The Spectre Within:

Unburying the Dead in Elizabethan Literature

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Abstract

This thesis examines spectrality in Elizabethan literature, focusing on the ghost as a figuration of disjuncture within contemporary constructions of the dead. Taking account of the cultural unease and uncertainties about the afterlife generated during the Reformation, I explore how particular conceptualizations of the dead manifest instabilities that move the figure of the ghost into the disturbing role of the spectre. The literature I examine ranges from Elizabethan translations of Seneca and key theological treatises to examples of the English revenge tragedy produced by Shakespeare, Marston, and Chettle. In drawing upon this cross-section of work, I highlight the resonances between varying forms of spectrality in order to explore ways in which the ghost incorporates, but also exceeds, the theatre's requirement for dramatic excess. It thus becomes clear that the presence of the spectre extends beyond the immediate purposes of particular writers or genres to expose a wider disruption of the relation between, and ontologies of, the living and the dead.

The theoretical apparatus for this project is drawn primarily from deconstruction and psychoanalytic theory, with attention to the uncanny as an area in which the two intersect and overlap. These modes of analysis usefully highlight areas of disturbance and slippage within the linguistic and conceptual structures by which the living and dead are defined and understood. In adopting this approach, I aim to expand upon and complicate existing scholarship concerning the figure of the ghost in relation to sixteenth-century theological, philosophical, mythological, and popular discourses and traditions. I do so by demonstrating that the emergence of the uncanny arises through a culturally specific haunting of the form and language of Elizabethan treatments of the dead. The spectre thereby emerges as a figure that is as much the product as the cause of instabilities and erosion within the Elizabethan construction and containment of the dead.

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in any form for any other degree or professional qualification except as specified.

Catherine Stevens   October 31 2010

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

there sits Death, there sits imperious Death,
Keeping his circuit by the slicing edge.

<div align="right">(Christopher Marlowe, Tamburlaine Sig. E3[r])</div>

The spectre of death haunts Elizabethan literature and art as a figuration that both reifies and destroys the relation between the living and the dead. It appears through the iconography of the Dance of Death and the funeral arts; the intense theological debates concerning the afterlife; the corpses that litter the stage and the ghosts that pursue revenge in the history plays and tragedies of the theatre. As Marlowe's Tamburlaine gloats to his intended victims, death maintains its "circuit" implacably. Like all spectres, it has no cessation, no respect for boundaries, no limits. Always, it waits for the living, ever-present yet deferred and unknowable. Since the living are always alive, death should remain invisible, banished to a future that is never here. The dead should remain invisible also, expelled by the rituals of funeral and burial from the presence of the living. It is precisely this, however, that makes the dead so ripe for the production of spectrality: for nothing is so unsettling and corrosive as the emergence of the fixed, absent state of death within the protected borders that demarcate the space occupied by the living.

The staging of that spectrality is the focus of this thesis. I use this phrase, not in the sense of the theatrical dramatization of spectres (although much of my primary material does focus upon plays) but in regard to the conditions that form the grounds for, and topography of, the hauntings of Elizabethan literature. The pervasive presence of the ghost is a central figure in this type of haunting, not only because it enters into narratives concerning the return of the dead, but because, where it enters the spectral (a distinction to which I will return a little later), it perfuses the interiority of the living with the presence of death. As such, the ghost constitutes both the conditions for, and figuration of, the uncanny. Overused by playwrights to the point that it is often verging on the parodic by the end of the sixteenth century,

the pre-*Hamlet* Elizabethan ghost has been variously celebrated, maligned, and dismissed by countless critics. Dover Wilson exemplifies a common critical trend when he assesses the typical Elizabethan ghost as "a classical puppet, borrowed from Seneca, a kind of Jack-in-the-box, popping up from Tartarus at appropriate moments" (*What Happens in Hamlet* 55).[1] Early modern sceptics were not always impressed by the theatrical appeal of this style of ghost either: the ever-sceptical Thomas Nashe addresses the topic repeatedly and devotes much of his 1592 work *The Terrors of the Night or, A Discourse of Apparitions* to mocking popular beliefs about ghosts, complaining memorably that "spirits of the aire" are "in truth all show and no substance" (Sig. Cii[r]). But despite the supposed tiredness of the figure, two of the Renaissance's most memorable ghosts – Old Hamlet and Banquo – do not arrive until around the turn of the century. The earliest quarto of *Hamlet* was written sometime in the few years preceding its first publication in 1603, and *Macbeth* was written around 1606.[2] The ghost, it seems, was only just warming up.

It is commonplace for critics to position this development as an anomaly that arises through Shakespeare's genius, as he reimagines the seemingly tired, formulaic ghost of his contemporaries' work and renders it newly unsettling. E. Pearlman's "Shakespeare at Work: The Invention of the Ghost" provides an excellent example of this kind of historicized account of Shakespeare's "radical reinvention of the Ghost," charting numerous innovations over the course of *Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth* in contrast with the "familiar creatures of Elizabethan convention" (71, 73). In comparison with the standard characteristics of preceding ghosts – which are typically "a trifle campy," histrionic and verbose – Pearlman suggests that "it is almost impossible to exaggerate how startling and original" Old Hamlet's ghost

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[1] Wilson refers us in particular to the satirical complaint in the anonymous play *A Warning for Faire Women*, in which Comedy protests to Tragedy that the latter must have "a filthie whining ghost, / Lapt in some fowle sheete . . . Comes skreaming like a pigge halfe stickt, / And cries Vindicta, revenge, revenge" (Anon. Sig. [A2v]). This encapsulates the stock Elizabethan ghost at its most extreme, although it does not really constitute an accurate representation of all treatments of the ghost prior to Shakespeare's innovations.

[2] The evidence regarding *Hamlet*'s date of writing is somewhat unclear and the matter is considerably confused by the existence of the earlier, lost play, the *Ur-Hamlet*. For an overview of key arguments, see Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor's introduction to the Arden edition of the 1604 quarto, pp. 43-59. For a discussion of the complications introduced by the existence of multiple versions of the play, see pp. 74-86. There are no published editions of *Macbeth* until Shakespeare's 1623 folio but scholars generally agree that it was written in about 1606. Nicholas Brooke provides an excellent outline of the evidence concerning this dating in his introduction to the play, pp. 59-64.

would have been when it was first performed (71-72). Such accounts are appealing in their tracking of the nature and effectiveness of Shakespeare's revisions to the ghost's narrative function, dialogue, appearance, and (most importantly) unsettling of assumptions about the proper place of the ghost within some form of afterlife. However, it is a central premise of this thesis that the literary and dramatic evolution of the ghost is by no means so linear in terms of its engagement with the uncanny: and that Shakespeare's remarkable treatment of the ghost is in many respects an escalation of an ongoing engagement with the unassimilable aspects of death within Elizabethan culture. Although the theatrical properties of Shakespeare's innovations transform the figure of the ghost, the resulting uncanniness arises in conjunction with, rather than isolation from, the spectral workings of the wider discursive constructions of death within Elizabethan culture.

I want to consider the ghost, not only as a product of the struggle to come to terms with the problems that death poses for the living, but also as a figuration of a wider form of spectrality, the hauntings of language and epistemology that disrupt the ontology of the subject through their (dis)connections to the dead. The figure of the ghost is not inherently disturbing (or at least not radically so), despite belonging to the supernatural: the extent to which it generates the uncanny is contingent upon the environment in which it emerges. It becomes spectral where it operates as a figure of linguistic and psychic excess: where its functioning exceeds the categories and terms by which it is understood and thereby erodes the very structures of its own entry into signification. Because the spectre moves within, between, and outside of the structures by which we define and understand the world and our own subjectivity, it disturbs our security and disallows the emergence of alternate forms of containment. The dead become particularly generative of such spectres during the Reformation as, amidst the conflicted space of competing understandings of death and the afterlife, they occupy ever more unstable territory.

This thesis functions, then, at the intersections between the turbulent historical conditions that produce a particular unease in understandings of death; the structures of language as a site of disjuncture and slippage in those understandings; and the psychoanalytic discourse that relates such disturbances to their source within, and impact upon, the human psyche. For these purposes, I limit this study to a body of

literature broadly described as Elizabethan, although I have treated the parameters of this descriptor somewhat liberally. My choice of primary literature includes the early Elizabethan translations of Seneca and ranges through to later examples of revenge tragedies, focusing primarily on Henry Chettle's *The Tragedy of Hoffman* and Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth*. Strictly speaking, *Macbeth* is Jacobean but I include it here on the basis that its treatment of the uncanny and the figure of the ghost enters into the wider emergence of spectrality in literary engagements with death during Elizabeth I's reign and epitomises the disturbances therein. I also look at theological treatises with particular resonance in this area, primarily that of Ludwig Lavater's Protestant tract *Of Ghostes and Spirites Walking by Nyght* and Pierre Le Loyer's Catholic response, *A Treatise of Specters*. While neither of these were written by English theologians, they were both written and later translated into English around this period, the former being published in English in 1572 and the latter in 1605.[3] Both works are representative of, and influential within, contemporary discursive constructions of the ghost and share important links to the production of spectrality in literary and dramatic engagement with this figure.

   I choose this selection of literature, not because it constitutes any broad representation of the literature available in this area or even of the range of beliefs surrounding the ghost but rather, because some of these texts draw out the spectral in ways that have sometimes been partially or entirely overlooked by their critics, while others (specifically the Shakespeare plays) exemplify the spectral more openly. The aim of this thesis is not to provide a survey of Elizabethan literary ghosts, nor to make claims that are somehow universally applicable to them. Rather, it focuses upon the way in which spectrality often pervades, and is figured by, specific ghosts within Elizabethan literature and examines the mechanisms by which this occurs and to what effect. I therefore exclude detailed consideration of a number of prominent ghosts, such as the ghost of Andrea in Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, the ghosts of Albanact and Corineus in *Locrine* (one of the apocryphal Shakespeare plays), and the ghost of Gorlois in Thomas Hughes' *The Misfortunes of Arthur*. These ghosts exhibit fewer spectral characteristics than those I have chosen to

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[3] Lavater's work was originally published under the title of *Von Gespaenstern* in Zürich in 1569 and then in Latin in 1570 under the title of *De Spectris* (also in Zurich). Le Loyer's text was first published in French as *Quatre Livres des Spectres* in Angers in 1586.

examine, despite sharing stock attributes such as the desire for revenge and deployment of Senecan and/or other classical images and language.

In order to understand the grounds for the spectrality I address in this thesis, it is necessary to take into account the historical and cultural conditions that underpin the ghost and the dead more generally in the second half of the sixteenth century. In particular, we must pay attention to the social, psychological, and epistemological complexity underpinning Elizabethan conceptualizations of death amidst the changes of the Reformation. Eric Mallin provides a useful starting point for this in *Godless Shakespeare*, recounting a conversational remark made by Stephen Greenblatt in which the latter seeks to construe "the idea of Renaissance unbelief" as a product of religion by pointing out that it arises, and is understood within, the religious structures of concepts such as "heresy". In response, Mallin argues that, while "an active and vocal godlessness" amongst Elizabethans would have been hopelessly dangerous, this does not mean that it was not possible to think in ways that were anterior or alien to religious systems or that religion necessarily claims psychological primacy (3). Mallin's aim here is to establish a basis for claiming that Shakespeare's work extends beyond orthodoxy or religious boundaries. However, his observation has a broader applicability in that it highlights the complexity of human thought even in an environment dominated by theological prescription and the potential for conceptual constructions to extend beyond the constrictions of hegemonic systems of understanding. As Catherine Belsey observes in "Shakespeare's Sad Tale for Winter," in addition to religious narratives, "other influences" persisted within early modern England "that were not so firmly under the control of orthodoxy, whether Catholic or Protestant" (3). For her, it seems "that the official knowledge promulgated by theology, whether Catholic or Protestant, rarely tells the whole cultural story" (25).

This point is amply demonstrated at a much broader level in regard to social and cultural responses to the Church's reformulation of death. Historical research increasingly suggests that, during and after the Reformation, individual understandings were not consistent either in adhering to, or departing from, the Church's teachings on the dead, particularly with respect to the nature and existence of ghosts. In theory, the ghost no longer had a home within the Protestant framework

of death. The later medieval Church had generally assimilated and often even encouraged belief in ghosts as the spirits of the returned dead, on the basis that they were able to return from the intermediate space of purgatory (Schmitt 6). This did not mean that apparitions were commonplace or that they were always held to be the spirits of the returned dead – the point was subject to theological debate and apparitions were also associated with other manifestations of the supernatural and with perceptual error – but it was widely understood from the twelfth century onwards that they had a logical place within the structuring of the afterlife.[4] Within the first few years of Elizabeth I's reign, ghosts became officially defunct as the Church severed the links between the living and the dead, removing intercessory practices and rejecting Purgatory officially when the Church published its *Thirty-Nine Articles* in 1563.[5] Along with eliminating the staging point from which the dead might return, the most zealous reformers restricted possible interpretations of visiting spirits to position them firmly as either angels or (more likely) demons. Surveys of popular responses to those changes indicate a wide and complex range of understandings that varied far beyond mere adherence to, or rejection of, the Protestant constructions of the afterlife. This was scarcely new – Marshall demonstrates that even in the medieval period, ghost sightings and beliefs were complex and fraught with contradictions – but it marked an increasingly wide destabilisation in understandings of the dead (*Beliefs and the Dead* 12-18). Clergy across the Church were inconsistent in their teachings and perspectives and the populace often continued to engage in cultural practices designed to assist or communicate with the dead (such as funeral and memorial practices and Hallowe'en

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[4] For more on beliefs about the nature and function of ghosts, including their place within pagan and Christian belief, see Schmitt's *Ghosts in the Middle Ages*, esp. pp. 4-5, 25-26, 178-81. Prior to the twelfth century, the Church generally rejected the idea of the dead returning, under the lingering influence of Saint Augustine's teachings (Schmitt 17-24, Belsey 8-9). Even once the medieval Church embraced the existence of ghosts, its teachings indicated that visits from the dead could only occur in accordance with God's "special providence"; however, Peter Marshall demonstrates that popular belief and accounts of medieval ghost sightings did not always conform to this or other theological principles (*Beliefs and the Dead* 15-17). Marshall identifies the persistence of belief in connections between the living and the dead and the dead's potential to return as a sign of the persistence of "apotropaic folk custom" as well as Catholicism, the two sharing "fluid boundaries" (*Beliefs and the Dead* 137). For an overview of the key strands of belief and practices surrounding the dead in this period, see Marshall's *Beliefs and the Dead* pp. 12-18 and Keith Thomas's *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 701-724.
[5] The specific section that dispensed with purgatory was Article 22, which declares the "Romyshe doctrine concernyng purgatory" to be "vainly fayned, and grounded upon no warrauntie of Scripture, but rather repugnaunt to the word of God" (Sig. [Biiv]).

bell-ringing). Popular beliefs in purgatory lingered even amongst non-Catholics, and other non-purgatorial constructions of the ghost persisted as well (Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead* 127, 129-39, 262).[6] Moreover, while some Protestant theologians sought to assign the persistence of ghost beliefs to the uneducated masses, ghost-sightings persisted – even, on occasion, amongst members of the Protestant clergy (*Beliefs and the Dead* 246-47).

But sceptics existed also, even outside of Protestant parameters. Although he was scarcely inclined to express open religious doubt, Reginald Scot's provocative treatment of ghosts in *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* scoffs at Catholic ghost lore in a fashion that leaves little room for more legitimate supernatural figures either. (Marshall 239). More strikingly, across the population, "educated sceptics (like Horatio in *Hamlet*) were as liable to see apparitions as anyone else" despite their rejection of the systems through which such apparitions might be thought (Marshall, "Old Mother Leakey" 100). Lavater's *Of Ghostes and Spirites Walking By Night* complains of precisely this problem when it states that "Many not only of the common sorte, but also menne of excellent knowledge" are afflicted by uncertainty about the existence and nature of ghosts (Lavater 10).[7] This problem is then reiterated by his translator, Robert Harrison, who comments in his introduction to the volume that he is carrying out the translation in response to the lack of existing guidance on the matter when "there be many also, even nowe a dayes, which are haunted and troubled with spirites, and knowe not howe to use them selves" (Sig. [aiir]). In short, the reformed Church's establishment of a fundamental divide

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[6] Marshall points out that "the hardline of some clerical writers that all apparitions were demonic illusions was only one of a set of interpretive possibilities". More ambivalent understandings occurred in instances such as "some Elizabethan and early Stuart Protestant providentialist writings, where spirits in the likeness of wronged dead persons act as agents of God's vengeance against the wrong-doers" ("Old Mother Leakey" 100-01). Marshall thus argues for a more complex cultural response to the Protestant dismissal of ghosts than Keith Thomas, who argues that there was little confusion amongst the early reformers but it grew in subsequent years (*Religion and the Decline of Magic* 704-06). For a survey of theological and popular changes to ghost beliefs during the Reformation, see Marshall's *Beliefs and the Dead* pp. 232 – 264, Thomas, pp. 701-24, and R.C. Finucane's *Appearances of the Dead: A Cultural History of Ghosts*, pp. 90-114. G. Bennett also provides an excellent glimpse into early modern understandings of the ghost in "Ghost and Witch in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," including in regard to theological issues – see esp. pp. 6-9.

[7] Marshall observes that Lavater and Harrison's comments regarding the persistence of ghost beliefs reflected a wider concern amongst a number of prominent English Protestant theologians (*Beliefs and the Dead* 247). See for instance William Perkins' *A Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft*, which states that the belief that "dead men doe often appeare and walke" among the living "is indeede the opinion of the Church of Rome, and of many ignorant persons among us: but the truth is otherwise" (115).

between the living and the dead was subject to breaching in ways that were not always consistent with any established systems of belief.

