or joy” (219).

Eroticism, religious ecstasy, and corporeal horror braid together within the twinned tropes of “gutting” and “stripping.” The stripping of Christ in the Passion was a hallmark image for the Christian imagination and it found multiple expressions in ritual and performance within the practice of the religion. The Catholic rituals of Holy Week involved a multi-part ritual in which the altars were stripped, which had a dual function: it emulated the stripping of Christ and prepared the sacred space for the celebration of Holy Week, which tradition required to be performed on bare, unadorned altars. Eamon Duffy explores this ritual in depth and demonstrates the way this ceremony took on horrifying entailments, as reformers, literally stripped the churches of their idolatrous imagery (*Altars* 391).

No doubt, torture perpetually re-inscribed the images of gutting and stripping within the Elizabethan mind. The state still practiced flaying as torture, and the act of disemboweling a prisoner, required peeling away the layers of the skin to get at the innards. This underscores Duffy's proposal that the image of stripping was a dominant metaphor for the Reformation in

England, which I categorize as a breed of the INSIDE/OUT schema here. As Duffy reports, surviving roods illustrate the torture of virgin martyrs, who were depicted as stripped and scourged. The practice of stripping, scourging, and the greatest in magnitude, flaying, were dark accompaniments to disemboweling. This metaphor extended to the way in which the Reformers envisioned the entire Reformation as stripping religious houses, religious guilds and religious people of their previous religious affiliations and habits. The relics, the “skins” and “garments” of centuries of piety that preceded the Henrican revolution, were to be turned over to the crown, an act that horrified secret recusants and even those in agreement with the politics and theology behind the movement:

Now these heirlooms, from the most elaborate monstrance or the most bejewelled vestment down to the humblest kerchief or houseling towel were to be turned into cash for the benefit of the Crown. Some of the commissioners balked at so breathtaking an act of sacrilege. The commissioner for the Weald of Kent had to be pressured by the Council to act, and claimed later to have left as much in the parishes as they could get away with, since, 'we were very loathe to take anythinge from them.' John Huddleston, whose family was to have a long tradition of recusancy, helped compile the Cambridgeshire inventories for 1549 but refused to assist in the confiscations. But whatever the scruples of individuals, the process of stripping moved swiftly ahead (*Altars* 477).

The mention of the “houceling towel” brings to mind the appalling image of the Ghost, “unhouseled” and “unaneled,” a man stripped of sacramental dignity of death and so sent to the “most horrible” tortures of Purgatory (1.5.76).

The execution of Mary Queen of Scots engendered tales of her being stripped as in this first person account:

Then they, with her two women, helping her up, began to disrobe her of her apparel: then she, laying her crucifix upon the stool, one of the executioners took from her neck the *Agnus Dei*, which she, laying hands off it, gave to one of her women, and told the executioner, he should be answered money for it. Then she suffered them, with her two women, to disrobe her of her chain of pomander beads and all other apparel most willingly, and with joy rather than sorrow, helped to make unready herself, putting on a pair of sleeves with her own hands which they had pulled off, and that with some haste, as if she had longed to be gone. All this time they were pulling off her apparel, she never changed her countenance, but with smiling cheer she uttered these words, 'that she never had such grooms to make her unready, and that she never put off her clothes before such a company.' Then she, being stripped of all her apparel saving her petticoat and kirtle, her two women beholding her made great lamentation, and crying and crossing themselves prayed in Latin. She, turning herself to them, embracing them, said these words in French, '*Ne crie vous, j'ay prome pour vous*', and so crossing and kissing them, bad them

pray for her and rejoice and not weep, for that now they should see an end of all their mistress's troubles (Wynkfield).

Stripping and the gory relative of flaying are a repeated motif in the text of *Hamlet*.