With the Protestant structures of the afterlife unable to assimilate either conflicting popular beliefs or reports of actual ghost sightings, a heightened instability emerged within the terms by which the Elizabethans conceptualized the dead. A number of historicist critics have argued convincingly in recent decades that these developments accompanied a marked unease in English society's treatment of the dead that manifests itself in the period's literature. Michael Neill's *Issues of Death* and Robert Watson's *The Rest is Silence* both suggest that, in conjunction with secular developments within areas such as science and philosophy and in the midst of cultural shifts that fostered the importance of social distinctions and individual identity, the reformers' teachings gave death a heightened sense of finitude. This was particularly because the elimination of intercession and purgatory isolated the dead from "the reach of their survivors" and rendered death "a more absolute annihilation than ever" (Neill 38). Additionally, although the political and theological changes liberated the individual's spiritual fate from the spiritual interventions of the Church, this came with a catch: autonomy demands increased responsibility. What constitutes spiritual liberation in one respect brings also an increased sense of culpability and the associated problem of fallibility: and "the sinfulness" of individual "interiority" was rendering it increasingly "impossible to imagine satisfactorily the survival of a full selfhood in heaven" (Watson 6).[8] Thus death held a heightened threat of eternal torture, since the elimination of purgatory also erased the escape afforded by the painful but finite purging of sins.[9]

This is not to suggest, of course, a sudden outbreak of mass terror, nor a widespread rejection of Protestant teachings about death. Nor were anxieties about

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[8] Watson focuses more on the Jacobean period, but his observation about the problem of achieving salvation incorporates the events of later sixteenth-century England also: a problem arose in regard to "the familiar laws of supply and demand: assurance about personal salvation was declining while attachment to both the external properties and the internal subjectivities of the human individual were increasing" (2).

[9] As Neill points out, such fears reach a dramatic peak in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, in which Faustus longs for the reassuring finitude of purgatory as he faces the prospect of eternal damnation in his final moments: "Let Faustus live in hel a thousand yeeres, / A hundred thousand, and at last be savd. / O no end is limited to damned soules") (Sig. [F2v]). The actual experience of purgatory was much debated over the centuries but by the early sixteenth century, was generally considered equivalent to the tortures of hell; however, as Faustus perceives, it was nevertheless comforting insofar as it constituted a means to attain eventual entry to heaven (Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead* 25-26).

death entirely new, for medieval culture was by no means free of expressions of cultural anxiety concerning death and the afterlife. It does suggest, however, that the frames of reference within which people understood death were strained increasingly under the competing forces of discursive constructions of death and individual and social need. Watson and Neill both link such shifts to the development of certain treatments of death in the English tragedy, in which death increasingly became an enemy that was to be overcome. For instance, Watson observes that the revenge tragedy treated death as "a contingent event" that "can be cured by destroying its immediate agent," the execution of revenge upon the killer effecting a triumph over the cause, if not the result, of death (44). Neill, on the other hand, associates the revenge tragedy with an endeavour to combat death through the preservation of memory, with the stock character of the ghost forming part of the wider attempt to redress death's abrogation of the individual through the perseverance of the dead within the memory and current space of the living (245). Both critics trace a course of progress in which literary treatments of the dead evolve in response to contemporary unease in the period's theological (re)constructions of death, thereby manifesting a residual fear, uncertainty, and instability in the terms and structures through which the dead are conceived and understood.[10]

Such research suggests that the persistent return of the ghost figures broader difficulties in the cultural accommodation of changes in death and in the relation between the dead and the living. The tension between conflicting constructions of death and individual or popular needs creates fertile ground for increasingly unassimilable forms of the ghost to arise. It is not surprising, then, that the return of the dead in the period's literature become unstable as conflicted understandings of what it is to be dead pervade the structural workings of language in related

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[10] Phoebe Spinrad's *The Summons of Death on the Medieval and Renaissance English Stage* also provides an excellent exploration of the ways in which the problems of death are conceptualized and expressed within Medieval and Renaissance theatre and iconography. Her account focuses more closely on the dramatic treatment of the topic within a selection of plays, with less attention to the wider historical conditions underpinning cultural constructions of death. William Engel's *Death and Drama in Renaissance England: Shades of Memory* explores how memory and mnemonics inform the conceptualization and performance of death within the theatre. In a related vein, his earlier work *Mapping Mortality: The Persistence of Memory and Melancholy in Early Modern England* provides a detailed examination of the symbolic and iconographic aspects of early modern responses to the problems of mortality. Susan Zimmerman's *The Early Modern Corpse and Shakespeare's Theatre* makes an outstanding contribution in this area also, focusing primarily on the problematization of the dead within the Shakespearean corpus.

discourses. While the terms employed in discursive constructions of the dead inform individual and collective understandings, the language through which those terms are constructed is neither stable nor contained. As deconstruction suggests, this is in part inherent in the very nature of language: but the effect is heightened where the instability of language meets the escalation of shifting tensions within the formulation of the concepts it constructs. In an environment in which rapid and uneven changes are occurring even within the constitution of the categories of life and death, the terms themselves become increasingly unstable. Moreover, since those terms are not constituted through theological structures alone and are not separable from their linguistic connections to other historical and cultural discourses, instabilities in conceptualizations of the dead are heightened by a further slippage at the site of language. The uncanny emerges within these paradigmatic fractures, as familiar, delineable, and containable conceptions of death merge inextricably with the nebulous territory of what is unknown and unassimilable. The ground becomes ripe for a haunting.

Historicist approaches often place Elizabethan ghosts within a linear schema in which particular cultural and literary conditions (such as the inheritance of classical and medieval forms, narratives, and themes) are responsible for specific figurations of the ghost. The atemporality of those ghosts and their spectral effects function to disturb precisely such fixing of historical conditions. In invading and eroding the boundaries of the categories upon which they depend – not just appearing inside that from which they are excluded but troubling the very distinction between inside and outside – spectres enter into the territory of the uncanny. It is particularly significant that "death," "dead bodies" and "the return of the dead" are, as Sigmund Freud points out, common causes for profoundly uncanny experiences ("The Uncanny" 241). This perhaps suggests that, of all categories, death is that within which we are least able to tolerate movement. Since death is the ultimate immobilizer, the most contained, isolated, and inanimate state (in visible and biological terms at least), and the state against which the living are defined, we can bear no rupturing of its borders, no movement. As that which the living cannot avoid or contest (at least not successfully), it is also the ultimate category of the natural: the one event that is unavoidable and biologically fixed irrespective of culturally specific understandings

of what it holds. Hence, any threat to the boundaries of death, and in particular to the immobility of the dead, is almost invariably generative of the unnatural or supernatural and often a concomitant emergence of the uncanny.

In its radical indeterminacy, its erosion of the boundaries that are essential to its functioning, the uncanny is notoriously difficult to define. Studies of the uncanny throughout the last century have typically fallen back upon a description of the effects it generates in order to establish its function as a category, with Freud's foundational essay "The Uncanny," struggling as much as any to define the term. Freud describes the uncanny or "die unheimlichkeit"[11] as a "feeling", an "experience", an "atmosphere", an "effect", and a specific "class of the frightening" ("The Uncanny" 219, 249, 227, 246, 220).[12] For my purposes, the most important aspect is that which Nicholas Royle highlights in his summary of Freud's findings when he outlines the uncanny as "a critical disturbance of what is proper," "a crisis of the natural, touching upon everything that one might have thought was 'part of nature'," and "a peculiar commingling of the familiar and the unfamiliar," particularly where "something unhomely" is revealed "at the heart of hearth and home" (*The Uncanny* 1). In this, we must be aware that the "natural" does not fall outside of the workings of linguistic and philosophical construction but is rather a product of them. Hence, Freud is at pains to point out that if the supernatural occurs within the accepted bounds of perceptive or "material reality" in a literary text, then its naturalization – its assimilation of the supernatural within the (imaginary) norms of the text – prohibits the uncanny from arising ("The Uncanny 250).[13] In other

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[11] The two terms are not quite synonymous, being subject to the play of differences that inevitably marks a translated word or text (Royle 11). Psychoanalytic and literary critics vary in which term they deploy, often for no clear reason. For my purposes, this distinction is not substantially important and for purposes of consistency and clarity, I therefore employ the English term "uncanny" throughout.

[12] Derrida describes Freud's conceptualization of the uncanny as displaying "an uncontrollable undecidability in the axiomatics, the epistemology, the logic . . . and of the thetic or theoretic statements" (*Archive Fever* 46). Hélène Cixous observes Freud's essay to be "a niggling, cautious, yet wily and interminable pursuit (of 'something' – be it a domain, an emotional movement, a concept, impossible to determine yet variable in its form, intensity, quality and content)." It is a "fleeting . . . search whose movement constitutes the labyrinth which instigates it" ("Fiction and Its Phantoms" 525). As these descriptions suggest, the fashion in which Freud's writing reflects the content of his elusive subject matter is at least as reflective of the nature of the topic as of his approach.

[13] Rather surprisingly, Freud claims on this basis that literature often does not produce a sense of the uncanny in relation to an event that would invoke it in "reality" and that "the supernatural apparitions in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* or *Julius Caesar* . . . are no more really uncanny than Homer's jovial world of gods" because they fit within an "imaginary reality imposed on us by the writer" ("The

words, what is "natural" alters according to the terms of the cultural (and/or textual) environment in which it arises and therefore so does the production of the uncanny and its relation to the supernatural. But where the uncanny does arise, it breaches our understanding of such categories, eroding the distinctions between what is understood to belong or not belong. It is accordingly associated with the "sense of a secret encounter," not with something "out there" but with something that disrupts the relation between "what is inside and what is outside" (Royle 2).

The experience of the uncanny, then, is linked to both sense and perception and, crucially, to the means by which perception is produced. In his essay "On the Psychology of the Uncanny," Ernst Jentsch (one of Freud's contemporaries), emphasises the capacity for that which is "new," different, or "hostile" to generate a sense of the uncanny because of a delay in producing "conceptual connections" between the object and the individual's "previous ideational sphere" (8-9). What is familiar and understood is differentiated from what is not by the individual's ability immediately to assimilate "the phenomenon in question into its proper place" within existing categories of knowledge; failure to do so produces "disorientation" and often a resultant "shading of the uncanny" (8-9). Although Freud justly criticises this work as simplifying the uncanny to what is merely unfamiliar or out of context, Jentsch's theory usefully signals that the Freudian intermingling of the foreign and the homely is a function of what the conscious is (un)able to taxonomize. Thus the production of the uncanny is specific to the individual's intellectual and conscious functioning in relation to his environment. The production of the uncanny supernatural (including the figure of the spectre) is inextricably linked to the degree to which the text incorporates the apparition within its cultural, theological, and philosophical terms in the same way that it would, in the "real" world, be linked to the individual's personal understandings of what is natural, normal, and familiar. The uncanny is therefore inextricably associated with issues of language as the means by which we construct and comprehend our inner and outer worlds.

Uncanny" 250). These examples are, by Freud's own criteria, flawed, since the plays that he cites purport to be retellings of actual historical events and it is clear in all three of these plays that the encounter with a ghost is both unexpected and radically disturbing. Derrida treats Freud's scepticism towards the literary production of the uncanny with incredulity, commenting that Freud's claim is "all the more surprising in that all the examples of *Unheimlichkeit* in this essay are borrowed from literature!" (*Specters of Marx* 245).

John Newton observes in "Reading Ghosts: Early Modern Interpretations of Apparitions" that ghosts are read through existing "cultural schemata". In an early modern context, they are "assumed into a pre-existing world view, or meta-narrative, in which their existence can only be accounted for in the context of an overall scheme of religious thought" (67). However, this assertion implies that there is always a means for the ghost to be assimilated, that theological structures are always able to accommodate the ghost in some way even if only through disqualifying it as a legitimate figure. I would argue instead that the ghost enters into the role of the spectre precisely because, in some instances, it exceeds such meta-narratives and cannot therefore be accounted for in existing structures of language and thought. This is the point at which the psychoanalytic framework of the uncanny meets the deconstructive dismantling of linguistic and conceptual containment. In *Jacques Derrida*, Royle argues that Derrida's work is inherently associated with the uncanny. Deconstruction's function, he suggests, is to disturb, displace, and transmute the "verbal, conceptual, psychological, textual, aesthetic, historical, ethical, social, political and religious landscape" but also to expose that such "seismic transformations" are already present in the texts (any texts) themselves (26). It is this destabilization, this subversion of the seemingly solid ground of language and knowledge, that produces the deconstructive spectre in much the same way that the breaching of the natural and familiar generates the ghosts of the psychoanalytic uncanny.

This is why Royle comments that "monsters lurk everywhere in Derrida's work". What is monstrous is "intimately connected with what is normal, with normality and normalization" – the monstrous can only be named as such through its opposition to what is normal, but deconstruction, like any event that is generative of the uncanny, disturbs that opposition, exposing that what is outside or opposed to the normal may also inhabit it (111). Thus deconstruction is both descriptive and productive of spectrality. Where psychoanalysis locates the uncanny at the site of the border between the conscious and the unconscious, deconstruction similarly situates it in the borders and structures that form the systems of thought and language. The spectre is, in both instances, the apparition of that which breaches the border and thereby destabilizes the opposition between what lies upon either side. This is why Ernesto

Laclau describes Derrida's treatment of the spectre as "a classic deconstructive move: the specter being undecidable between the two extremes of body and spirit, these extremes themselves become contaminated by that undecidability" ("The Time is Out of Joint" 87). The spectre haunts the terms of its own construction, the crucial distinctions between past and present, life and death, presence and absence.

To be clear about my choice of terminology here, I should acknowledge that the term "spectre" may be used to denote any visual apparition ranging from a "phantom, or ghost" to an imagined "object or source of dread or terror" or even a "reflection" (*OED* "spectre," def. 1, 3). All of these connotations will become important at various points throughout this thesis and others will arise through early modern usages of the term in my primary texts. Like the "spirit," the "shade," and indeed the "ghost," the "spectre" is slippery and changeable in its early modern deployment. For this reason, I do not attempt here to distinguish in any depth between their implications in modern and Elizabethan usages as my own deployments of these terms inevitably shift according to whether I am adopting my own theoretical terminology or entering into the terms deployed within my primary texts. Instead, I endeavour to consider spectres and ghosts in the (con)textual forms that they take in any text under discussion, making clarifications only where a given context requires further explanation. By and large, I habilitate early modern terms to the lexicon of my critical apparatus as appropriate whilst remaining alert to the nuances and implications of their original usage. My own usage of the term "spectre" will generally invoke its deconstructive and uncanny senses, in which the spectre constitutes, not merely the figure of the ghost as the visual manifestation of the spirit of the dead, but relates more closely to the functioning of the ghost where it refuses the containment or logic of structures of knowledge.

With that established, we may consider that the ghost, as Christopher Prendergast puts it in "Derrida's Hamlet," inhabits a "place/non-place" because there is no space between these oppositions and yet the ghost can be relegated to neither pole (45). Like Derrida, Prendergast refers here to the ghost that is decidedly spectral in its effects. This is not simply, or at least not only, a matter of binary opposition in qualities associated with oppositional terms but rather of the opposition that arises from the boundaries that function to differentiate particular categories. Life is

continuous with death in terms of the individual's linear progression across time and mortal bodies possess the same spiritual substance as the dead: but the act of dying functions to generate a division that, in Protestant theology at least, positions the dead in isolated opposition to the living. In the presence of the spectral, though, the poles themselves begin to crumble as the failure of exclusion erodes the fixity of their positions. Prendergast observes that ontological "displacement" underpins Derrida's reading of the ghost's "radical indeterminacy" rather than the more usual theological problematization of critical debate (45-46). In *Spectres of Marx*, Derrida identifies the ghost's ontological indeterminacy – its occupation of an indeterminate state "between presence and absence . . . material embodiment and disembodiment" – as the condition of its spectrality. Thus, "it inhabits a space of pure virtuality, and what in that space is swallowed up is the ontological ground of Being itself" (Prendergast 45). To a certain extent, this is a function of any ghost, in that ghosts always occupy an indeterminate territory between and within the conditions of presence and absence and its related categories of opposition (life/death, past/present, and corporeal substance/spirit, to name three of the most prominent). However, in the wider context of *Hamlet*, the spectrality of this specific ghost cannot and does not function independently of its disruption of theological contexts: nor, indeed, does the spectrality of any ghost exist outside of or anterior to, the culturally-specific structures (philosophical, theological, linguistic) that its spectrality disturbs. Rather, it is its paradoxical ability to inhabit but also exceed these structures that generates its uncanny effects.

This conceptualization of the ghost is central to this thesis and has been usefully explored in some areas by Marjorie Garber's important approach to the topic in *Shakespeare's Ghost Writers*. Published in 1987, Garber's work explores the uncanny extensively in Shakespeare's work, using a predominantly psychoanalytic framework. Garber examines ghostliness in a number of Shakespeare's plays in order to demonstrate, not only the uncanniness that psychoanalytic, poststructural, and postmodernist theories expose within his work, but also "the way in which Shakespearean texts . . . have mined themselves into the theoretical speculations that have dominated our present discourses, whether in literature, history, psychoanalysis, philosophy, or politics" (xiii). The subsequent exploration incorporates a kind of

intertextual reading of Shakespeare's work to demonstrate that theoretical modes of enquiry are not something that we merely project backwards upon his drama and the historical aspects of its production, but also arise in conjunction with, and response to, its constant breaching of boundaries. Thus for Garber, the uncanniness within Shakespeare's work is doubly uncanny in that it not only manifests ghosts within its own time, but also ghosts us, as critics that come after, but also within, the conditions of his writing. Garber's reading of this uncanniness is particularly helpful, not only for the light it sheds on ghostliness within individual plays such as *Hamlet* and *Julius Caesar*, but also for the way in which it establishes a basis for considering the broader atemporality of the spectre. In breaching its own cultural conditions for the structuring of categories such as life and death, past and present, the spectre speaks to us through its resonance with our own modes of enquiry into precisely the same events.

In some respects, the collection of essays in Ewan Fernie's *Spiritual Shakespeares* constitutes a similar endeavour as it sets out to liberate the treatment of the spiritual (and therefore spirits) from the theological strictures to which historicists have often bound the topic. Refreshingly, Fernie sets out to compile a collection of essays that identifies spirituality as a "dimension of the plays" that is "illuminated by, but remains irreducible to, any established theory or theology" (2). Identifying spirituality as anterior to religion and as a "mode of opposition to what is," he argues that Shakespeare's work is "sufficiently 'real' to be haunted by spiritual alterity from within," producing unidentifiable forces that operate outside of the confines of specific ideologies and theologies (9, 5). This is the source of many of the characters' crises, such as those generated by the supernatural events that plague Richard III, Brutus, and Macbeth. Fernie takes to task critics such as Greenblatt for minimizing the spiritual forces at work within the protagonists' demises. He proposes instead that we "think in terms not so much of spiritual truth as *truths*. For a drama cut loose of its medieval moorings in an epoch of religious fission and the emergence of scepticism, spirituality is not a secure given, so much as a questionable and open structure of being and experience." Hence, "Shakespearean pluralism involves competition between possible absolutes, and resistance to the absolute as well" (7). In this, Fernie does not directly address the matter of the uncanny but

indirectly identifies the grounds for it, by working to show that the excess and dissolution of boundaries within Shakespeare's drama are more than products of the tensions between historical (and often specifically theological) forces, but arise through the presence of something more, something *other* at work within his negotiations between competing cultural forces. What is perhaps most useful here is his alignment of the spiritual with that which the spectres in Shakespeare's work show us when they refuse the constraints of the systems of knowledge. Both expose that we may sometimes learn more from what we cannot know than from what is already established and therefore marked by its own limits.