Laertes warns his sister that “the chariest maid is prodigal enough/If she unmask her beauty to the moon.” (1.3.40-41). Enfleshment seeks to erupt or burst like what Horatio describes in Act 1 Scene 1 as the “strange eruption” of the state. Hamlet remarks of his father's ghost, “Why thy canonized bones, hearsed in death/Have burst their cerements,” and his father's spirit tells him the torture he endures in Purgatory would “make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres” (1.4.52-3), (1.5.22). In this way, also, passion is conceived of as an interior force that could extravasate the corporeal exterior, as when Ophelia describes Hamlet's sigh as something that would “shatter all his bulk” and “end his being” (1.5.107-108). Polonius, similarly describes love as a “violent property that “fordoes itself” and Hamlet proclaims : “Let me not burst in ignorance” (2.1.115) (1.4.51). Finally, there is Ophelia’s description of Hamlet as a man come undone with his innards fairly spilling out:

Lord Hamlet with his doublet all unbraced,
No hat upon his head, his stockings fouled,
Ungartered, and down-gyved to his ankle,
Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other,
And with a look so piteous in purport

As if had been loosed out of hell

To speak of horrors—he comes before me. (2.1.87-94)

5.2.1 Drawing

It is unclear what to be “drawn” and quartered referred to precisely—there was first, the public “drawing” of the accused through the street to place of execution; though the Encyclopedia Britannica notes specifically that it referred to the act of dragging the “offal” from the tortured body. Either way, the polysemy in the word demands that all meanings were simultaneously evoked; and it's here that we see the metaphor of “drawing” entwining with the idea of an infection being drawn from a wound—or a poison that must be squeezed out. We see an incipient reversal of torturer and tortured, where Hamlet, the object of the State's scrutiny and surveillance, becomes the one to perform the deeds the audience most fears; this is a troubling aspect when trying to arrive at a final and univocal reading for the text. Hamlet's behavior with his mother in the closet, the murder of Polonius, and the macabre disregard for his corpse, go virtually unaddressed, and seems to rest uneasily within the context of his character arc. He arrives at the serene acceptance of his fate and the remembrance of his father, only after imitating the state that murdered him. It reads as a revenge fantasy, an isolated incident that has a cathartic violence, meant to vet the terror of the subject living at the mercy of the state.

And it is within this isolated revenge fantasy that the most literal image of drawing emerges, as Hamlet drags Polonius's body through the castle; it is an evocation that is both enacted in stage direction and solicited in language, which Gertrude pointedly marks in noting that Hamlet has disappeared with Polonius “to draw apart the body he hath killed,” while the King reports: “and from his mother's closet hath he dragged him” (4.1.25, 4.1.36). This is in stark contrast to the more metaphoric reference in Ophelia's report of Hamlet's visit to her bed chamber and likewise engages a layered polysemy when Ophelia says: “He falls to such perusal of my face/As he would draw it.” (2.1.102-3). Typically, this is understood to mean that he would draw it as an artist might, but it also delivers the sense that he tries to drain her face, as one might drain a draught—along with the consideration that she is “drawn” toward an untimely death in the fourth act, eliciting an interconnectivity between drawing and horrible death. The King insists that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern “draw Hamlet onto pleasures,” highlighting the dramatic irony that “The Mousetrap” is envisioned as a trap for both King and Hamlet. The king's “occulted” guilt is drawn out by the Mousetrap (3.2.84). In most instances, it is Hamlet who is performing the drawing, it is the protagonist/victim, the one in most jeopardy who performs the act reserved in Elizabethan society for the state. Since “Bloody Mary's” reign was not far gone in memory, Shakespeare seems to be rehearsing an endless cycle of violence, and before depicting Hamlet's serene and Christ-like acceptance of his fate, momentarily steps outside the frame and contemplates the nihilism of violence answered with violence, and the

impossibility of resolution. Memorial seems to be the only path, if re-assimilation was to occur. Alternately, it posits a sort of momentary revenge fantasy for the Catholic audience; Hamlet's guilt in the murder of Polonius brings about the end scene but his culpability is never completely addressed, nor is his part in Ophelia's death. The death of Ophelia appears to mark the turning point away from revenge fantasy (and the expected ending for revenge tragedy in terms of genre) toward something else: memorial as ultimate and lasting revenge, a slower justice but one more likely to bring hope.

5.2.1.1 The Wheel

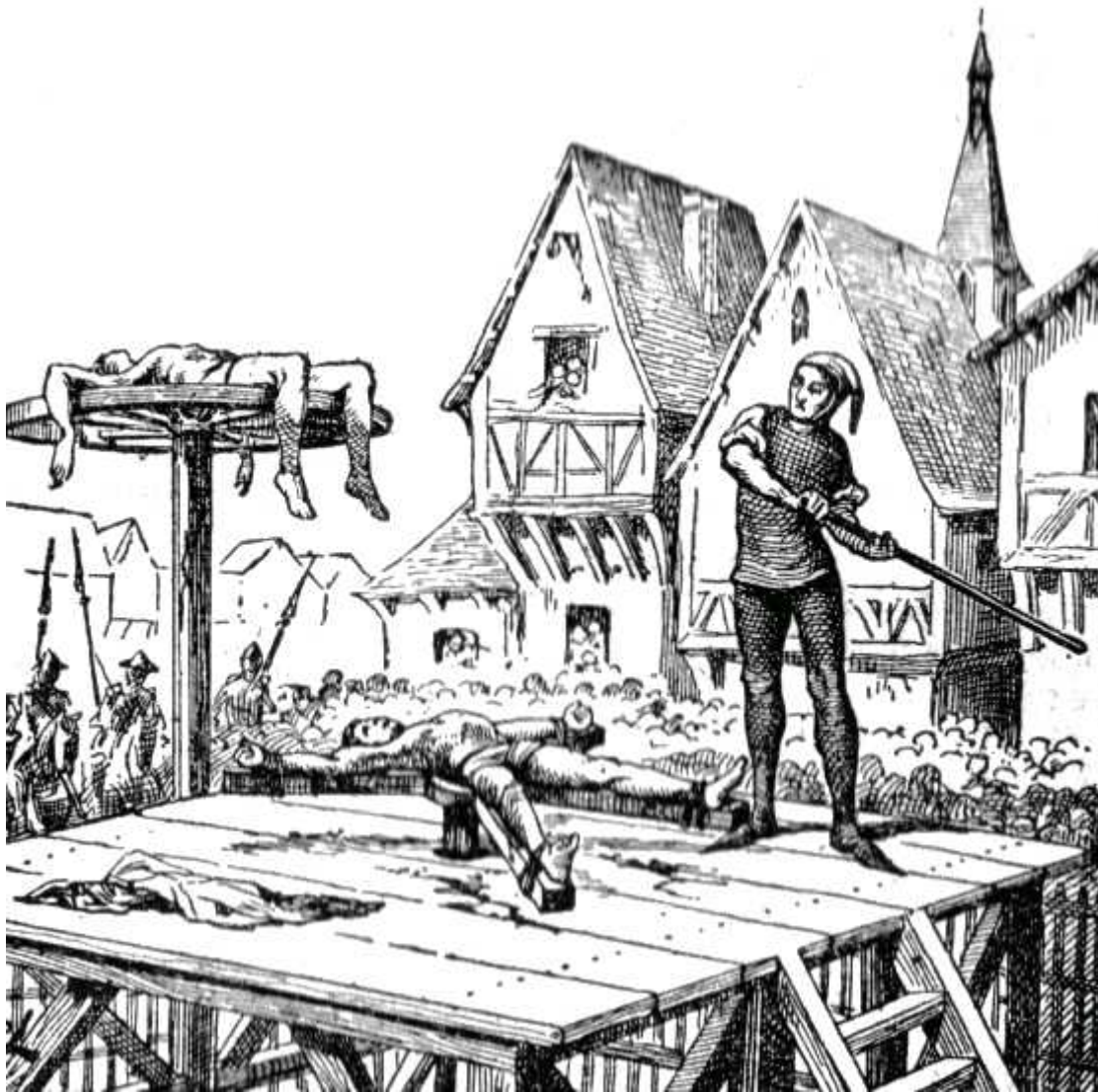


Figure 14 Lamaine Kolem, date unknown (Source: Creative Commons)

In an essay entitled: “The Reason of the Strongest,” Jacques Derrida writes about the way torturing is *revenante* or haunting the wheel :

The torture of the wheel belongs to a long juridical and political history. It sets in motion not only the turning apparatus of a wheel, but the quartering of the alleged criminal. The subject being punished is quartered, his bound body forming one body with the wheel, subjected to its rotation. When I speak of a double question whose torture returns, when I say that this question was at the same time and/or by turns historical and conceptual or semantic, I am describing a torturing and quartering on the wheel. There is quartering properly speaking when horses pull on the four limbs of the condemned. But there is also a sort of quartering on the wheel: it turns, returns, and draws, stretches the four limbs of the body by pulling them in opposite directions. (8)

In *Hamlet*, there is one example of “draw” being used next to the recurring motif of a “wheel.” The wheel usually referred to the “wheel of fortune,” which permeates the text of *Hamlet* as much as it permeated Renaissance expressions of fate and destiny. Rosencrantz: “The cress of majesty/Dies not alone, but like a gulf doth draw/What's near it with it; or it is a massy wheel” (3.3.16-18). “Draw” here refers to the tidal pull of a whirlpool, but that it appears next to a “massy wheel” necessarily evokes the other latent association with “wheel” as one of the instruments of drawing in the medieval era, and still in use in Shakespeare's England, or haunting the word, as Derrida has it.