Some recent critical approaches to issues of uncanniness in Shakespeare's work have also focused on the Gothic in an attempt to challenge the linear, historical narratives that place this as a specifically eighteenth-century event. Two volumes have been produced recently that are helpful in this respect. Christy Desmet and Anne Williams argue in their Introduction to *Shakespearean Gothic* that Shakespeare's work is not only foundational to later Gothic literature but generates, in and of itself, many of the qualities that we now associate with the genre. In particular, they highlight Shakespeare's disturbance of "rules," suggesting that "in authorizing the 'barbarous' and the irrational, in affirming the burden of the past, Shakespeare invited us to contemplate the human elements that escape the bounds of reason and do not obey its laws" (2, 7). Similarly, John Drakakis and Dale Townshend's *Gothic Shakespeares* navigates the seeming atemporality of Shakespeare's engagement with the dark and often transgressive preoccupations associated with the later body of work in the eighteenth century and beyond. In his introduction, Drakakis points out that Shakespeare's work, with its "investment in the resources of the supernatural," death, and the sphere of "human experience" outside of the rational, qualifies itself as belonging to the Gothic (1). These collections of essays work towards identifying the many ways in which qualities that typify this genre have considerable force prior to the eighteenth century, exposing the complexity of the relation between Shakespearean and later bodies of work we now classify as the Gothic. Although most of the essays in these volumes address material outside of the parameters of this thesis, their explorations of the intertextuality of Shakespeare and the Gothic is helpful in drawing attention to how a

text's themes, concerns, modes of enquiry, and literary devices may emerge through a complex engagement with its environment in a way that often denies subsequent critical constructions of historical situation and genre. In the latter volume, Townshend's chapter "Gothic and the ghost of *Hamlet*," is of particular interest for the way in which it shows the spectre in *Hamlet* to be linked directly to the struggle to comprehend death and the failure of mourning, an issue that I will take up in some depth in Chapter Two. Townshend demonstrates that modern psychoanalytic conceptions of mourning and spectrality connect directly with the treatment of such issues in *Hamlet*: for the spectres in Shakespeare, like those of eighteenth-century Gothic, manifest the (failed) compulsion to come to terms with the nature of death.

Zimmerman's *The Early Modern Corpse and Shakespeare's Theatre* makes a helpful addition to this field of study from another focal point, turning the longstanding critical interest in early modern treatments of the dead towards the issue of corporeal indeterminacy. Zimmerman draws attention to the body as a "hermeneutic matrix for the human being" that is problematic in its slippages between polarised categories determining what is "visible," material and known, with what is uncertain and obscured from view (1). Pointing to corruptibility of the corpse as a site at which such divisions are eroded, she goes on to highlight the problematization of the body and the dead within contemporary theological and scientific discourses, and related aspects of its treatment in the theatre. Zimmerman traces a pattern emerging within Shakespeare's work in which the body becomes a site of ontological indeterminacy and epistemological instability in regard to understandings of the human. Thus, although she does not directly set out to investigate the uncanny, her research provides fruitful insights into the instability within early modern conceptualizations of the dead that is generative of, and figured within, the increasingly spectral ghosts.

While focusing primarily on Shakespeare's plays, Zimmerman's treatment of the wider conditions of early modern understandings of the dead draws attention to the fact that the ghost's spectrality is not specific to Shakespeare's work. It seems to me that Shakespeare is not so much alone in his production of uncanny and often Gothic disturbances of the dead, as he is uniquely effective. That is to say, his spectacular breaching of conventions and of psychological and cultural boundaries in his

treatments of the dead magnifies, rather than invents, a disturbance present within wider engagements with the figure of the ghost. The stage upon which Shakespeare places his most compelling and disturbing ghosts is already primed for, and indeed generative of, precisely such spectres. Recently, Belsey has called into question the enduring assumption that Shakespeare's creation of a genuinely unsettling spectre in *Hamlet*, rather than a conventional "bloodcurdling but not eerie" ghost, was entirely new (1). She turns to popular stories outside of Protestant and Catholic constructions of ghosts and the afterlife to draw attention to "the long tradition of popular ghost lore that successive doctrinal prohibitions and appropriations were unable to suppress" (8). Her detailed tracing of the resonances between *Hamlet* and popular stories that functioned outside of the structures of religious understanding constitutes an important addition to existing accounts that have so often limited the play to a simple interaction between Protestant and Catholic perspectives, with perhaps a few added elements of the most well-known strands of folklore or classical mythology.[14] Belsey is convincing in her argument that "the ghost lore and the storytelling skills that make the apparition in *Hamlet* chilling grow out of the conventions of popular narrative" (24). However, in tracing the familiar patterns of the literary histories of Elizabethan stage ghosts, Belsey endorses the traditional view that "outside Shakespeare and prior to *Julius Caesar* in 1599, extant stage ghosts are not uncanny" (7). While locating *Hamlet* within a wider tradition of ghostly disturbance and ostensibly liberating it from the critical assumption that "Shakespeare invented the uncanny virtually single handed," Belsey tacitly affirms the perspective that he produced the earliest known theatrical examples and does not address the possibility of its emergence within other contemporary modes of writing outside of popular folklore (7).

Indeed, this is indicative of a much wider trend amongst critics looking at issues of early modern spectrality: Shakespeare may not have dreamt it up alone, but attention to the uncanny is oddly absent from critical approaches to ghosts and the

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[14] Belsey notes that it is not possible to liberate these narratives entirely from the theology of the time, since "there are few surviving popular tales where vernacular ghost lore is not interlaced with scraps of Church teaching." Nevertheless, she contests that "we have . . . fragmentary access to material that retains enough vernacular elements to demonstrate their survival into Shakespeare's time and beyond" (11). I would suggest that this may well denote the inseparability of popular belief from Church teachings in the immediate social context as well as in terms of the writings that survive, although Belsey does not pursue this point further.

dead within the writing of his contemporaries. Such perspectives seem to be the product of a kind of historical sleight-of-hand, an established reading of the Elizabethan corpus that conjures them into an assigned role within the narratives of literary history in regard to treatments of the dead. It is as though Shakespeare's extraordinary generation of the spectral draws a veil over other writings, hiding from view the instabilities and shifting terms of other, less radical engagements with death. But if, as Belsey argues, Shakespeare's engagement with the uncanny was preceded by earlier examples of its presence in contexts such as that of folklore, this suggests that we might do well to examine the work of contemporary writers with sharper attention to their treatment of the dead, outside of the traditional, historicized accounts of their literary role.

David Punter outlines an emerging critical movement towards such modes of analysis in his essay "Spectral Criticism." Spectral criticism, as he describes it, is "a substrate of all dealings with text, an undecidable ground on which our reading occurs, a reinvocation of a terrorizing but desired communion with the dead" (260). Drawing upon the foundation of Derrida's *Specters of Marx*, he points out that:

> Derrida engages with the looping circularity of history, whereby there is, as in the Gothic, never an origin, or a never-origin, a state whereby the past refuses to be entirely occluded but remains to haunt the apparent site of enlightened new beginnings: in the beginning – apparently – is the apparition. History therefore cannot be written without ghosts, but the point goes further than this: the narratives of history must necessarily include ghosts – indeed they can include little else – but they will also be written *by* ghosts. History is a series of accounts of the dead, but it is also a series of accounts *by* the dead; the voices we overhear in our dealings with history are spectral without exception, they spectralize the possibility of knowledge. (262)

This approach suggests that scholarly and critical approaches to the writing of the past are not only unable to preclude the ghosts of history, but are also produced *by* its ghosts. The spectres in question are not merely the narrative figures of ghosts but are those that write history: they are the voices that return now, for the first time, as we address the writings of the past, but also that emerge through our own voices, as our engagement with history and historical texts is inseparable from the history that constructs *us*. Thus they are to do with the sense "that we are, as it were, looking at

the wrong side of the paper (or at the paper before, or after, it has been temporarily inscribed)" so that the text is "open to construal as the 'text instead', the wrong text, a ghostly alteration of a prior state of material being which is unsusceptible of recapture" (267).

Such an approach enables a movement beyond the recapturing of an historical voice or voices to examine the spectral workings, the incompleteness and transgressions within the text that enable it to move outside of the structures we identify in our (re)constructions of history. One of the most important points here is Punter's suggestion (in regard to the postcolonial) that "the phantomatic" may "be a function of specific relations between and among languages, so that the issue of the speaking voice" would have to "be considered in terms of the 'foreigning' of the apparently natural, the inner sense of a language not our own" (268). This concept is important to my approach to the language in which Elizabethan writers construct the dead, realizing, not only the "partiality of all our efforts" to access their writings through "accurate historical exhumation," but the impossibility of the Elizabethans being any more able to hermetically contain and control their treatment of the dead (271). It is not only history, after all, that cannot access the gaps, the incompletions and hauntings of the texts that we examine, but all entries into language, into the employment of networks of significations with no origin, end, or limits. So while Punter returns us once more to Old Hamlet as the ghost *par excellence* and the ghost that continues to haunt our readings of the spectre, it is in order to consider that "spectral criticism" does not attend to the matter of knowing – as Hamlet attempts (although fails) to do – but "thrives . . . not on the originary voice but on the *echo*" (273). For Punter, "*Hamlet* tells us *of* secrets; it cannot, by definition, tell us secrets" (274)

In this thesis, I work to call forth a few more of those secrets, to look at the spectral workings of broader treatments of the ghost that speak with and to, the profoundly uncanny figures in *Hamlet* and other Shakespearean works. I begin by looking at treatments of the dead in the early Elizabethan translations of Seneca, focusing primarily on Jasper Heywood's translations of *Thyestes*, John Studley's

Agamemnon, Alexander Neville's *Oedipus*, and Thomas Nuce's *Octavia*.[15]

Compiled into a single volume by Thomas Newton in 1581, most of the translations

(including all of those which I address here) were undertaken in the 1560s.[16] These

texts demonstrate a marked spectrality as they call the Senecan dead into the

conflicted language of their contemporary environment. Critics of these translations

have largely failed to register their significance as individual literary works that

function, like other texts, in a complex relation with the linguistic and cultural

conditions of their production. Broadly speaking, criticism has fallen into two

streams. In the first, critics approach the translations as cultural relics of the

Elizabethan approach to translative processes, assessing how faithful a translation is

to the "original" or how aesthetically pleasing it is, with an accompanying critique of

stylistic and formal properties. Evelyn Spearing, who has strongly influenced the

last century of criticism in this field, exemplifies the typical result of this approach

when she observes that the *Tenne Tragedies* have little "dramatic quality" and their

value lies only "in the interest of their language and style, in their metrical and

grammatical forms, and in their influence on the development of the Elizabethan

drama" ("The Elizabethan 'Tenne Tragedies of Seneca'" 458). Despite paying close

attention to the linguistic workings of the translations, their innovations and creative

treatment of the source texts, she assumes that the translations function as somewhat

inferior copies of the Senecan originals.

Other critics have largely followed suit throughout the last century. For instance,

in "Adapting to the Times: Expansion and Interpolation in the Elizabethan

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[15] Although originally assumed to be authored by Seneca, *Octavia*'s authorship is now generally attributed elsewhere by modern scholars. John Fitch, for example, argues that the play was probably written after Nero's death in 68 AD and no later than the 90s. Nevertheless, it forms a functional part of the Senecan corpus amongst the Elizabethan translations, not only because the Elizabethans believed it to be the work of Seneca but also because of the role that it takes up within the mythological, historical, and thematic network constructed throughout Seneca's tragedies. For an outline of the key points of debate in the play's authorship, see Fitch pp. 510-12.

[16] As Jessica Winston indicates in "Seneca in Early Elizabethan England," critics often focus upon Newton's 1581 quarto of *The Tenne Tragedies of Seneca* because it immediately preceded a sharp rise in Senecan-inspired drama (31). Because there is little variation between editions, the distinction between criticism of Newton's quarto and the earlier publication of individual translations from 1559 through the 1560s is largely unimportant for my purposes. Only one of the translations in this edition (Newton's version of *Thebais*) was new, although Studley's *Phaedra* [*Hippolytus*] and *Hercules Oetaeus*, written around 1566-67, are not known to have been previously published (Norland 253). Neville's version of *Oedipus* was the only text to undergo any significant revision for Newton's edition and none of the amendments significantly affect the passages I discuss here.

Translations of Seneca," Howard B. Norland addresses the way in which the translators alter their source texts "in keeping with the sixteenth-century conception of tragedy" and with the contemporary audience in mind, but does not alter his critical framework significantly from that of earlier critics (262). He incorporates a range of considerations in terms of form, content, and interpretation but perpetuates the commitment to assessing "fidelity" to the original texts (259). Occasionally critics gesture in the direction of a more culturally specific reading of the translations – in his Introduction to Heywood's translation of *Thyestes*, Joost Daalder goes so far as to describe the text as "fundamentally a Renaissance play as much as a classical one" – but there are few real attempts to engage seriously with the implications of viewing the translations as specifically Renaissance texts (xxvii).

The second stream of criticism focuses more closely on the longstanding debate about Senecan influence within the development of Renaissance drama. In this, some critics do consider cultural perception, but usually only in order to explore what it suggests about how the translations function as conduits for the transmission of Senecan influence within the evolution of the English tragedy.[17] In "Seneca and English Tragedy," for instance, G.K. Hunter considers formal, ethical, philosophical, and theological differences between the Latin and English versions of Seneca, but only in order to argue against the predominant critical trend that identifies English tragedy as being heavily indebted to Senecan influence. Considerably more attention has been paid to the broader cultural reception of Seneca as part of the debate concerning Senecan literary influence – for example, in looking at how Stoic ideas

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[17] Prominent criticism in favour of the argument that the translations play a role in the wider transmission of Senecan influence include T.S. Eliot's "Seneca in Elizabethan Translation" and B. R. Rees' "English Seneca: A Preamble," the latter of which concludes, rather offputtingly, that "English Seneca . . . was the midwife assisting at the birth of English drama" (133). Some critics who support the notion of Seneca as an important dramatic influence argue that a more complex model is nevertheless required to understand the complexities of historical influence. This includes Gordon Braden's *Renaissance Tragedy and the Senecan Tradition*, Rees' "English Seneca" (123-25), Daalder's introduction to *Thyestes* (xxi-xv), and Robert Miola's *Shakespeare and Classical Tragedy: The Influence of Seneca*. A smaller body of scholarship argues against the translations (and indeed the Senecan corpus itself) having a substantial influence upon drama, such as Howard Baker's *Induction to Tragedy*, F. L. Lucas's *Seneca and Elizabethan Tragedy*, and Sander M. Goldberg's "Going for Baroque." The latter highlights the need for more specific conceptualization of elements such as dramatic action and rhetoricity in discussions of the relation between the Renaissance and Senecan tragedy. For an overview of the scholarship up until 1978, see Frederick Kiefer's "Seneca's Influence on Elizabethan Tragedy: An Annotated Bibliography."

are perpetuated and/or transformed through their reception into the Christian climate of Elizabethan England – but the translations are not usually the central focus here.

What is conspicuously absent from most of this debate is any endeavour to produce sustained consideration of the translations in regard to their assimilation of the formal and mythological properties of Seneca's texts into the framework of Elizabethan language and discourses. The cultural and linguistic specificity of the translators' reception of Seneca, the qualities that see the Latin brought forth, not only into the English language, but into the philosophical, theological, and cultural climate of Elizabethan England, remain relatively unexplored.[18] The lack of theoretical material employed in addressing the Senecan translations across the spectrum of criticism is perhaps responsible for (or indicative of) some of the limitations of work in this field. Even amongst the small number of critics that attend to the translations as texts of individual significance, it is seldom that any attempt is made to engage with translation theory in any meaningful way. Yet in recent decades, translation theorists have increasingly called into question the practice of positioning translations as secondary by-products or copies of "original" texts. Octavio Paz highlights one of the most important aspects of this shift when he comments that "all texts," including translations "are originals . . . . Up to a point, each translation is a creation and thus constitutes a unique text". For him, true originality is impossible even in the so-called original text, "because language itself, in its very essence, is already a translation – first from the nonverbal world, and then, because each sign and each phrase is a translation of another sign, another phrase" ("Translation: Literature and Letters" 154). Thus, Paz suggests that the term "original" is itself somewhat illusive, according a linguistic and creative priority to a source text that disguises its own dependence upon, and entry into, the significatory networks of other texts, other writings that endlessly contribute to the cross-referential structures of language. He also suggests that while the translated text inevitably enters into an exceptionally close relationship with its source, this relation

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[18] Douglas Green argues in "Newton's Seneca," that "the old debate about the extent of the collection's influence . . . has obscured other possible effects" and goes on to explore the significance of Newton's translation of *Thebais* just as the English tragedy turns from instructive morality to the "mimetic representation of characters involved in an ethical action" (93-94). Green's essay is rare in that it gives serious consideration to the inevitably transformative effects of re-writing a Senecan text in an altered historical context. However, its focus upon Newton's translation renders it of limited relevance for my purposes.

is by no means isolated or contained. At the same time that the translation performs a doubling of the source text, it must equally enter into a relationship with the linguistic structures, discourses, texts, and contexts that are specific to the functioning of the language into which it translates.

In Chapter One, I draw out the spectral qualities of this relation between the source and translated texts through theoretical frameworks offered by Walter Benjamin and Jacques Derrida. I do so in order to examine how, in the Senecan translations, the spectral aspects of translation both resonate with, and greatly amplify, the disturbances of the dead. These works introduce Seneca's revenants into English at a time when the dead are already inhabiting unstable ground and claim them at once to be both ancestor and offspring. They are marked in advance by the source texts that they are not and at the same time inscribe Seneca's material with the language and therefore the discursive structures of Elizabethan English. I examine the relationship between the source and translations in some depth, not with a view to assessing the accuracy or quality of the translations, but in order to consider the ways in which the assimilation of Seneca's Latin into the Elizabethan cultural environment transforms its content, unsettling the terms by which the dead are understood, and thereby also their containment. In doing so, I make no claim to positioning the translations of the dead as directly influential upon other, subsequent drama and literature, but rather work to establish a destabilisation of the dead that enters into a wider cultural disruption of the ontologies of the dead and their relation to the living.