5.2.1.2 Violence Against the Body

The majority of the remaining references to torture and the exposed body remain firmly in the domain we might more reasonably expect: scrutiny of the state is couched in terms of violence against the body as in the King's comment that "Well we shall sift him" (2.2.61). The body presents itself as porous and vulnerable to external malice in the form of poison, as in the image of King Hamlet's murder as the "leprous distillment" poured "in the porches of my ears" (1.5.70). In the medieval theatre of cruelty, Enders argued, the truth was imagined as something that must be "squeezed" from the body; and this image penetrates *Hamlet* at various points, as interrogation haunts the text as a form of extraction, wringing, and squeezing. Claudius remarks about Hamlet: "You cannot get from him" (3.1.2), the truth. Earlier, Polonius describes his son's departure in terms of wringing: "hath my lord wrung from me my slow leave" (1.2.60). Hamlet ironically remarks to Claudius regarding "The Mousetrap" that no one with a clear conscience should be affected by the play, "our withers are unwrung" (3.2.267). He then refers to the wringing action of the state when he converses with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern: "when he needs what you have gleaned, it is but squeezing you, and sponge, you shall be dry again" (4.2.19-21). However, the image of expressing the truth from one who stands accused emerges in the revenge fantasy portion of Hamlet as torturer in its peak form inside Gertrude's closet: "Peace, sit you down,/And let me wring your heart" (3.4.41-2).

The idea of something drawn from or sucked out, as suggested by the imago of disemboweling is manifold in the text: “it takes/From our achievements, though performed at height,/The pith and marrow of our attribute” (1.4.23-5); [King] Hamlet's inner torment feeds “even on the pith of life” (4.1.24); or as in Ophelia sucking the “honey” from his “musicked vows” (3.1.156).

5.2.2 Purgation

The image of an infection being drained through purgation also features prominently in the text, as a central metaphor for the dramatic action, which sometimes is expressed as a draining of infection from of “the quick of th' ulcer” (4.7.140). Purgation ,going back to antiquity, was a prominent metaphor in philosophy, medicine, and in art. During the Renaissance this was particularly so, for example, Michaelangelo is often quoted as saying “beauty is the purgation of superfluities” in dealing with art-making, and the Renaissance medical penchant for purgation in medicines and practices has been well-established. The idea is that purgation would remove something festering from a core and leave something beautiful behind. Shakespeare deals with this complexly. Renaissance purgation depended on astrology to determine the appropriate time for blood-letting and this bears out in *Hamlet*. There are both right and wrong moments for purgation as Hamlet notes, in the image of his father unjustly sent for purgation in Purgatory. Either consciously or unconsciously in imitation of the Renaissance

understanding, via Aristotle, that the “catharsis” of drama was a “purgation,” the sense of something rotting and festering that needs purging persists in the story for Hamlet: “I’ll lug the guts into the neighbor room.” (3.4.235). “Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you.” However, there is also a rebellion against unjust purgation as in the “pluck the heart of my mystery” speech to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, which compellingly performs a rebellion against an “out of joint” purging as well as illustrating the horror of a human form being treated as “an organ” or an inanimate object, which is what occurs in the dehumanizing practice of disemboweling:

you would seem to know my stops, you would pluck
out the heart of my mystery, you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my
compass
in this little organ yet cannot you make it speak
'sblood do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe?
Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me you cannot play upon me
(3.2.392-402)

The idea of purgation that occurs unjustly or at the wrong moment in time is further played out through Hamlet's contemplation of action against Claudius and Gertrude. He considers going to his mother's closet and says that it is “the very witching time of night,/When churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out/Contagion to this world. Now could I drink hot blood” (3.2.419-421) suggesting he knows that a dangerous blood-letting must be done but

carefully for he wishes to be “cruel, not unnatural” (428). With the carefulness of a surgeon, he will form a gutting, a purgation with words and not weapons, he will “speak daggers to her, but use none” (429).

On his way to his mother's closet Hamlet comes upon Claudius and here we see the most complex consideration of natural and unnatural purgation; the contemplation that ensues juxtaposes purgation toward the good and purgation toward the evil, a juxtaposition compatible with the Renaissance idea that purgation wrongly enacted and at the wrong moment, could loose “contagion” upon the world. Hearing Claudius' admission of guilt and his prayer for forgiveness, Hamlet speaks the cruel irony before him, “And am I then revenged/to take him in the purging of his soul?” Would he send Claudius to heaven through an act of vengeance for his father? He decides not to kill him and reinforces the medicinal subtext of the passage, saying “My mother stays./This physic but prolongs thy sickly days,” a wondrously complex depiction of moral decision making (3.3.97). Typically this passage is understood as a temporary subversion of the revenge Hamlet seeks, and the “physic” is read univocally as Claudius' penitential prayer. But it is decidedly more complex and double-edged. Purgation can happen in prayer, it can happen in action; but another kind of purgation, withholding wrong action for greater penance is its own purgation: by granting Claudius his life he gives him medicine that will prolong his “sickly days” (100-1), which he sees as just, for it will give him more time to accumulate his wrong-doing and sinful actions and lead to greater torment for a villain. Hamlet

says that he will take his life at a later time: “When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage/Or in th' incestuous pleasure of his bed/At game a-swearing, or about some act/That has no relish of salvation in 't” (90-93). So the physic is both the uttered penitence and the appropriate withholding of purgation because it is the wrong moment, which Renaissance medicine believed would release bad spirits upon the world.

If the play has performed within a polysemic web of words evoking torture and disembowelment (and the related tropes of purgation, drawing, and quartering) in latency, the bed-chamber scene between son and mother not only evokes them but makes those references explicit. Aside from the obvious representation, after the murder of Polonius, in which Hamlet says he'll “lug the guts” into another room, he uses the word “draw” to describe what he will do dragging the body through the rooms of Elsinore. Gertrude later reinforces this saying that he “draws” the body, not only from room to room, but “into parts.” Though he is true to his word as it concerns his mother, to use words and not daggers, his intent is fulfilled: “These words like daggers enter in my ears” Gertrude says, “O Hamlet, thou has cleft my heart in twain.” (3.4.177). Hamlet persists in his mission to be “cruel but not unnatural” and his mother protests against him as he persists, in a scene that can only be described as the nonpareil of sado-masochism with no actual violence.

5.3 CONCLUSION

Marion's description of the saturated event is crucial to the thesis advanced in this dissertation. Marion starts with the intuition that certain phenomena that appear to consciousness are saturated in that there is a “givenness” to them; thus, any intentional acts directed at or emanating from them, seem to be excessive, and defy delimiting description. This givenness—that is, the things about a phenomenon that are assumed and presumed to be constitutive of it, so much so that they are difficult to make explicit—is in one sense, the defining element of basic-level cognitive schemata. Because they form our categories of understanding and bridge our pre-linguistic cognition with our post-linguistic cognition, the presentation of metaphors in these rudimentary cognitive schemata always seem over-run with givenness because these metaphors are the “givens” of all language and understanding. By the same token, when there is a saturated phenomenon, it is most likely to appear in these primal schemata, because they seem to accurately describe the indescribable, and we default to our first revelations in understanding our world, when everything was indescribable.

The Elizabethan living through the Reformations would find it somewhat difficult to describe the splitting of public and private self under the Tudor regime. The Tudor regime invented neither the idea nor the phenomenon of the interior split. It was an idea that existed since antiquity; the very essence of Socrates' *Apology* was the responsibility of the individual to foster a private existence that participated in yet, at crucial moments, opposed the public. “A

man who really fights for justice,” Plato records Socrates as saying, “must lead a private, not a public, life, if he is to survive at all” (29). Hamlet's soliloquies characterize him as a man living publicly in one fashion, and struggling with metaphysical and political justice in private, making him the quintessential Socratic character, separating his private and public selves. For the Elizabethan, the split between public religion and private religion enacted by the Henrican revolution underscored the value of this classical notion; however, it also created a schizophrenic existence difficult to describe and vertiginous in its experience. Today we are used to religion being of the private domain, and its contestation in the public square is the status-quo. For the Elizabethan, this contestation and concealment would be experienced as a novel phenomenon, and therefore posed all of the cognitive effects of novel phenomena, including its effect on linguistic wordplay.