In Chapter Two, I look at specific strategies by which the living endeavour to contain the dead through the compulsion for ritualized burial, and then move on to considering the ways in which breaches of burial are generative of the spectral. Drawing attention to the structural polarisation of terms that underpins the production of categories such as "living" and "dead," I examine theological extracts from Perkins and Lavater with a view to establishing how they endeavour to separate fully the living and the dead, and to what effect. Using deconstructive theory, I explore how the mutual exclusivity of the terms and constructions used in such treatments of the dead is marked by the conditions of its own failure. I also look at the psychoanalytic structures that underlie the imperative to bury. As a figure that

reifies the disruption of burial, the ghost exposes the way in which death lurks within the space of the living. More than that though, it demonstrates the way in which death is constitutive of the living and therefore integral to the existence of that which it destroys. Freudian and Derridean theories of mourning suggest that the formation and preservation of the inner self is paradoxically both dependent upon death and also its banishment: but the structures of mourning are often troubled, particularly in the Elizabethan revenge tragedy. The resulting failure of the living to lay the dead satisfactorily to rest and to mourn adequately – to bury the dead fully and finally – is fundamental to the production of spectrality and concomitant interior disruption in texts such as *The Tragedy of Hoffman* and *Hamlet*.

Of course, in both of these plays, the melancholic inability to relinquish the dead father is related to an injunction that, in seeming conflict with the requirement for burial, calls for the son to bear the father's memory. Both Hamlet and Hoffman commit to preserving this memory, but are haunted by the effects, as remembering the dead and remembering the living are neither separable nor the same and therefore disrupt the temporal structures through which memory operates. In Chapter Three, I consider how the problematic commitment to remembrance marks the very being of the bereft son in a way that corrupts his ability to function within time. This effect is connected to the ghost's wider problematization of temporality and its epistemological categories. The longstanding debate amongst *Hamlet*'s critics regarding the ghost's positioning within Catholic and Protestant theologies testifies in itself to the ghost's resistance to assimilation by the structuring forces of theological discourse and related philosophies. What is so significant about the ghost's indeterminacy is that, as it simultaneously inhabits and exceeds ontological and spiritual categories, it erodes their very foundations. I look particularly closely at how the spectral disruption of time destabilises the structures of inheritance so that linear progress – pursuit of that which would put the time to rights – is underpinned by the (temporal) conditions of its own failure. In this, the nature of inheritance becomes defined, not by the material, biological, social, or political rewards that are passed through time, but by the control of time as the structure that enables their trafficking, enabling the heir to inherit in time and proceed with the business of living. In texts such as *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *The Tragedy of Hoffman*, this also

becomes what is least subject to mortal control. The living cannot, in the presence of the spectre, inherit and also liberate themselves from the effects of the lingering presence of the dead.

Indeed, this erosion of the boundaries between the living and the dead bleeds into the most immediate means by which the living comprehend and position themselves in relation to their outer environment. In Chapter Four, I explore this problem further, focusing on the corruption of perception that pervades Elizabethan constructions of the spectre. Unsurprisingly, the matter of determining the accuracy of visual perception is of crucial importance in a culture in which the interpretation of apparitions links directly to the veracity of opposing theological accounts of such sightings and, accordingly, may influence the salvation of the soul. When considered in conjunction with philosophical and theological conceptualizations of the nature of vision and perception, episodes of visual uncertainty problematize the matter of accurately perceiving any kind of independent, exterior reality, drawing the subject instead into a complex relation between inner and outer worlds. In this process, the spectre exposes that which is usually hidden within the interior of the gazing subject as well as the exterior domain in which the ghost emerges. In returning an image that fails to correlate with the subject's understanding of the external environment, the spectre often functions as a reflection that exposes a fundamental disjuncture within the structures by which inner and outer worlds are conceived and separated.

Throughout my exploration of this topic, I examine and quote from original publications of my primary texts rather than modernised editions. Since the process of editing and modernising punctuation and spelling inevitably involves a certain degree of interpretation, I examine texts in their original form in order to avoid any loss of nuance or ambiguity that may be significant in the generation of spectrality. I have compared my primary material to modern, edited texts where available and note any significant errors or problems in the original publication where it is relevant to my argument. I largely preserve original spelling and punctuation in my quotations from primary texts, other than silently expanding contractions and ampersands, and restoring the spelling of those letters originally modified to suit the printing process. For purposes of clarity, I have made occasional corrections to punctuation and spelling and restored letters that have been obscured in the original text where it is

necessary for sense. All changes to spelling are marked by brackets. Citations from these works vary according to the text, as some were originally published with page numbers and others only with signatures. For plays from Shakespeare's first folio, page numbers are specific to the section of the folio, as comedies, histories, and tragedies were divided into sections with independent page numbering. I have therefore preceded all page references for these texts with a number corresponding to the relevant section of the folio – most citations are from the third section, which contains the tragedies.

In regard to the authorship of translations, it should be noted that I make an implicit distinction between translations of "literary" texts (such as the works of Seneca) and translations of theological doctrine. The Senecan translations, including the modern translations of Fitch and Frank Justus Miller, are listed under the relevant translators' names in my Works Cited list. The other translations of contextual material – specifically theological tracts such as those of Perkins, Lavater and Le Loyer – are listed under the original authors' names and I largely refer to them as the authors throughout my discussion. This is not because I wish to suggest that the latter texts are any less subject to the transformative effects of translation that I discuss in Chapter One than are literary texts. Rather, it reflects the fact that I primarily utilize these texts to highlight particular instances of cultural, philosophical, and/or theological discourses that provide significant resonances between, or context for, my discussion of literary and theoretical material. The finer distinctions between original and source text are therefore of less significance to my line of enquiry and have been excluded from consideration. The same principle applies, of course, to translated theoretical material such as the English translations of Derrida that I employ throughout.

In terms of editions, I generally use the earliest published edition of a primary text. The notable exception to this is *Hamlet*, for which I use the text of the second quarto published in 1604, based on the premise that it offers a more complete and credible treatment of the play's material than the so-called "corrupted" first quarto of 1603. I use the 1631 edition of Chettle's *The Tragedy of Hoffman* as the earliest extant copy of the play. Although some alterations may have been made between its original publication (around the same time as *Hamlet*) and this later date, it retains all

of the qualities of an Elizabethan play and there is no cause to treat it as a later work. It will be noted that I largely treat the plays discussed in this thesis under the category of "literature" and with attention primarily to their textual, rather than performative qualities. I do so on the basis that a static text that has been effectively fixed through the medium of publication may offer insights that are less readily identifiable within the endlessly fluid and variable space of dramatic performance. Whilst many plays would not, of course, have originally been written in their published form prior to or even during their staging, their written legacy is no less important for that, nor indeed less a product of their cultural context. It is worth noting too that a number of dramatic works were not necessarily intended for performance. Although there is evidence that some Senecan plays were performed around the time of the Senecan translations – specifically *Oedipus*, *Troas*, and *Medea* – only *Oedipus* is known to have been performed in English translation and it appears entirely possible that some of the translations were undertaken purely as literary endeavours (Winston 30 n.5, 32, 48-49).[19]

In seeking to expose the spectres within this selection of literature, I assume that we are able to speak to them still, or rather, *with* them, for it is perhaps more apposite to suggest that the spectre speaks first and foremost to us. The ghosts that stalk through the literary and dramatic history of the dead are at their most potent where we are willing to listen to them, to avoid construing them as mere products of particular narratives, forms, and functions within literary history and consider the ways in which they repeatedly haunt the conditions and frameworks of their own production. It is here that they have most to offer us, for in manifesting the instability of the processes by which Elizabethans constructed and attempted to constrain the functioning of death, they expose also the instability of ontology itself,

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[19] For more on the debate as to the possible performance of the translations, see H. B. Charlton's *The Senecan Tradition in Renaissance Tragedy* pp. 145, 153-58 and C. H. Conley's *The First English Translators of the Classics*, p. 29 (both of whom argue in favour of a number of translations having been performed) and Henri de Vocht's "Introduction" to *Jasper Heywood and His Translations of Seneca's Troas, Thyestes, and Hercules Furens*, pp.xxxiii-xxxiv (which argues against it). Much of the debate rests on conjectures regarding the nature of the translations, such as T. S. Eliot's and Jack O'Keefe's speculations that Heywood's invention of Achilles' vengeful ghost seems designed for dramatic performance (Eliot, "Introduction" xlviii-xlix; O'Keefe, "Innovative Diction in the First English Translations of Seneca" 92). Bruce Smith pieces together an interesting account of the conditions of production for Neville's *Oedipus* (as well as performances of other incomplete Senecan translations by Alexander Nowell and William Gager) in "Toward the Rediscovery of Tragedy: Productions of Seneca's Plays on the English Renaissance Stage."

of our accounts of what it is to be, and to be alive. In this, they speak to us, outside of (their) time to call into question the means by which we understand the living, the dead, and the formal distinctions upon which the histories of both rely.

Chapter One

Spectres of Translation

Through paunch of rivened earth, from *Plutos* rain
With goastly steps, I am returnd again.

<div align="right">

Nuce, *Octavia* (Sig. [Eiiiir])

</div>

Revenance

   In Nuce's translation of *Octavia*, the dead Agrippina announces her entry onstage
with an assertion of her return. Like all spectres, Agrippina functions as a revenant:
she "*begins by coming back*" (Derrida, *Specters* 11). This is true in more than one
sense, for Agrippina's return is not just the return of the dead woman (the mother and
murder victim of the Roman emperor Nero), but also of the ghost found in the first-
century pseudo-Senecan Latin manuscript from which Nuce translates. Agrippina
belongs not only to the past of the play's living, but to the past of the text itself; thus,
she has made precisely the same return before. Her movement from the past (when
she *was*) to the present (when she *is not*) is doubled by the effect of the movement
from the Latin text to the English translation. This is not strictly a temporal
movement, although there is an obvious chronological sequence at work in which the
Latin precedes the English. Nor is it simply a linguistic movement. Constructed
within the culturally specific frameworks of Elizabethan language, the English
through which the ghost now returns cannot function as an uncomplicated vessel for
the same figure merely to return in a different tongue. In translated form, the figure
of the English Agrippina manifests itself as the Latin Agrippina, but is neither
synonymous with, nor isolable from that predecessor. To put it another way, as
Agrippina appears again, for the first time, she manifests and refuses her Latin past at
the same time that she manifests and refuses her existence within the present English

text. Alien to herself, the dead woman passes from one language into the next to become a figuration of the hauntings of translation.

As Agrippina's entry suggests, a special relation exists between the return of the dead and the functioning of translation that calls for particular attention where the two coincide. The return of the dead involves, at the outset, a movement beyond limits – beyond time, mortality, and (in Reformation England) the reassuring structures of theological and philosophical ontologies. In calling the ghosts of Senecan texts into another time, another language, another culture, the Elizabethan translations are expositive of the way in which the very process of translation – in itself a return – is the stuff of which spectres are made. A distinct resonance exists between the nature of translation and the ontological and temporal paradox of the ghost. In *Ghosts: Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis, History*, Andrew Buse and Peter Stott outline the basic problem of the ghost thus:

> The ghost cannot be properly said to belong to the past . . . for the simple reason that a ghost is clearly not the same thing as the person who shares its proper name. Does then the 'historical' person who is identified with the ghost properly belong to the present? Surely not, as the idea of a return from death fractures all traditional conceptions of temporality. The temporality to which the ghost is subject is therefore paradoxical, as at once they 'return' *and* make their apparitional debut (11).

The problem of the ghost, then, is that it fails to occupy a clearly locatable position within existing categories by which the living and the dead function: it disturbs the delineation of time, identity, and presence. So too, the translation. An English translation of a Latin text is not the same text as the original; yet nor is it entirely separate or independent. In entering into another language, translations enter also into the cultural and discursive contexts that are inseparable from that language's constitutive elements and frameworks of signification. When the Senecan ghosts of Agrippina, Thyestes, Tantalus, and Laius return in the Elizabethan translations, they do so as Seneca's ghosts and yet they are no longer that which Seneca wrote. If the ghosts are the same and yet not identical with their formerly living selves, this is true also of their relationship with their prior existences in the Latin original.

As I suggested in my Introduction, this aspect of the relationship between source and translative texts has been notably absent from existing critical treatments of the Elizabethan translations of Seneca. This body of scholarship has largely excluded consideration of the culturally transformative aspects of translation to focus instead upon the matters of dramatic influence and/or formal and stylistic comparisons between English and Latin texts. Such approaches typically manifest assumptions about the nature of translation that fall within the wider spectrum of "normative" approaches to translation. In *Translation, Poetics, and the Stage: Six French Hamlets*, Romy Heylen points out that since the eighteenth century, predominant translation theories have positioned the translation as a text that can be assessed according to fixed criteria in order to determine the extent to which they succeed in reproducing the original (2-3). Even prior to the eighteenth century though, such conceptions are in evidence. For instance, John Dryden observes in the preface to his translation of *Ovid's Epistles* that "the sence of an Authour, generally speaking, is to be sacred and inviolable" so that "a Translator has no . . . Right" to alter it: "'tis his business to make it resemble the Original" (Sig. [a3r-a3v]). Dryden goes on to compare translation to the copying of artwork, an image he furthers in his preface to *Sylvae: Or, the Second Part of Poetical Miscellanies*: "Translation is a kind of Drawing after the Life; where every one will acknowledge there is a double sort of likeness, a good one and a bad. . . . I cannot without some indignation, look on an ill Copy of an excellent Original" (Sig. a3[r-v]). Such ideas are then formulated in more depth by subsequent scholars such as Alexander Tytler, whose *Essay on the Principles of Translation* in 1791 establishes a foundation for translators to duplicate the "ideas," stylistic elements, and readability of the original: principles that are repeated in much of the following two centuries of translation theory (Heylen 2).

As the critical responses to the Elizabethan translations suggest, such approaches establish a hierarchy between the privileged source text and the secondary translation. This is particularly clear in early to mid twentieth-century criticism, although it by no means ends there. Eliot's "Seneca in Elizabethan Translation" is one of the few essays to catalogue the modifications and variations within the translations with comparatively little privileging of the Senecan text, but a more typical approach is that of Rees when he complains that the translators "accentuated"

Seneca's literary "defects by emphasizing them through their own" ("English Seneca: A Preamble" 128). Even in late twentieth-century criticism, such judgements persist, albeit often in less overt form: for instance, Norland observes Heywood's addition of a choral passage in the second Act to have a logical function but complains nevertheless that it "seems especially inappropriate to Senecan drama" (245). Norland, like others before him, charts a series of the notable disparities between source and translations, partly in order to note the effects that they have upon the text but also to assess their validity or adherence to the qualities of the Latin texts. These types of conceptualizations of the translation process imply that the source text is in some way pure, with a claim to linguistic, creative, cultural, and temporal priority. The translation is therefore designated an impure derivative, judged by how closely it can reproduce the purity of the original but, by virtue of its altered state, is never quite able to attain the same condition.

However, recent translation theory has begun to challenge such formulations, calling for more complex understandings of the nature and function of translations as individual works (Heylen 1). [20] Heylen describes the linguistic problems of translation as "almost trivial if one takes into account the different historical and socio-cultural backgrounds as well as the different literary codes operating in the receiving literature" (22). She argues that translation should not be viewed as "a derivative or secondary literary activity. As a form of interliterary communication it is a unique sign-producing act whereby the translator must choose between different sets of cultural norms and values," negotiating between the "poetics or ideologies" of the original and "receiving" cultures (21). The extent to which the translator privileges one over the other influences the extent to which the source text is acculturated (23). Heylen further suggests that, in minimizing the issue of cultural specificity, "normative" translation theories fail to recognize that "the conditions required to produce 'equivalence' differ from period to period, and from language culture to language culture" so that what functions to re-produce an "original" text in one set of social, cultural, and historical circumstances may differ substantially in another (4). I would add to this that actual equivalence can only be illusory, given not only the issues of socio-cultural, historical, and literary gaps but also the slippage

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[20] Heylen provides a useful survey and critique of some of the key strands of translation theory in recent decades. See esp. pp. 5-25.

and deferral that is inherent within language (a point to which I will return shortly). Heylen's argument is useful though in illuminating the fact that, in order to translate at all, Studley, Heywood, Nuce and Neville's language must function in dialogue with their wider environment, including but also extending beyond that of their Latin sources.

Indeed, Renaissance translation theorists themselves demonstrate an awareness that the relationship between original and source texts is not one of simple transmission or reproduction. Warren Boutcher points out that in Laurence Humphrey's 1559 Latin text *The Interpretation of Languages*, *or*, *On the Method of Translating and Explicating Sacred and Profane Authors*, translation is not separated from other modes of writing.[21] Because "*literary* translation into English" is considered to be a part of the wider forms and practices "of classical *learning . . .* it is not really distinct from other forms of imitative literature". Rather, it is "a special case, a work rewriting one particular original, rather than drawing more eclectically on a number" ("The Renaissance" 48). [22] Therefore, it was often "the point the translator wished to make, or the meditation he or she wished to offer regarding a particular issue" that took prevalence over translative accuracy (51). Accordingly, Elizabethan translations might best be viewed as functioning, in Boutcher's terms, as "'original' works by authors who happen to be translating" or as the equivalent of "particular stage productions" that produce "original and unique performances of texts" (46, 49).[23]

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[21] This text was not translated into English at the time. The translation of its name here is provided by Boutcher. Thomas M. Greene also discusses some important aspects of early modern translation theory in regard to the broader transmission of classical forms and ideas in Renaissance literature, particularly poetry. See *The Light in Troy*, pp. 28-53.

[22] The purpose of Elizabethan translation largely excluded the modern aim to disseminate a book that would not otherwise be accessible; and in any case, those readers sufficiently well-educated to be reading the plays in translation, and interested in doing so, would typically have had the education to read them in Latin (Daalder xxvi). Instead, motivations for translating ranged from the desire to enhance and improve the English language (a motivation previously shared by Roman translators) to social, political, and literary ambitions and pecuniary gain (Schulte and Biguenet 2; Boutcher 50).

[23] Nashe, of course, would disagree, having made clear in his preface to Robert Greene's *Menaphon* his distaste for "triviall translators" who bleed Seneca dry so that he "at length must needes die to our stage" and for those who he leaves "to the mercie of their mother tongue, that feed on nought but the crummes that fal from the translators trencher" (3[r], [1v]). Whilst reflecting the extent of Senecan influence amongst his contemporaries, Nashe's opinion is not reflective of a widespread resistance to such material since Senecan material was clearly popular and, as Winston points out, the practice of incorporating material from other sources was scarcely controversial in Elizabethan England (29). However, Senecan ghosts did provide excellent fodder for other satirists also: for instance, in Jonson's

With this in mind, it is clear that normative approaches to translation demonstrate inherent flaws within their structural opposition between source and translation. Spearing exemplifies this when she expresses the common complaint that Seneca is "utterly inferior . . . to the Greek dramatists" before observing that the translators "often accentuate [Seneca's] faults and obscure his merits" ("The Elizabethan 'Tenne Tragedies of Seneca'" 456-57). In doing so, she illustrates that, if the Senecan source texts are positioned as pure originals against which the translations are judged as a secondary work, they may as easily be found inferior when placed within alternative pairings. While the very term "original" implies priority in both temporality and importance, the original text itself is no more inherently contained and incontaminate than its subsequent translations. This conflict is not merely a problem generated by the supposed literary or dramatic inferiority of Seneca, as Spearing's reading suggests, but rather it manifests the more fundamental problem of the "impurity" of language (Derrida, "Roundtable on Translation" 100). Derrida's work demonstrates that as a system of signification, language is dependent upon "prior structures." The association of a particular meaning with a specific word (or chain of words) is possible only through a linguistic structure that exists through "differentiation" (Culler, *On Deconstruction* 96). A particular word can bear a specific signification only through a structure that differentiates both the word and meaning from others. The process of signification is therefore dependent on pre-existing structures, but as every pre-existing structure is equally dependent on other prior differentiations in much the same way, there is no originary event. At the same time, differences are not fixed, so meaning cannot be traced back to a systematic series of differences either (Culler 96). Presence is inscribed within absence: absence within presence. Language cannot, therefore, consist of a series of pure terms that are self-contained and/or stable. Moreover, if any linguistic utterance is dependent upon the differentiations it produces and invokes, the language within which it operates cannot be self-contained because the differentiations contained therein must draw upon (and be distinguished from) those of other languages.

It is clear from this that an "original" or source text, like a translation, is constituted through its relation to others. As a related issue, translation can never

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mockery of dramatic ghost scenes in *Poetaster* (Sig. [F2v]). For a closer look at the Elizabethan reception of Senecan plays, see Smith's "Toward the Rediscovery of Tragedy."

properly duplicate the effect that occurs when a source text is written in one language but contains traces of another. Derrida suggests that "translation can do everything except mark this linguistic difference inscribed in the language, this difference of language systems inscribed in a single tongue." The translation cannot accommodate the multiple "languages or tongues" contained in any "one linguistic system." Moreover, that impurity threatens "every linguistic system's integrity" as well as the translative process ("Roundtable" 100). This has two key implications here. Firstly, it suggests that the source text is not at one with itself: the Senecan text may be written in Latin but its language, its contents, are not hermetically sealed. Most obviously, it carries also the mark of Greek, but also of other languages, cultures, texts, that play a constitutive role in both Latin and the text itself. Hence, the hierarchical positioning of two texts may express a critical preference based on aesthetic, dramatic, or other criteria at a particular moment, but it does not express a relative purity within the privileged text. Secondly, since the language of the translation is subject also to the same conditions, it cannot reproduce those of the original, irrespective of the quality of the specific translation. There is always a gap, a distance produced through the unique qualities and impurities of each of the languages.

The role of the translation, then, is not simply to capture some form of originary purity or essence. Derrida observes an intersection between Benjamin's "The Task of the Translator" and the "central metaphor" of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok's "The Shell and the Kernel," both of which produce a conception of the original containing an "'untouchable'" property that the translation is unable to access.[24] This quality or "kernel" is that which cannot be drawn into the language of the translation but requires the translator "to go toward the unthought thinking of the other language" ("Roundtable" 115). Derrida relates this to a structure of desire, in which "the desire or the *phantasm* of the intact kernel is irreducible – despite the fact that *there is no* intact kernel" . . . and there never has been one" (115). Untranslatability relates instead to the impurity that ensures that a language cannot function in a state of containment: in its imperfection, its failure to constitute perfect, contained modes of signification, it is subject to slippage and deferral that is not

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[24] For Benjamin, see esp. pp. 77-81. For Abraham and Torok, Derrida refers specifically to the essay "The Shell and the Kernel," on pp. 79-98 of their collection of essays by the same name.

reproducible in another linguistic system. In this, Derrida is building upon his work in "Plato's Pharmacy," in which he observes an unresolvable problem within the translation of the word *pharmakon*, which means (amongst other things) both "*remedy*" and "*poison*". Since the two connotations are inseparable because each is inscribed within the other, "the choice of only one of these renditions by the translator has as its first effect the neutralization of the citational play". The difficulty, then, is that "textuality being constituted by differences and by differences from differences . . . is by nature absolutely heterogeneous and is constantly composing with the forces that tend to annihilate it" (98). Thus a translation must be both "violent" and "impotent: it "destroys the *pharmakon* but at the same time forbids itself access to it, leaving it untouched in its reserve" (99).

   Derrida's formulation of this problem clarifies a difficulty expressed by the Elizabethan translators themselves. The prefatory material to the translations often suggests that the following work stages the return, rather than the replication, of Seneca's work, but a return that, like a ghost, is never at one with itself. Whilst pronouncing the translator's ability and intention to convey accurately the matter of Seneca's work, prefatory comments frequently acknowledge discontinuities between the translation and source texts in a way that suggests fundamental disjunctures between the two languages (fuelled in no small part by the sixteenth-century perception of English as an inferior tongue).[25] For instance, in H.C.'s address to the reader of Studley's *Agamemnon*, we are advised to:

>   deme him not presumtious,
>   whom muses moved ryght,
>   The statlye style of *Senec.* Sage
>   in vulgar verse to wryght (Sig. [℄viv]).

Vernacular English or "vulgar verse" – a description that has often been applied to Studley's work in the pejorative, as well as in the sense of the common language – is inherently different from the "statlye style" of Seneca's Latin. Even in Thomas

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[25] Massimiliano Morini argues that the perception of English as an inferior language fades in the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries under the influence of humanists, who fostered patriotic pride and a sense that English had now evolved through contact with other languages (*Tudor Translation in Theory and Practice*, 40).

Peend's subsequent address, which claims that Studley transmits the Latin text "in perfect englysh ryme," the reader has to be invited to read correctly by warning that the piece will attract "spytefull" responses from some but that "men dyscrete and learned will / read thinges with judgement right" (Sig. **[₵viir-v]**). Studley follows suit, apologizing for the "rude maner" and "barbarusnes" of his work in comparison with his fellow translators Heywood and Neville but suggesting that the reader should nevertheless be able to "embrace it for the excellencie of the matter therin conteyned" (Sig. [Aiiiv] – [Aiiiir]). The English version is tacitly acknowledged to diverge from the Latin, but those who are sufficiently well-educated are supposed to appreciate the essential similarities.

Those similarities lie in the supposed transmission of the spirit or meaning of the original work. The translators typically claim that, while their task is hampered by the impossibility of achieving a perfect match for Seneca's style in English, it is not necessary to prioritise the transmission of narrative and linguistic details in order to convey the essential qualities of the Latin.[26] In effect, their commentaries are suggestive of the desire for the illusive "intact kernel" that can never be accessed by, or transmitted through, the translative language (Derrida, "Roundtable" 115). While the tension between linguistic transformation and adherence to the source text testifies to the singularity of both translation and original, and is amplified by acknowledgement of the conscious processes of filtration, substitution, and expansion, the translators insist upon their ability to convey the essential substance of the original. At the same time, the very existence of such claims signals an awareness of the impossibility of this task. In his preface to *Oedipus*, Neville informs his readers that "he hath somtymes boldly presumed to erre fró his Author, rovynge at Rando[m] where he lyst: adding and subtracting at pleasure" but instructs them "let not that engendre disdainful suspicion . . . . Marke thou rather what is ment by the whole course of the historie" for although the "base tran[s]lated Tragedie" is "from his Author in worde and Verse far transformed," it is "in Sense lytell altred"

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[26] Such claims clearly rest upon a different understanding of what is essential to the text than that which has predominated within translation theory in the following centuries. For more on philosophical, theoretical, and practical approaches to translation throughout the Renaissance, see Morini, pp. 3-29.

(Sig. ab[ir]; [abiiiv]).[27] What we are reading, we are supposed to assume, is what
Seneca really meant – even if he wrote something rather different. Heywood adopts
much the same approach in advising the reader of *Troas* that he has "endevored to
kepe touche with the Latten, not woorde for woorde or verse for verse" but by having
"observed their sence" (Sig. [Aiiiiv]).[28] He shows no sign of considering this at
odds with the fact that he has "with addicyon of mine owne pen, supplied the want of
some thynges," including radically altering three of the choruses and adding a scene
in which Achilles' ghost returns from the underworld (Sig. [Aiiiir]).[29] Similarly, in
his preface to *Medea*, Studley claims to have largely followed "the darke sence of the
Poet" before going on to acknowledge that in "the fyrste *Chorus* . . . I sawe nothyng
but an heape of prophane storyes, and names of prophane Idoles: therfore I have
altered the whole matter of it" (Sig. [Aiiir-v]).

Such commentaries alert us to the fact that the "sence" of a work is not stable over
time and that neither, therefore, is what is required or perceived to convey it. The
claim to reproduce sense but not linguistic detail is a claim of having accessed that
essential (but illusory) kernel of the source text, but it is riven with its own
contradiction. If this achievement requires or enables the transformation of formal
properties, narrative elements, and even characters in translation, then the original
text's sense is not containable or isolable as either a linguistic or literary property but
is specific to a particular network of language at a particular moment. In order to
remain the Senecan text in English translation, the Senecan text must radically

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[27] In the substantially revised version of *Oedipus* that is published as part of Newton's collection of
the translations in 1581, Neville's claim is altered to "somewhat transformed" rather than "far
transformed," seemingly aiming to persuade that the two texts are closer than his earlier preface
suggested (77). His young age at the date of the earlier translation (he was possibly as young as
sixteen at the time of its publication) may have played an influence in its less strategic wording.
[28] Scholars vary as to whether they use the original title of *Troades* or Heywood's title *Troas* when
discussing Heywood's translation. For consistency, I adopt the more commonly used *Troas* and I
have accordingly identified the text with this title in my Works Cited list. In later translations such as
those of the Loeb editions, the title is expressed in English as "Trojan Women."
[29] A number of critics observe Heywood's approach to translation to differ substantially between
texts. Like Spearing, O'Keefe describes *Troas* as "very freely rendered", *Thyestes* as "a somewhat
more precise translation" and *Hercules Furens* as "exact, yet stilted," with a greater reliance upon
"Latinisms and other words of his own construction" (94). Nevertheless, Heywood claims to have
translated accurately the original text even in the case of the substantially modified *Troas*. Kiefer
offers a useful overview of the changes introduced in Neville's *Oedipus* and Heywood's *Troas* and
Thyestes in *Fortune and Elizabethan Tragedy*, in which he considers the nature of the changes in
relation to their thematic and dramatic functions - see pp. 60-82. Norland's "Adapting to the Times"
and Vocht's *Jasper Heywood and His Translations of Seneca's Troas, Thyestes and Hercules Furens*
also discuss Heywood's adaptations: see Norland pp. 244-48 and Vocht pp. xxvii-xxxiii.

transform and thereby shatter the illusion of continuity with itself. This is implicit in Heylen's description of translation as a "teleological activity" – a writing in which the translator reads, interprets, and rewrites from a retrospective position (5). The original, after all, does not itself remain constant over time. Even if a manuscript is preserved intact, passed on through the centuries without modification, it must increasingly be rendered out of time, out of culture, its language becoming increasingly alien to itself. Benjamin describes the translated work as issuing "from the original – not so much from its life as from its afterlife", the period "when in the course of its survival a work has reached the age of its fame" ("The Task of the Translator" 73).[30] Hence, "in its afterlife – which could not be called that if it were not a transformation and a renewal of something living – the original undergoes a change. Even words with fixed meaning can undergo a maturing process. . . . What sounded fresh once may sound hackneyed later; what was once current may one day sound quaint" (74).

What Benjamin describes here is a kind of gradated cultural translation in which a text evolves over time as it becomes isolated from its originary environment because, whilst the printed word may remain physically unchanged, signification does not. Anterior to the translative process, the text alters even if read with an appreciation for the historical, cultural, and linguistic differences of the original context, because the original text has in fact passed on. To translate the original text into English, then, effects transformation upon transformation. In response to the issue of what occurs when a text *comes back* – which implies translation, but also any form of return in which the original text is drawn into the context of another's work – Derrida observes "it is never the same text, never an echo, that comes back to you. . . . or, if there is, it's always distorted" ("Roundtable on Translation" 158). The translator's reformulation of the source text into another language not only draws it into a new realm, an additional space in which endless strands of signification are called upon and (re)arranged, but does so in a manner that is unique to the translator's ear. The ear that hears the text re-authors the text, whether it is the translator who physically rewrites it into another language or the audience who receives it. Originality, in the

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[30] Benjamin makes this assertion on the basis that the "concept of life is given its due only if everything that has a history of its own . . . is credited with life." Thus, the "range of life must be determined by history rather than by nature" (73).

sense of a textual point of origin or a starting point at which a story might claim to begin, ceases to have meaning here. The systems of signification that the story enters into are stable neither in the predecessive text nor in the translation.

When we approach the Elizabethan translations of Seneca, then, we are considering texts that are something more than a mere vehicle for the transmission of Senecan influence or cultural relics of a particular era of translation practices. In agreement with Benjamin's work in "The Task of the Translator," Derrida observes that a "contract" exists between "the original and the translating text" in which the "translation augments and modifies the original" so that this evolution enables the "survival" of both text and language. While a translation promises "reconciliation" between the two, though, it can never fully achieve this: there remains always that which is untranslatable ("Roundtable" 122-23).[31] The unique relationship between translation and original renders them both integrally linked and irreconcilable.[32] Derrida goes on to suggest that "the original is in the situation of demand, that is, of a lack or exile. The original is indebted a priori to the translation. Its survival is a demand and a desire for translation . . . . Translation does not come along in addition, like an accident added to a full substance; rather, it is what the original text demands." The two are equally "indebted" (153). This should not be taken to suggest that the translation exists only as a sub-set or offshoot of its predecessor, or that the two must function together to form some kind of unified whole. Rather, we are dealing here with translation as a process of supplementation.

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[31] Benjamin specifically applies this idea to translations that "are more than transmissions of subject matter" and arise from originals that contain a special quality of "translatability" (72-73). Yet there remains always those elements of language that cannot be translated, the sacred text that occupies the position of a proper name in some way and cannot take any other (76). Derrida summarizes this when he observes that in Benjamin's formulation, "sacralization or the sacred is the untranslatable, and every time there is some proper name in the language that does not let itself become totally common, that cannot be translated, one is dealing with a text that is beginning to be sacralized. One is dealing with poetry" ("Roundtable" 148). I do not take this argument into account as a means to distinguish certain originals as more or less sacred or translatable than others because, as Derrida himself comments, "in a certain way, literature is the untranslatable" (148). Therefore, I consider that the Elizabethan translations are bound to be subject to this principle of sacralisation.

[32] Heywood implies as much in his preface to *Thyestes* when he describes a dream in which Seneca appears and requests him to "make me speake in straunger speeche / and sette my woorks to sight, / And skanne my verse in other tongue / then I was woont to wright" so that Heywood might "renewe my name" (Sig. [*vv-*vir]). Thus Heywood too suggests that the translation does not preserve the original in a state of stasis, but inherits it and simultaneously enables it to live on in organic form.

In *Of Grammatology*, Derrida argues that Rousseau's invocation of the supplement – a linguistic relation in which a term that appears "self-sufficient" is supplemented and opposed by a successor – reveals a disturbance of the supposed purity or integrity of the anterior term:

> the supplement supplements. It adds only to replace. It intervenes or insinuates itself *in-the-place-of*; if it fills, it is as if one fills a void. If it represents and makes an image, it is by the anterior default of a presence. Compensatory [*suppléant*] and vicarious, the supplement is an adjunct, a subaltern instance which *takes-(the)-place* [*tient-lieu*]. As substitute, it is not simply added to the positivity of a presence; it produces no relief, its place is assigned in the structure by the mark of an emptiness. Somewhere, something can be filled up *of itself*, can accomplish itself, only by allowing itself to be filled through sign and proxy. The sign is always the supplement of the thing itself. (145)

Derrida adds that "this second signification of the supplement cannot be separated from the first. . . . But the inflexion varies from moment to moment. Each of the two significations is by turns effaced or becomes discreetly vague in the presence of the other." But there remains always the fact that "the supplement is *exterior*, outside of the positivity to which it is super-added, alien to that which, in order to be replaced by it, must be other than it" (145).

Thus we see a double movement. The supplement functions as an addition or "a surplus, a plenitude enriching another plenitude, the *fullest measure* of presence" but in performing this act of seeming completion, it exposes a deficiency within the previous sign (144). As Culler puts it, "the supplement is an inessential extra, added to something complete in itself" but in forming that completion it exposes the "lack in what was supposed to be complete" (103). Accordingly, Derrida's conception of the supplement suggests that "the indefinite process of supplementarity has always already *infiltrated* presence, always already inscribed there the space of repetition and the splitting of the self" (Derrida, *Of Grammatology* 163). Like a ghost that appears in the place of the (formerly) living, the original and translation – each of them separable and complete – work to replace and add to one another. Despite arriving after the source text in terms of its historical creation, the translation may function as an anterior presence that is supplemented when we refer to the source

text: the source constitutes a completion, bearing a fullness that the translation is unable to access or attain. Yet, as Benjamin and Derrida show, the translation equally supplements the source, exposing a deficiency in its presence by completing a certain lack, adding to the source without quite displacing it. While existing in seeming opposition, both original and translation are inscribed within the presence of the other. The translation must produce linguistic displacement in calling the source text into another language: as in Derrida's example of the *pharmakon*, it must neutralize or modify the "citational play" of certain elements of the original's language and produce differences from the differences comprising that language ("Plato's Pharmacy" 98). But as it does so, that which it cannot call forth – that which is modified, displaced, or deferred, and therefore inaccessible within the translation - is not wholly isolated or excluded. Instead, the supplementarity of each sees the presence of both translation and original inscribed within the presence (and therefore difference) of the other.