Shakespeare's dramatic imagination and remarkable aptitude to engage in word play, enabled an exploration of this split and described the indescribable; it was literally indescribable because of the contestation and suppression of public discourses enacted by the Elizabethan regime, but it was also *phenomenally* indescribable, an obscure experience of a split self laden with uncanniness and anxiety. Disemboweling performed a horrifying enactment of a split subject, inside from out, and underscored an obsession with a self split at the quick, a self lacking unity and resisting its way to the point of mortal peril and jeopardy. This emotionally charged imago enmeshed with the very metaphysical questions that the theological disputes of the day

brought to the fore: if monarchs could change spiritual and theological values on nothing more than a whim, what answer to these theological questions would suffice or provide stability? Were values once represented as transcendent and eternal truths, so easily subject to the machinations of power and time? These were destabilizing, troublesome questions, forming an unspoken ether as they were unable to be fully explored or expressed in language, but unquestionably present in the silent language of image and art.

A paperweight on the desk becomes a weapon, should one be startled by the presence of an unwanted intruder in one's office. Suddenly, the shape and form of the paperweight take on new meaning. When we are startled, through various mechanisms of alertness in the limbic system (see discussions of novelty in previous chapters), the whole world around us seems new, and delivers new meaning to the quotidian elements that once merged with a largely unnoticed background. The events of the English Reformation were similarly startling, and the metaphysical questions at work in *Hamlet* cause the very meaning of everything to be examined anew. The word "autopsy," from the Greek, *autopsiā*, seeing with one's own eyes, did not appear until 1651, with the specific meaning of "dissection of a body" appearing in 1678. Language, however is often a lagging indicator; like our first imaginal experiences of the world, ideas precede their linguistic expression, active but nevertheless somewhat undefined until they reach concrete, linguistic expression. The idea of an autopsy, here, though not a word used frequently in English, applies both literally and figuratively. The public witnessing of

disemboweling was very much like an autopsy in which the anatomy of the secular or religious heretic are exposed for perusal. Autopsies are strongly at work in *Hamlet*, a text which uses verbal “daggers” to perform operations on the innards of the body, that figures extended examinations on decomposition, as the body becomes food for “impolitic worms” if not before our very eyes, then in our imaginations. If we think of the earlier meaning of the word “autopsy,” as in seeing with one's own eyes, *Hamlet* is looking at the questions of politics and religion—the meaning of private and public selves, the presence or absence of God, and the position of love, death, and embodiment within existence—at the moment just before the new Elizabethan order begins to take root and become the new status quo. It is, in this sense, an autopsy of the Catholic English self, as the Protestant English self—either willing or unwilling—is being born.

Each of the chapters hints at a large unspoken language that existed in the imaginal, pre-linguistic consciousness of Elizabethan subjects. The basic architecture of human consciousness is the vocabulary of this “language,” making it meaningful almost at any time or any place, but that architecture is an embedded structure that meshes with the environmental and cultural influences that surround it. I've discussed the vanquished Catholic culture of England as an iceberg of narrative and evidence, with only the smallest bits peeking through the surface of the icy deeps of untold history; the double language to which I'm referring has a similar quality, something that is perceived rather than observed directly. The use of visible artifacts as texts themselves—such as architecture, imaginative theology, and various modes of cultural

expression—not only provides interesting information about the period, it enhances our reception and understanding of the literal texts concurrently produced. Mary Hazard also intuits a phantom presence, what she calls the Elizabethan silent language. Hazard writes:

Understanding the silent language of the Elizabethan Renaissance illuminates the literature of the period that produced the works of Sidney, Spenser, and Shakespeare.