As we turn to look more closely at the Elizabethan translations, then, we are dealing with texts that manifest the writings of Seneca, not merely by representing or reimagining his work in English form, but by entering into a mutually transformative relationship with it. This process is not fundamentally so very different from that of the writing of "original" works: rather, it magnifies the engagement of the text with a particular set of linguistic, cultural, and literary elements in a way that exposes the disjunctures as well as the points of commonality between translation and source. If the translation calls the original work into a new environment in which it supplements that which formerly seemed complete, this is because it does not and cannot encapsulate or duplicate that which it follows. The translation and original haunt one another, neither isolable from, nor continuous with that which they inhabit. And it is here, within the already spectral site of the translative process that the cultural haunting of language emerges to bring the Senecan dead into newly unsettling contexts.

The hauntings of Seneca

The dead are uniquely figurative of the spectral workings of language. The absence of death marks out the boundaries of presence; the dead delineate the

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boundaries of the living. Paradoxically, the dead perform this function by being that which is most unknown and most circumscribed at once. To be constituted as the living, the living need the dead; to *be* is to be haunted by the dead who, in occupying the borders of the living, expose the dependency of the living upon the oppositional presence of those who are now absent. Beyond comprehension, the dead must be accorded a defined space in order to mark out what it is to be alive. The dynamics of this relation are evident also within language. Derrida points out that, if writing consists of oppositions, as Plato suggests, the "contrary values" of oppositional terms are contingent upon an externality in relation to each other, so that "one of these oppositions (the opposition between inside and outside) must be accredited as the matrix of all possible opposition." But rather than writing "being governed by these oppositions," perhaps it "opens up their very possibility without letting itself be comprehended by them". In other words, if it is only "writing – or the *pharmakon*" that enables "the strange difference between inside and outside" to arise, writing cannot merely occupy a position within the structures it describes or be governed by the "concepts" that it forms. It "leaves only its ghost to a logic that can only seek to govern it insofar as logic arises from it," with the result that logic itself is exceeded ("Plato's Pharmacy" 103). In this formulation, "every model of classical reading is exceeded . . . at the point where it attaches to the inside of the series – it being understood that this excess is not a *simple* exit *out* of the series, since that would obviously fall under one of the categories of the series." If it is still possible to refer to an excess, that excess "is only a *certain* displacement of the series. And a certain *folding back*" or "*re-mark* – of opposition within the series, or even within its dialectic" (104). Hence writing, in the sense that Derrida uses it here, is necessarily implicated "in questions of life and death" (105).

It seems evident from this that the translation of a scene in which the dead return shares a unique relationship with its subject matter by allegorizing that which it conveys. Derrida suggests that the "functional displacement" that occurs within the oppositions of writing does not involve "conceptual identities" so much as "differences" and "simulacra" (104). When the two coincide, however – when concepts overlap with or enter into similar structures of displacement as the linguistic mechanisms through which they are produced – then we are faced with an additional

folding back, a further haunting of oppositional terms. As I suggested earlier, the fundamental disjuncture between the linguistic and cultural contexts of the source and translation means that dislocation and transformation is inevitable within the translative process. The degree to which that disjointedness emerges within the workings of the translation is contingent upon a multitude of factors affecting the receiving culture's ability to assimilate the language and cultural specificities of the source (Heylen 22-23). In *Thyestes*, *Agamemnon*, *Octavia*, and *Oedipus*, the way in which the haunting of the returned dead figures the haunting of the translation substantially heightens the visibility of the folding back of oppositions to expose and amplify the uncanniness of their ghosts. In each translation, we are faced with an endless series of oppositions – most pressingly, original and translation, Latin and English, past and present, life and death – but the purity and therefore the opposition of those terms is subject to a marked displacement and re-inscription. Like a ghost, the text repeats the first time, the first text, the first text's appearance of the dead, *for* the first time, so that it can neither be separable from, nor synonymous with, the original with which it shares its existence. The returned dead function in opposition to the dead who are not returned; to the living; to their formerly living selves; and even to their unreturned selves, the selves that they describe as inhabiting the underworld in the past or future. But in entering language through these oppositions, they are inscribed with the states that they are not. Moreover, in English, their linguistic terms are inscribed with the Latin that they are not, the more so because that is precisely what their existence hinges upon.

If we return to my epigraph, we can see that Nuce's Englished Agrippina both haunts, and is haunted by, the ancestor that she claims to be when, "with goastly steps" she returns again. Agrippina announces her entry in the Latin text of *Octavia* with the lines: "Tellure rupta Tartaro gressum extuli. / Stygiam cruenta praeferens dextra facem / thalamis scelestis".[33] In Fitch's translation of these lines, the ghost is

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[33] The Elizabethans typically consulted a range of manuscripts and the translations are often, accordingly, not a direct translation of any one version of a text. I have examined Fitch's Latin in comparison with sixteenth-century editions and found there to be no significant variations in regard to the passages I discuss in this thesis. I therefore cite Fitch's Latin throughout. For a detailed account of Heywood's manuscript usage for *Thyestes*, see Daalder 83-87. It appears that Heywood relies primarily upon Gryphius's 1541 edition of Seneca's tragedies *L. Annaei Senecae Cordubensis tragoediae septem* (*Seven Tragedies by Lucius Annaeus Seneca of Cordoba*), as do Studley and most of the other translators whose work is collected in Newton's *Tenne Tragedies* (Daalder 87; Spearing,

specific, linear, and categorical in accounting for her (re)arrival: "Bursting through the earth I have made my way from Tartarus, bearing a Stygian torch in my bloody hand to herald this iniquitous wedding" (571). Fitch's version cannot, of course, function independently of the transformative dislocation of translation any more than that of Nuce, but it offers a valuable point of comparison for how the Latin generates a markedly variable reverberation in English in accordance with cultural, philosophical, and linguistic variations over time.[34] In Fitch's translation, Agrippina is markedly somatic, her pathway tangible. As in the Latin text, she has come, not just from Hades but specifically from Tartarus, a reminder of her crimes while alive. Emerging from the infernal realm beneath, she has broken through the crust of the earth and advanced to stand before us, clutching a Tartarian torch with a "bloody hand" in order to illuminate the immoral nuptials of Nero and Poppaea. The phrasing implies a logical and linear sequence of events: the dead Agrippina, having traced a physical pathway from the realm of the dead to that of the living, has momentarily re-entered the realm of the living. Agrippina, like death itself, has a home, a proper place, distinguished from life more by virtue of space than temporality or by distinctions between physical and spiritual matter.

Nuce's translation of these lines is a different affair altogether, transforming a fairly standard Senecan ghost that functions within the clearly mapped out spaces of the classical afterlife and underworld, into a spectre, a revenant with an uncertain relation to the parameters of time and space:

> Through paunch of rivened earth, from *Plutos* rain
> With goastly steps, I am returnd again.
> In writhled wrists that bloud do most desyre,
> Forguiding wedlock vile, with Stygian fyre (Sig. [Eiiiir]).

"Introduction" XII). Vocht produces a brief but useful comparison between Heywood's Latin sources and identifies Gryphius as Heywood's principle source also (xxv-xxvi).

[34] Daalder complains that reliance upon modern editions of the Latin has led to inaccurate criticism of Heywood, a point that no doubt extends to critiques of the other translators also (xxxviii-xxxix). However, this is a less pressing consideration here, where differences between the two are of secondary importance to the primary issue of how the translations draw Seneca's text into the linguistic and cultural environment of the Elizabethans. On this basis, I employ Fitch's translations throughout in order to provide a point of comparison and to illuminate the particularity and cultural specificity of the Elizabethan translations. It is not intended to establish some kind of ahistorical standard for how the Latin should be translated. Unless otherwise noted, Fitch's translations are very close in nature to those of Miller's influential translations in the earlier Loeb Classical Library editions.

This ghost has, not just a bloody hand, but wrists that are "writhled" ("shrivelled" or "withered") and desirous of blood (*OED* "writhled," def. 1.). Wrists in *desire* of blood – the image is at least as suggestive of pale, corpselike or even translucent arms as it is of arms that bleed. It is worth noting that Nuce's choice of language appears progressive - the *OED*'s earliest example of "writhled" is from Thomas Cooper's *Thesaurus linguæ Romanæ et Britannicæ*, published in 1565, just one year before Nuce's translation. The Latin "dextra" becomes the same in English – the "hand" – and yet not the same; in fact it is entirely opposed to that with which it coincides. In the following line, "Forguiding wedlock vile, with Stygian fyre", "forguiding" appears entirely original. The word makes no appearance in the *OED* and I can find no other instance of its written usage within early modern English literature.[35] The impression is of a warning, not just a heralding (as in Fitch's version) but an advance indication of the evils that the wedding is to bring, so that we seem guided towards this event at the same time that it is called forth to the present. For this ghost, the future is as spectral as the past: the future is present within the present – because it is both visible and marked out in advance of itself – and yet never to arrive, for she has no more of a place in the mortal future than in the mortal past. The ghost can affect and participate in neither – time is as illusive as her withered, bloodless arms.

   This effect extends also to the ghost's positioning in relation to the afterlife and the present space of the living. Nuce's Agrippina makes no dramatic break through the "paunch" or bowels of the earth, for although the earth is "rivened," the unusual adjectival form of "riven" renders the split out of time with the ghost's claiming of the present when she states "I am returnd again." The earth's fissures do not quite align temporally with the ghost that is "returnd," marking present within past, past within present. The ghost's abode is similarly inexact. Rather than emerging from Tartarus or even the more generalized Hades, both of which form an oppositional pairing with the mortal world, she lacks a geographical-spiritual abode, identifying her spatial origin as that over which the god Pluto rules. While remaining broadly consistent with Seneca's lines, this is a significant expansion of their sense, for

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[35] It is possible that the word is the result of a compositor's error, but given its curious aptness, it may equally be an intentional innovation. Its uncanny effects are, in any case, unmitigated by the uncertainty of its origin.

"Pluto's rain" is as evocative of the dead over whom he reigns or of his divine jurisdiction of power as it is of the underworld itself. Again, the oppositions that construct Nuce's terms fold inwards, exposing each term's lack of containment. With the second line, Agrippina's ambiguous figure materializes into an "I" whose "goastly steps" further distort any sense of linear temporality. Again, the translation duplicates the general sense of the Latin, but the syntax reveals something more: "With goastly steps, I am returned". The figure is here, its steps are what bring it here, but its steps are also spectral, with no past and therefore no end. Moreover, the mode of her passage through the rivened earth remains oddly intangible. Where Seneca has her enter "Tellure rupta" ("bursting through the earth," as Fitch translates it), Nuce has only "Through". With no indication as to the nature of her passage, we are given the sense of a shifting, unstable ground, a rift that does not divide the geographical from the spiritual but rather threatens to collapse the distinction between the two. What sort of steps this spectre takes in order to appear before us is a more mysterious matter altogether than in Seneca's image of the animate dead marching from Tartarus to Rome.[36] This revenant is at odds with itself, less logical than its predecessor, more difficult to pin down.

The translation, like the time in which its ghost appears, is "out of joint", its inheritance doubly spectral. The classical ancestor to Nuce's Aggripina is predecessive, past, and other, but it also inhabits her as she stands before her audience in immediate, Englished form. The translation is both inseparable and alienated from the original, familiar (to an audience acquainted with the Latin original) and yet strange. Thus, the dead Agrippina verges on the uncanny, not because she is dead nor even quite because she is returned, but because she is the embodiment of a missed glance. Her Englished return simultaneously manifests, distorts, and destroys her Latin return and in so doing is rendered strange. What we can see at work here is a continual folding back between the oppositions of language that works to magnify the similarly structured content of Nuce's subject matter – a process amplified further by the linguistic displacements of translation. Each term

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[36] Nuce's passage shares a certain similarity here with Miller's translation, for which the relevant line is: "Through the rent earth from Tartarus have I come forth" (459). However, Miller's phrasing demonstrates a more logical movement through time and space and yields a more explicit sense of physical passage through the earth.

(whether a particular word or a whole phrase) supplements, and is supplemented by, the Latin; each of them is inscribed by its opposite(s) in a way that both displaces it and exposes its insufficiencies.

Consequently, the text plunges us into the ontological disruption that Derrida refers to as "hauntology":

> Repetition *and* first time: this is perhaps the question of the event as question of the ghost. *What is* a ghost? What is the *effectivity* or the *presence* of a specter, that is, of what seems to remain as ineffective, virtual, insubstantial as a simulacrum? Is there *there*, between the thing itself and its simulacrum, an opposition that holds up? Repetition *and* first time, but also repetition *and* last time, since the singularity of any *first time*, makes of it also a *last time*. Each time it is the event itself, a first time is a last time. Altogether other. Staging for the end of history. Let us call it a *hauntology*. (*Specters* 10)

This formulation of spectrality applies to writing itself, in that the structural hauntings Derrida describes invoke the workings of supplementation. If the ghost, as supplement, repeats the "thing itself," it does so in a way that accords the thing its singularity (in that the ghost is oppositional to, rather than synonymous with, the thing) and denies it, by exposing the reliance of the thing upon the supplement that both opposes and completes it. Thus, hauntology describes a repetition by a ghost that, in duplicating, replacing, and adding to the "original" figure or event, establishes and erodes the singularity of that which it repeats. As the inside and outside of each set of terms arises through their oppositional placement, those terms fold back in a fashion that displaces the system of differentiation and sees each supposedly complete term haunting the form of the other.

This process of identification and displacement is not confined to the mechanisms of language: it emerges also through the figuration of the ghost itself. In Nuce's translation, Agrippina is the spectre of a spectre; her return (as the dead) to the realm of the living is a return not only of her formerly mortal self (absent from this play) but of the same return in Seneca's Latin text. Indeed, her entrance relies upon the audience's knowledge of her Latin predecessor (as authorization of and context for the Englished text) and of her (living) role in the historical events preceding the play itself. However, while both ghost and translation function within an opposition that supposes a distinction between original and simulacrum, that opposition is shifting

and unstable in the face of the singularity of each return. There is no set of boundaries that we can identify in order to combat the uncanniness of the collapsing oppositions of life and death, Latin and English, past and present, nor can we locate some form of radical continuity or total dissolution of the distinction between poles that might generate new oppositions and thereby re-establish an inside and outside. Instead, we are faced with a ghost that, like the workings of language, refuses the circumscriptions of her position even as she repeats them. Agrippina's return may concomitantly be her first appearance (dead or otherwise) within the play but it is also her *first* first appearance in this, Nuce's Englished version of the play. It is also, of course, her last: "staging for the end of history," as Derrida calls it.

The resulting disjuncture is not only the product of the span of time and cultural distance that marks out a gap between Latin and Elizabethan texts. As Derrida makes clear, it is fundamental to the functioning of translation, in that the translation cannot access or repeat the original text's relation to the polylingual systems or impurities of the language in which it is written ("Roundtable" 100). But the spectrality of these shifting oppositions is compounded by the calling of the Latin dead into English at a moment when the receiving culture is undergoing instability in its own frames of reference for the dead. The translators draw upon a contemporary lexicon that is already marked by the (conflicted) terms of contemporary understandings of the dead. Hence, the language in which the underworld is constituted in the translations is often markedly Christian, incorporating both Protestant and Catholic terminology. This is not to suggest that their deployment of language is a direct reflection of the translator's individual beliefs or affiliations, which ranged from Roman Catholic (in the case of Heywood) to Puritanism (in the case of Studley). Rather, it is that the language system within which the translators conceive, interpret, and transform the Latin manuscripts is constitutive of, and inseparable from, the contemporary discourses of their theological, sociocultural, and political climate. As a result, the language employed by the translations generates an unsettling "citational play" between the classical, Catholic, Protestant, and secular understandings that inhabit the structures through which the Senecan world is Englished (Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy" 98).

The resulting transformation of the Latin is by no means neutral in its effects. Even in other parts of the translation, this discursive interplay generates significant resonances between the Senecan narratives and Christian perspectives to transform thematic elements of the source texts. For instance, Norland points out that Neville occasionally infuses *Oedipus* with "a Christian perspective" so that certain passages relating to philosophical and moral problems produce the tone of "an Old Testament prayer to a vengeful God" (258). The translation thereby generates a thematic shift as Christianised language and perspectives pervade his classical subject matter. When it comes to the underworld, this sense of slippage heightens amidst the tensions of shifting Reformation constructions of the afterlife, complicating the environment of the classical underworld significantly. For instance, Neville translates a generalized phrase referring to the environment of Hades into a term that is Catholic and Latinate at once: where Fitch's translation of *Oedipus* refers to the terrified dead searching for "hiding places in the shadowed grove" ("pavide latebras nemoris umbrosi petunt / animae trementes"), Neville describes them flying out of "*Limbo* lake" (Fitch 70-71; Neville Sig. [Cbiir]). The phrase "Limbo lake" is only just emerging at this time, with Thomas Phaer's 1558 translation of Virgil's *Aeneid* possibly being the only earlier instance in writing.[37] "Limbo" derives from the Latin "limbus," denoting a liminal or border area, and was assimilated into medieval English to connote two additional realms to heaven, hell, and purgatory: *limbo patrum*, for patriarchs and prophets, and *limbo infantium*, for children who died before being baptized (*OED* "limbo," def. 1.a). At the same time, it is evocative of the similar space to that which exists inside the "portals" of Hades for those who have died early (Toynbee 36). Thus the term "Limbo lake" is striking for its negotiation between poles, containing a series of re-marking between oppositions as it maps out a kind of intermediate space. Latin in origin and English in present form, it re-presents a geographically non-specific section of Seneca's underworld through a recognisably Christian term; yet at the same time, it remains entrenched within the topography of the underground, the lake being evocative of one of Hades' rivers.

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[37] The *OED* lists Phaer's usage in *The seven first bookes of the Eneidos of Virgill* as the earliest example of the phrase. I have been unable to find any other instances in which it has been used before Phaer and then Neville (OED "limbo" def. 3).

Other Senecan translators follow suit. Rather than the "dismal lakes" ("tristes lacus") of the underworld that Thyestes describes in Seneca's *Agamemnon*, Studley's 1566 translation has Thyestes' ghost declare that it would be better "to haunt / the lothsome *Limbo* lakes" than to remain in the mortal world to which he has returned (Fitch 126-27; Studley Sig. [Biv]). Nuce, Studley's fellow student at Cambridge University, also uses the term in his 1566 translation of *Octavia*. Where Fitch's translation has Octavia call upon her dead father to "come forth from the shades" – "Emergere umbris" – Nuce draws upon the possible association with water in this phrase to have Octavia entreat her father to "steppe forth from *Limbo* lake" (Fitch 526-27; Nuce Sig. [Biiiir]).[38] Similarly, where the Chorus in Fitch's version describes Agrippina instructing her dead husband to "Raise your eyes from Acheron / and feast them on my punishment" ("Exere vultus Acheronte tuos") in order to celebrate her downfall, Nuce's Chorus has Agrippina call out "O *Claudius* now from *Limbo* lake" that he might "Revenge and due correction take" (Fitch 544-45; Nuce Sig. [Div]).

Undoubtedly, part of the appeal of this phrase is that it lends itself readily to the metre and rhyme (all of the phrases occurring at the end of a line) and that it retains a clear etymological link to the Latin. But the emergence of Christian terms within the Senecan landscape by no means ends there. In Fitch's translation of *Agamemnon*, Cassandra declares "I do not try to placate the gods with any prayer" ("nec ulla caelites placo prece"); in Studley's translation, she refers instead to "the heavenly ghostes," thereby drawing Seneca's term into a pluralised form of the Christian nomenclature for God (Fitch 182-83; Studley Sig. [Ebiiiiv]). It is common for the translators to choose language that evokes the more immediately disturbing punishments of the Christian afterlife also. In *Thyestes*, where Fitch's translation of the ghost Tantalus shows him describing "the pools and rivers and retreating waters" of the underworld ("stagna et amnes et recedentes aquas"), Heywood's Tantalus describes the "pooles and flood[s] of hell". Where Seneca's ghost requests permission to retreat "to my prison's black lair" ("atrum carceris liceat mei / cubile), Heywood's ghost refers to it as a "dungeon darke of hatefull hell" (Fitch 234-35;

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[38] Definitions for "emergō" or "emergere" in the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* include "to come up out of the water, emerge," "to come forth (from confinement, concealment, or sim.)" and "to become apparent, come to light" ("emergō," def. 1, 2, 4).

Heywood Sig. [Aiiiv]). In *Thyestes*, where Fitch's translation sees the ghost of Tantalus protesting, "has something worse been devised than thirst parched amidst water," ("peius inventum est siti / arente in undis aliquid"), Heywood has his ghost ask "is ought found worse / then burning thurst of hell / In lakes alowe?" (Fitch 230-31; Heywood Sig. A[ir]). The Englished underworld supplements, and is supplemented by, that of Seneca, as the classical dead inhabit an oddly shifting ground that is recognisable as Seneca's underworld and yet embedded within the spiritual topography of Christian afterlives. In doing so, the language of the translations not only disturbs the oppositions between source and translation, Latin and English, pagan and Christian, but also between Catholic and Protestant discourses: for in drawing upon heaven and hell, the translations enter into terms that are evocative of both and exclusive to neither.

   In this polyphonic script, the underworld takes on a peculiar intensity. The classical underworld drawn in Greek and Roman literature is roughly correlative to the multiple spaces of the afterlife in Catholic theology. Hades contains multiple spaces, ranging from Elysium (for the chosen few) to Tartarus (for the very wicked) and including also a liminal space for those who die very young. [39] Rather like purgatory, the underworld is not quite a closed space, for it is possible in some instances for traffic to occur between the underworld and mortal realms. In Seneca's *Hercules*, Vergil's *Georgics*, and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the living make successful excursions into the underworld; in numerous plays, including *Thyestes*, *Agamemnon*, *Oedipus*, and *Octavia*, the dead are able to return to the mortal realm temporarily. This sense of permeability in the division between the living and the dead mitigates somewhat the permanency and threat of death. It also means that the underworld, rather like the varying spaces of the Catholic afterlife, can signify any state ranging from terror and torture to eternal bliss, with considerable variations possible as to the

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[39] These mythological constructions of the afterlife and the underworld that appear within Greek and Roman literature are not representative of pagan and philosophical understandings within the populace. Toynbee observes in *Death and Burial in the Roman World* that, although Greek concepts such as Hell, Limbo, and the Elysian fields entered Roman awareness through the work of Virgil and subsequent writers, such ideas generally constituted "poetic" convention rather than genuine belief (36-37). In practice, actual Roman beliefs about the afterlife varied considerably from Epicurean and Stoic scepticism as to the existence of a conscious, individual afterlife to a much wider belief in the perpetuation of the soul and the belief that the living and the dead might influence one another (34). Emily Vermeule provides a useful account of Greek beliefs and their expression in art in *Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry*.

precise location and characteristics of specific spaces.[40] But in the changing language of Reformation England, in which conceptualizations of the afterlife are increasingly drawn towards the Protestant poles of heaven and hell, the underworld becomes darker and more of a focal point for fear. To a Christian audience, a classical term for the underworld, such as Hades, has a kind of neutrality in that it evokes the safely fictionalized space of mythology. Where such a term is translated into "hell," the image enters into an altered discursive context in which the original terms of reference recede beneath the force of the Christianized terms' more immediately threatening connotations.

Such effects are important because they affect not only the audience's understanding of the source text but also the language into which the text now enters. According to Benjamin, translation produces a process of supplementation and corresponding growth: as translators negotiate between the two languages, they contribute to the receiving language in a way that both expands and destabilizes its own terms. Benjamin claims that languages share a "central reciprocal relationship" because "a priori and apart from all historical relationships," they are "interrelated in what they want to express." The "*mode* of intention" or formal elements exclude those of the other language, but the languages nevertheless "supplement one another in their intentions" to express a particular object (74-75, italics are my emphasis). As a useful example, we might take Neville's translation of the sunrise in the opening lines of *Oedipus*. Seneca's lines are "Iam nocte Titan dubius expulsa redit / et nube maestus squalida exoritur iubar," which Fitch translates as "Now darkness is driven off, and the Titan returns hesitantly, his beams made gloomy by filthy clouds" (Fitch 18-19). Neville translates these lines as "The night is gon and dredful day / begins at length to appeare / And *Lucifer* beset with Clowds, / himself aloft doth reare" (Sig. A[ir]). Here, "Titan" and "Lucifer" exclude one another modally but share the same "intended object," that of the morning sun. Neville's choice of the word Lucifer supplements the figure of Titan in a process that Benjamin sees as enabling both "the maturing process of the original language" and the growth of the language of the

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[40] For a more specific account of Catholic conceptions of these spaces, see Marshall, who observes that while the basic structure and function of purgatory was generally consistent in the medieval Church, "the world of the dead seems to have been at once vivid and vague, a nexus of objectified theological and cultural values, visionary speculation, and calculating didacticism" (*Beliefs and the Dead* 12).

translation (75).[41] The jarring transition from Titan (god of the sun) to Lucifer (the morning star, but also the fallen archangel or devil) highlights that the process of supplementation is marked by the destabilizing effects of linguistic slippage. Neville's choice of the term Lucifer is not inappropriate, exchanging one figuration of morning light for another: but since it cannot be isolated from its prominent association with the Christian figure of ultimate darkness, its frame of reference is modified and extended. As this slippage draws the original image into an altered mode of discourse, it not only replaces but also adds to the original term so that its range of signification expands to remarkable effect: for the break of day introduces us to a land that has been overtaken by a mysterious evil, altogether befitted by the heralding form of Lucifer.

Benjamin's conception of this process pays insufficient attention to the disruption inherent within these linguistic substitutions, focusing instead upon dynamic growth. He claims that "the task of the translator consists in finding that intended effect [*Intention*] upon the language into which he is translating which produces in it the echo of the original." A translation differs from a "work of literature" in that it exists, not "in the center of the language forest but on the outside facing the wooded ridge; it calls into it without entering, aiming at that single spot where the echo is able to give, in its own language, the reverberation of the work in the alien one" (77). However, Benjamin's image betrays the disjuncture of the translative act, the significance of an echo that returns in an alien mode. If, as Benjamin suggests, the "mode of intention" within a language necessarily excludes that of another language, the intention itself cannot achieve universality because it does not exist prior to, or outside of, language. Both languages might "supplement one another in their intentions," as Benjamin suggests, but intention itself – even in the shared desire to express the same object – is constituted through the particular conditions of each language (75). The desire for the translation to access the illusory kernel of the

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[41] Benjamin views the translative process as such so long as it is the work of a "genuine translator," dispensing from the beginning with "bad translations" which seek only to convey "information" or a perceived "'poetic'" essence (76, 71). For him, "translatability is an essential quality of certain works" that have a "specific significance" (72). It is these works that play a crucial role in the evolution of language, with translation functioning to express "the central reciprocal relationship between languages" (74). I disregard Benjamin's distinction on the basis that its emphasis upon the special translatability of certain works (which rests upon a subjective judgement of individual merit) fails to take sufficient account of how his observed relationships between source and translated texts must affect translation more widely as a result of the dis/connections between languages.

source text does not somehow function prior to, or outside of, the language in which he wishes to locate it. As Benjamin himself acknowledges, the "transfer" into a "hitherto inaccessible realm of reconciliation and fulfillment of languages . . . can never be total". If the reciprocity of the two languages forges a movement towards a "pure language," the divine ascendancy that we are promised seems little more than a spectre, a vision that appears fleetingly amidst the trees but is no more concrete than the echo itself (76).

Derrida observes precisely this effect in his discussion of French translations of *Hamlet*'s famous line, "the time is out of joint." I will explore Derrida's wider treatment of these translations in Chapter 3, but for now it is sufficient to observe that his summary of the dislocated relation between *Hamlet* and its translations has a broader applicability:

> the translations themselves are put 'out of joint.' However correct and legitimate they may be . . . they are all disadjusted, as it were unjust in the gap that affects them. This gap is within them, to be sure, because their meanings remain necessarily equivocal; next it is in the relation among them and thus in their multiplicity, and finally or first of all in the irreducible inadequation to the other language and to the stroke of genius of the event that makes the law, to all the virtualities of the original. The excellence of the translation can do nothing about it. Worse yet, and this is the whole drama, it can only aggravate or seal the inaccessibility of the other language. (*Specters* 21)

The echo that returns from the translator's call into the woods is incomplete, disunited, despite the interdependency of the two texts. As the translation accesses a particular element or set of elements of the original line, it must exclude others as it produces its own referential play within the structures of the receiving language. As Neville's translation of the word "Titan" exemplifies, in entering into the unique, heteroglossic formulations of the receiving culture's language, the translation cannot avoid alienation from its source or, indeed, from the translations of the same material.

Derrida relates this formulation back to the status of *Hamlet* as "a masterpiece," which "moves, by definition, in the manner of a ghost" so that it "inhabits without residing, without ever confining itself" to its various translations (20-21). For him, "the stroke of genius . . . the signature of the Thing 'Shakespeare'" is "to authorize

each one of the translations, to make them possible and intelligible without ever being reducible to them" (*Specters* 25). This quality can scarcely be completely confined to the "masterpiece" though, for the inevitable disjunctures within the mapping of one language or text to another is a condition of language itself, of the calling forth of one text into another locus and therefore another time and context. The echo that Benjamin perceives in the woods may return us a translation that is evocative of the original, that appears to share a common intention and fosters the growth of both languages, but it must inevitably be altered – connected to, but also alienated from, its source. In other words, the disjuncture between the call into the "language forest" and the returned reverberation exposes a gap between the linguistic mode of intention and the intended object. Thus, the Englished echo manifests the qualities of a ghost, extending beyond the figure of the original to pervade also the concepts integral to its return, rendering strange the oppositions through which it enters into being. It becomes alienated even from itself.

In the Senecan translations, this porosity of language – the lack of purity in seemingly self-contained terms – manifests itself within the broader treatment of the dead to incorporate the tensions increasingly associated with the afterlife in Elizabethan culture. Just as the translators move Seneca's underworld towards the Christian poles of heaven and hell, rendering the terms in which the afterlife is constructed increasingly fraught, they also draw a heightened instability and burgeoning sense of darkness into the forms and imagery associated with the dead. Kiefer observes in a more general context that the translators' intepretation of Seneca's work produces "a world even more precarious and unstable than that of the original" and that "in the handling of the theme of change, the translators out-Seneca Seneca" ("Seneca Speaks in English" 380). This is true also of their handling of death, which is perfused by the growing unease associated with contemporary constructions of death. Neill explicitly associates the increasingly secularized treatment of the dead in the rise of the English tragedy with the culture's struggle to adapt "the psychic economy of an increasingly individualistic society to the stubborn facts of mortality," and the increasingly definitive theological division between the living and the dead (30).[42] It is evident also within these early Elizabethan

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[42] For Neill's overview of these changes, see esp. pp. 15-42.

translations as the writers draw the anxieties within evolving cultural understandings of death into their re-constructions of Seneca's pagan dead.

In Seneca's texts, the dead are rather less dead than those within Christian (and particularly Protestant) understandings. They depart from life, to the extent that they are no longer alive, but they are neither inanimate nor (in many instances) irreversibly absent. Rather, their absence is marked by a paradoxical sense of presence, an impression that their primary distinguishing characteristic is merely that they have moved home. At times, they take on indeterminate form, but often they still function as distinct figures or groups. Like their earlier Roman and Greek predecessors, the dead within the underworld are "condemned to a shadowy and tenuous condition" but retain a certain specificity, a sense of individual presence (Toynbee 35). In the translations, however, the dead become increasingly uneasy, displaced within their home. In *Oedipus* when the priest summons the dead King from Hades, Fitch translates the dead as "timid spirits" that search for places to hide ("pavide latebras nemoris umbrosi petunt / animae trementes") (Fitch 70-71). In contrast, Neville renders the dead into "shapes and forms" that fly out of "*Limbo* lake" (Sig. [Cbiir]). It is not clear from this formulation that the spirits are scattering in panic or even that they are spirits, other than by deduction – they lack specificity to the point that they might be any type of entity or none. Conversely, in Nuce's *Octavia*, the dead become more alive but also more disturbing. In Fitch's translation, Agrippina complains that the memory of her murder troubles her "even amidst the dead" ("manet inter umbras impiae caedis mihi / semper memoria") (570-71). In Nuce's translation, Agrippina elaborates: "I always doe remember well beneath, / Where piteous, ghostly, crauling souls doe breath, / Th' unkindly, slaughterous déede" (Nuce Sig. [Eiiiiv]). The dead whom Nuce's Agrippina invokes are neither fully dead nor transformed beyond the flesh. Universally animate, they are "ghostly" and yet with breath, repugnantly both "crauling" and "piteous". These are something more, something other than the dead of the Latin text. The distant shady figures of Hades are dragged into the light of day to reveal unpalatable qualities that resonate disturbingly with the physicality and fragility of the living.

A similar disturbance of the dead occurs in Studley's *Medea*. Seneca has Medea "invoke the thronging silent dead" ("Comprecor vulgus silentum") in her pursuit of

revenge against her husband (Fitch 408-09). Studley's Medea calls out to the "Flittring flocks of grislie gostes / that syt in sylent seat" and adds in additional lines referring to "wretched wofull wawlyng soules . . . That linked lie with ginglyng chaines / on waylyng *Limbo* shore," (*Medea* Sig. [Fiiv]). The first of Studley's images renders the ghost both more distant and ephemeral in their "flittering flocks" and more dreadful, as "grislie ghostes". The second draws the dead from their previous silence into a state of despair, wailing and jangling their chains. The latter may seem a hackneyed image in the light of the subsequent overuse of loudly protesting ghosts with clinking chains in the English tragedy, but in this early translation, it is effective as an image that disrupts the form and function of Seneca's dead. It is worth noting too the slippage within Studley's terms for the dead. By the mid sixteenth century, the term "ghost" has acquired multiple usages and is continuing to evolve rapidly. While for many centuries, a ghost had signified a spirit, a spiritual entity, or soul in a range of contexts, the medieval period saw it come to be linked more specifically to the visible apparition of the returned dead (*OED* "ghost," def. 3.a, 5, 8.a). It is also, around the time that Studley writes, beginning to be used as a descriptor for a physical "corpse," a usage that the *OED* first identifies as occurring in Sir Geoffrey Fenton's *Certaine Tragicall Discourses* (published in 1567, just one year after Studley's text) (def. 9). While Studley's use of the word "ghosts" is consistent with the Senecan text, then, it is more evocative of both visibility and corporeality. Vague and ill-defined in their "flocks," they are also disturbingly real, manifesting qualities of mortality, and therefore the living, within their afterlives. Ambulatory, somatic, and forceful, these collective groups of the dead seem strangely ill at ease with the underworld in their Elizabethan forms. The amplification of their presence through the heightened play between the oppositional qualities of the living and the dead produces a discomforting construction of the dead that incorporates but also exceeds Seneca's images.

This is evident also in those passages that demonstrate a marked engagement with the *deadness* of the returned dead. In direct engagements with individual ghosts, the dead become particularly animate, but also particularly dead, in the sense that the stark biological impact of death upon the physical body is often disconcertingly apparent. When the priest in Seneca's *Oedipus* summons Laius' ghost

necromantically, the ghost is blood-soaked and filthy. Fitch translates the scene thus: "Laius reveals his hidden face. I shudder to speak of it. He stands caked in the blood that poured over his body, with his hair covered in squalid filth, and speaks in rage" – "fari horreo. / stetit per artus sanguine effuso horridus, / paedore foedo squalidam obtentus comam, / et ore rabido fatur" (Fitch 70-71). Neville expands significantly on this already gruesome scene:

> out at length coms *Laius*:
> with fowle and griesly hue.
> All perst with wounds, I loth to speake
> with blud quight overgrown:
> Uncomly drest, in wretched plight,
> with head styll hangyng down.
> A Miser ryght as seemd to me,
> and most of Misers all:
> Thus in this case, at length he spake,
> and thus began to call. (Sig. [Cbiir])

His skin has a specific, ghastly pallor; his head hangs down, he appears the epitome of a "miser", a Latinate term that implies a "wretch," as Spearing notes, but also a hoarder of information, a figure who has been loath to appear or to share the information that he alone holds (*The Elizabethan Translations of Seneca's Tragedies* 74). A heightened sense of haunting arises here through the terms in which the ghost is constructed. Neville's ghost is as cognisant and emotive as its living inquisitors. In its grotesque, corpse-like form and distinctly mortal mannerisms and responses, this ghost manifestly erodes the boundary between the living and the dead to inscribe the qualities of each within the other.