The need for analysis of the written word has long been recognized, and has indeed been paramount in studies of the period. Investigation of silent language has more narrowly focused on the separate vehicles for expression; analysis of it as a system that supported and supplemented written and oral language has been largely neglected. (1)

This silent language to which both Hazard and I refer has all the qualities of a shibboleth: a distinguishing practice and language that mark people as members of a group and binds them together. As in Chapter 4, which advanced an argument of competing, implicit textual codes, Hazard also notes in the system of unspoken language she documents, the “use of indeterminacy.” Indeterminacy was the necessary accident of this shibboleth as the binding action of the secret, unspoken language acted as a stand-in for the absent rituals and beliefs formally under protest and beginning to disappear; even as it may have attempted to somehow validate the present rituals that extruded from the Henrican revolution and became concretized under Elizabeth, it was a language of ambivalence and confusion, of the sort that emerges from within the liminal atmosphere of social dramas, from within the context of novel events. This

final chapter on disemboweling marks an intersection of two silent languages, the silent language of the state and the silent language of the Elizabethan subjects, an intersection that crystallized the very conditions that gave the silent language its urgency and its artistic efficacy. While all cultures have a silent language—imagistic, suggestive, metaphoric and having the qualitative features of a system—certainly moments of social disruption and top-down governance can make particular periods and their cultures intriguing in their character.

There is a narrative that emerges from the silent language of Elizabethan England. In one sense, it is explained by Victor Turner's theories of social crisis and transition as described at the beginning of this chapter. The specificity of that social rupture in the Henrican revolution, as I've argued, set England apart from the larger European Reformation; the Reformation had different qualities in different regions. In so far as I have tried to set England apart, however, it elides another, larger social transition taking place within Western culture at that moment, and thus, reunites England within the context of a more general European Reformation: a general shift from the *homo religiosus* of the Medieval period toward a new conception of the modern self. This new self-concept included a sharper division between the secular and the sacred than existed before. The schism within the Catholic Church enacted this split as a necessary outgrowth—the unifying character of a single religion was in a strong recession and it made the former *homo religiosus* of the medieval period an impossibility. As religion became a pluralistic enterprise, it necessarily became a private enterprise. No matter how hard Elizabeth tried to

simply replace the old public religion with a new one, once the initial break occurred it opened a space of autonomous choice and subjective resistance, forming a diverse legion of Calvinists, Lutherans, and Puritans, all vying for a piece of theological authority in the establishing of a new English religion. Once that space opened, it created a strong split between the sacred and profane. For once the interpretation of the rites and rituals became contested, not just subtly through an individual or passing skepticism but openly and politically, the development of a secular space necessarily became crucial to social cohesion. The authority of the religious realm was weakened through contestation, and therefore a fundamental social glue dissolved. The rise of a secular theatre, separate from the liturgical traditions of medieval theatre, was not merely coincident, it became a secular stand-in for rites which no longer stood as unifying discourses. That these “secular” spaces, would *contain* the contested discourses in a silent language of gesture and dramatic signification, seems, then, inevitable. If the purpose of the cultural performance was remediation—or perhaps merely balm—for a society that lacked cohesion, the very subject of those performances could not escape the discourses that threatened that cohesion.

The thing about *Hamlet* that is notable is its persistence as a canonical piece of dramatic literature, even outside of the very specific components of its cultural production. Certainly, *Hamlet* is not alone in this strange doubleness of specificity and universality—nevertheless it provides a remarkable example of this phenomenon. Why does *Hamlet* still intrigue? The specificity of its connotations is underscored by the persistent and pervasive use of imagistic

tropes—particularly the schema of OUTSIDE/INSIDE—that carry with it the silent artifacts of historical narratives that threatened to be lost. It also, however, bears entailments of the grander shift from religious man to secular man, as Western society traverses through various stages of social transition that are still in process today, and still, being contested publicly. The concept of a man existing within a troubled social and cultural landscape, and forming a locus of inner resistance through reflection and, at the last, through memorial, provides a schema to humans today, who still struggle to navigate the breach between the sacred and profane. Mircea Eliade conceives of religious history as a journey away from a unified religious man who receives hierophanies—revelation of the sacred in everyday life—as a fundamental part of that existence. The history of religion for Eliade, is the story of human consciousness navigating an increasingly desacralized world. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* emerges at a moment where that desacrilization took a great leap forward, and explores the ramifications of that leap. “Desacralization,” Eliade writes, “pervades the entire experience of the nonreligious man in modern societies, he finds it increasingly difficult to rediscover the existential dimension of religious man in the archaic societies” (13). Desacralization is still in motion today, and for that reason, along with the primal appeal of the basic-level tropes with which Shakespeare seemed obsessed, *Hamlet* continues to compel.

6.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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