In such examples, we are scarcely witnessing a radical reimagining of Seneca's depictions of the dead. However, Neville's extraction of particular elements of the source text does produce a significant supplementation, an excess that both duplicates and further displaces the figure of the ghost. Many scholars criticize the Elizabethan translators for magnifying this type of grisly imagery. Rees, for instance, observes that Neville seizes upon the "lurid colours" and "horrific features of Seneca," thereby joining the other early translators who "lacked the genius to transcend their own failings" (128). Similarly, in *Fated Sky: the* Femina Furens *in*

Shakespeare, M. L. Stapleton observes a repugnant passage in Studley's *Medea* to be representative of the "rankness" that "represents the stylistic excrescence for which commentators condemn Seneca as well as Studley" (47). But if such "excrescence" suggests a displeasing expansion of Seneca's tendency to dwell on the macabre, it also indicates that the horrors of death and disturbance of the relation between the living and dead have a particular purchase within Elizabethan frames of reference that fosters their expansion. Neville's amplification of the effects of death upon the animate figure of Laius brings death and the dead into the mortal realm in a way that moves them beyond the predictable classical divisions to render them less containable and more disruptive. Thus, as the ghost is forced to speak of a future that is both unknown and assured, it evokes the anxieties of the culture into which it now enters in addition to the narrative and mythological structures of its Latin predecessor.

This collapsing of oppositions between the living and the dead becomes still more explicit in Studley's translation of the ghost's opening lines in *Agamemnon*. In the opening scene of the play, the ghost of Thyestes announces his return from the underworld to expound the tortures of Tartarus, outline the ghastly events that preceded his death, and prophesy the bloodbath to come. Appalled equally by the mortal world and the torturous realm below, he is uncertain whether to proceed or retreat. In Fitch's translation, his return is straightforward and self-centred: "I leave the dark world of infernal Dis and come released from Tartarus' deep cavern, uncertain which abode I hate more: I Thyestes shun those below, and am shunned by those above." ("Opaca linquens Ditis inferni loca / adsum profundo Tartari emissus specu, / incertus utras oderim sedes magis: / fugio Thyestes inferos, superos fugo") (Fitch 126-27). In contrast, Studley's translation renders strange the mapping of territories through its shifting terms:

> *Thyestes* I, that whether coast
>   to shun do stand in doubt
> Thinfernall feendes I flye, the foalke
>   of yearth I chase about (Sig. Bi[r]).

In beginning with his own name, the ghost's phrasing partially internalises the terrain so that the "coasts" of life and death lie within, inseparable in their equal abhorrence. Moreover, whether intentionally or otherwise, Studley interprets the "fugo" of the next line as applying to Thyestes rather than the inhabitants of the upper world: so rather than being exiled or driven out by living mortals, he instead chases them. The image is comical, but disconcerting: a figure of death pursuing the living, refusing temporal or spatial separation. Thus, in this version, the ghost's intrusion within mortal territory poses an immediate, physicalized threat to the security of the living.

In passages such as these, death looks the same as it does in Seneca's text at a narrative level, and yet not the same, neither fully commensurate with the Latin text's mythological constructions nor isolable from them. It creeps towards the unknown. Alongside the strangeness of such formulations of the afterlife, the threat of death becomes more overt at points in which Elizabethan and classical figurations of death coincide. For the Elizabethans, one of the ways in which the threat of death is addressed is through the further development of the medieval personification of death. The figure of Death emerged in medieval visual art forms such as the Dance of Death, in which the macabre skeletal figure summons the living to their demise. Neill traces a development of this figure during the sixteenth century in which Death develops an increasingly marked, distinct persona to become a shadow of the human, usurping individual identity as it works to destroy the structures, hierarchies, and individuality of the living:

> Death comes to be credited with a personality precisely as dying comes to be felt, more acutely than ever before, as a cancellation of personal identity. In his rage to un-fashion distinction, this Death takes a wicked pleasure in parodying, through the lively forms of Death the Antic, sardonic jester, grim summoner . . . the vivid self-exhibition of human identity. Personalized in this way, Death can be conceived as a threatening Other, or a morbid anti-self – the one we are each born to meet, an uncanny companion we carry with us through life, a hidden double who will discover himself at the appointed hour. (Neill 5-8)

According to Neill, one of the purposes that the personification of death serves is to see to it that the individual is conquered by a superior opponent rather than fading away into a universal nothingness. Although it is threatening, the figure of Death

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serves as a focal point for anxiety, a combatant that can at least be known insofar as it can be visualized.

   This figure is common to the Senecan corpus also, but the translators again amplify its effects, heightening its threat through exaggerated anthropomorphism. In *Oedipus*, as the Chorus describes the chaos that both Thebes and the underworld have fallen into, they paint a scene in which "Dark Death opens his greedy jaws / agape, and unfurls his wings to the full" ("Mors atra avidos oris hiatus / pandit et omnes explicat alas") (Fitch 30-31). In Neville's version, Death has not only greed, but a baleful, humanized stare and deadly aim:

> Lo see how gredy death on us
>   with scowling eyes doth leare.
> See see. Oh *Jove* how fast he throwes
>   his Darts. Not one he spares
> But al confownds. His thretning force,
>   with stand no Creature dares. (Sig. [Abiiiiv])

Nuce employs a similar personification of death in *Octavia* where Seneca has little or none. In Fitch's verison, Octavia's "heart trembles always – with fear not of death, but of villainy" – ("non mortis metu, / sed sceleris") (Fitch 524-25). In Nuce's account, it is "Deathes griesly girning face" that Octavia professes not to fear, with considerably less credibility in light of the figure's ghastly countenance (Sig. [Biiiv]). Similarly in a scene in which Death confronts the victims of a shipwreck, Fitch's translation shows death as a figure prowling for his prey: "Before their eyes prowls fearsome death, / everyone for himself looks to escape" ("mors ante oculos dira vagatur; / quaerit leti sibi quisque fugam") (544-45). Nuce's translation expresses much the same predatory behaviour, but renders Death visibly animate, diabolical, and violent:

> Then griesly present death doth daunce
> Before their eyes with pyning chéekes:
> Whose deadly stroke and heavy chaunce
> For to avoyde, then eche man séekes (Sig. Di[r])

This figure of Death is, once again, a direct match for its predecessor but also something more. It is deadlier, more malevolent in its trimuphant dance, its "pyning chéekes," and lethal "stroke."

Such imagery indicates that to anthropomorphize death, to accord it a counter-identity in opposition to that which it abrogates, is by no means to tame it. In fact, the more death is personified, the darker it becomes. In a scene in which Medea summons the dead, the gods of the dead, and the underworld in her quest for revenge, calling out to "the cavernous halls of squalid Death" ("squalidae Mortis specus"), Studley summons up a grotesque visage : "O mossye den where deth doth couche / his gastly carrayn face" (Fitch 408-09; Studley Sig. [Fiiir]). The figure of death is entirely divorced from any allegorical or moralistic context: it appears only to serve Medea's purposes. Death seems not only amoral but bordering on evil. In this, it speaks to the substantial anxiety that Neill and Watson observe to emerge within Reformation England as the culture struggles to assimilate theological shifts with complex social and cultural factors that heighten the threat of death to the individual. Death's force and inevitability is not new, but its hostility and vividly personified malignance is at a peak here. Thus, the translations perfuse the figure of Death along with a range of other aspects of Seneca's dead with contemporary frames of reference for their subject matter. In the echo of Seneca that emerges in English form, Death and the dead become a commingling of the pagan, Christian, and secular. Functioning as both the returned form and simulacra of their Latin predecessors, the deathly figurations in these texts simultaneously invoke conceptualizations of death that hold particular currency in Elizabethan culture. They are products of a linguistic transformation that subtly but clearly draws upon contemporary frames of reference for death that include a marked anxiety as to what it holds in store for the living. In manifesting such instabilities within the literary traffic between past and (Elizabethan) present, these translations refuse the containment or hierarchy often accorded to translative practices. Instead, they stage a haunting that sees the terms of Seneca's dead invade, and invaded by, those of the English into which it now enters. In so doing, they reveal a form of haunting that is to become increasingly overt as the dead of Elizabethan literature invade the space of the living from which they have been so unsuccessfully banished.

Chapter Two

Burial

When a man is dead, we ought to commit the dead corps to the grave . . . . There is no dead carkase so lothsome as a man is, the which both argueth the necessitie of buriall, and how ougly we are in the sight of God, by reason of sinne.

(Perkins, *A Golden Chaine* Sig. [L2v])

after a trauma, the conjuration has to make sure that the dead will not come back: quick, do whatever is needed to keep the cadaver localized, in a safe place, decomposing right where it was inhumed . . . Quick, a vault to which one keeps the keys!"

(Derrida, *Specters* 120).

Burying the Dead

Burial of the dead is supposed to be a swift and permanent arrangement. The resonance between Derrida and Perkins' perceptions of the injunction to bury – four centuries apart – demonstrates the pervasiveness of this imperative within markedly different discursive contexts, whilst denying biological decay as its primary motivation.[43]   For Perkins, burial constitutes an act of obedience to God: in burying the dead, the living affirm their place within the Christian (specifically Calvinist) spiritual schema that demands their acquiescence and attention to the isolation of the dead. For Derrida, burial constitutes an attempt within the structures of Western metaphysics – in this instance, the political and philosophical discourses that endeavour to delimit the inheritance of Marx – to banish the spectre of that which cannot be contained through the temporal and spatial strictures of history and

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[43] Perkins' text was originally published in Latin under the title *Armilla Aurea* in 1590: Hill's English translation of the work was published in 1591.

textuality. In my Introduction, I highlighted Freud's observation that the uncanny often emerges particularly strongly in conjunction with the physical manifestations of death that appear to threaten the living, specifically dead bodies and the returned dead. Here, both Perkins and Derrida identify an imperative that invokes precisely such a threat, not only to the psychic requirement to contain death but also to the theological, philosophical, and linguistic structures through which this emerges. In identifying a common need to disqualify the dead permanently from the present space of the living, they signal that such an exclusion requires active enforcement of the boundary between the two. They indicate that the dead cannot be relied upon to stay in their place.

In suggesting that the uncanny inhabits multiple and seemingly disparate discourses while appealing to a central, shared concern regarding the need for burial, I wish to draw attention to the way in which the uncanny inhabits language. Although Derrida insists that all Freudian "concepts, without exception, belong to the history of metaphysics" and "the system of logocentric repression," the uncanny – a concept that has become inextricable from Freud's writing on the subject – refuses the circumscription that this implies ("Freud and the Scene of Writing" 197). Derrida's treatment of metaphysics, philosophy, and language hinges upon the breaching of the purity, containment, and opposition of terms in a fashion that exposes their indeterminacy and instabilities, thereby destabilizing fundamental structures of knowledge. Thus, deconstruction works to disrupt the purity of terms from within to share common ground with the uncanny. Royle points out that "the uncanny is intimately entwined in language, with how we conceive and represent what is happening within ourselves, to ourselves, to the world" (*The Uncanny* 2). Its disruption to epistemological registers, or conscious understandings of what is familiar, normal, or possible, identifies its embeddedness within the language and therefore the discourses through which such understandings are constituted.

If the uncanny is characterized by an indeterminacy that renders its functioning difficult to define and locate precisely, it is in part because the uncanny both inhabits and exceeds the logocentrism to which Derrida generally confines psychoanalytic concepts. In taking up a position within the slippage and folding back of the opposition between familiar and unfamiliar, within a division that is not stable and

cannot be grasped, the uncanny erodes the structures through which the purity of particular terms is constructed and maintained. In this, the uncanny bears a special relation to death: not simply to the biological event of death but to the problems it poses for temporal, spatial, psychic, and linguistic finitude in the presence of excess, deferral, and supplementation. In other words, the uncanny emerges where the construct of death simultaneously manifests and also refuses the associated qualities of ending and completion. Where the injunction to bury demands psychic (en)closure and the isolation and sanctity of the categories of living and dead, the uncanny exposure of the porosity of the boundary between the two pervades the language within which those terms are constituted. The uncanny emerges within the spiritual and ontological conceptualizations of the living and the dead as the terms of burial and mourning are riven by their own construction.

In Chapter One, I drew attention to Derrida's claim that the "displacement" and "folding back" of oppositions within writing are essential to matters concerning "life and death" ("Plato's Pharmacy" 104-05). Derrida argues that there is no simple presence of "death" in which the state or idea of life exists independently only to be described by the signifier "death": rather, the generation of the concept as it is associated with the term "death" is contingent upon its place within the broader chain of terms. Derrida points out that:

> no element can function as a sign without referring to another element which itself is not simply present. This interweaving results in each 'element' – phoneme or grapheme – being constituted on the basis of the trace within it of the other elements of the chain or system. This interweaving, this textile, is the *text* produced only in the transformation of another text. Nothing, neither among the elements nor within the system, is anywhere ever simply present or absent. There are only, everywhere, differences and traces of traces. (*Positions* 23-24)

The differentiations upon which language is founded are therefore crucial in the constitution of meaning: but meaning is never simply present or fixed. If we return to my epigraph from Perkins, for example, its conceptual content and theological force do not function separately from the linguistic processes of supplementation, displacement, and re-mark through which they arise. The dead are not simply a given category to which is assigned the term "dead": they exist in and through a

differential relation to a series of other terms. The dead is also a "man," a "corps," a "carkase," a sinner; therefore, the category arises through a series of implicit oppositions to the living, the animate, those whom must bury rather than be buried, and God. But such oppositions emerge only through the play of differences, for the living too may be inscribed with almost the same set of terms: a "man," a corporeal body, a sinner. We can observe no simple category in which the dead constitutes a fixed presence defined by static terms or in which it occupies a stable position in opposition to the living.

Indeed, if we look at the wider passage from which this extract is taken, Perkins renders this shifting process of differentiation increasingly transparent as he furnishes a numbered list of theologically-driven imperatives in support of the need to commit the "dead corps to the grave". The list may be condensed as follows:

1. "The instinct of Nature it selfe."
2. "The examples of the Patriarkes, and other holy personages."
3. "The Lordes owne approbation of buriall, in that he numbreth it amongst his benefites. For the want thereof is a curse."
4. "There is no dead carkase so lothsome as a man is, the which both argueth the necessitie of burial, and how ougly we are in the sight of God, by reason of sinne."
5. "The bodie must rise againe out of the earth, that it may be made a perpetuall mansion house for the soule to dwell in."
6. "The bodies of the faithfull are the temples of the holy Ghost, and therefore must rise againe to glory."
7. "Buriall is a testimonie of the love, and reverence we beare to the deceased." (Sig. [L2v])

In this series, the categories of the dead and burial are inscribed and re-inscribed within a shifting framework of formulations that repeatedly disturbs the stability of its own terms. We begin with an appeal to nature, in which the burial of the dead is required through a kind of natural law. This places the living and the dead into a relation in which both function within nature (as burial of the dead situates them in accordance with its dictates) – or both function outside of, or in contravention to, nature. In order to belong within this category, the living are dependent upon their natural adherence to proper treatment of the dead. Yet Perkins' inclusion of the point suggests that it is necessary to teach, or at least reinforce, this "instinct" in order to ensure that the living understand how to occupy this place. At the same time, the

place of the dead within nature is fluid, depending as it does not upon the state of death but on the actions of the presently living.

Perkins then moves on to the example set by spiritual leaders and God's guidance. What has just been inscribed within nature is now reformulated within spiritual law. Whether or not the living possess the natural instinct to bury the dead, they must do so in order to operate within God's law, "for the want thereof is a curse." In the biblical example Perkins cites from Jeremiah 22.19, God threatens to cast the king Jehojakim out of Jerusalem and leave his corpse unburied (Sig. [L2v]). The lack of burial is the visitation of a curse: it is a punishment to be inflicted upon the dead by God, although the point is more generally applicable to the actions of the living. (A similar curse is called upon in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, in which Tamora is denied burial: "No funerall rite, nor man in mourning weede, / No mournefull bell shall ring her buriall / But throw her forth to beasts and birds [of] pray" [K4v].) In Perkins' imperative, however, the absence of burial is analogous with the curse: the treatment of the corpse determines the dead's place within God's law. What it is to be dead hinges upon whether or not one is buried.

In the fourth point, the dead are localized again to the individual, physicalized form of the repulsive "carcase," offensive to the eyes of both the living and God. Here, the need for burial emerges as a means to dispel the horror of the physical corpse, so that the dead are marked by their difference from the non-repugnant bodies of the living. But a slippage promptly emerges within the subsequent linking of the corpse's gruesomeness to the sins of the living. The dead body is now marked by those sins in a way that the living – who are not to be buried – are not. The spiritual state of those who are alive is re-marked within the physical state of the dead. Moreover, their sight, to which Perkins' image of the corpse appeals, is analogous with "the sight of God" as He views the inscription of sin within the dead. Therefore, the perspective of the living is momentarily inseparable from that of God at the precise moment that they view (or at least imagine) the repellent reification of their inner spiritual state.

Perkins' following two points proceed to mark death with a series of reversals of that which he has already established. Not only is the body's burial temporary because it must rise again, but the body is also sacred. It is the eternal dwelling

house of the soul; and for the faithful, at least, the body is to be celebrated as the Holy Ghost's temple and ultimately resurrected. The physical encasement rendered so repugnant in his previous point is also the locus for the spirit of both individual and God. For Perkins, of course, the point is one of temporal spiritual progression: the corruption of the mortal realm gives way to the restoration offered within the spiritual realm by way of the grace of God. This is part of what Zimmerman describes as a movement by Protestant reformers to counteract "the problem of transfiguration" by rendering the corpse "axiomatically dead," thereby "hardening the distinction between material and spiritual" (8). For my purposes, what is significant is that the series of arguments he deploys around the central compulsion for burial shows the repeated inscription and re-inscription of oppositional terms within one another. What must be buried because of its manifestation of mortal corruption must equally be buried because of its functioning as a spiritual temple and its role in spiritual perpetuity. The dead must be excluded because the living contain both what is corruptible and eternal: what is sinful and sacred. Finally, we are told that burial is an act of "love, and reverence," so that the exclusion functions as a manifestation of inclusion: the prohibition of the dead fosters a relationship with the group that, under Protestant teachings, is no longer available to the living.

This remarkable series thus exemplifies, through conceptual as well as linguistic instability, both the imperative to contain the categories and opposition of life and death and the impossibility of doing so. At the same time, the slippage that emerges within this extract is inseparable from the concerns and terms of psychoanalysis. Perkins seeks to differentiate the inevitable corruption of the mortal subject from the purified form of the faithful on the day of resurrection, but in order to do so, he must negotiate the problematic continuity of the physical body's role in this metamorphosis. The burial of the corpse achieves this in ways that mere disposal cannot. Committed to the ground, the body remains reassuringly locatable and (perceptually) intact, while the transition from decay to spiritual re-birth is smoothed by the cadaver's safe removal from view. Whilst his purpose is ostensibly theological, he repeatedly calls upon evidence or justifications that testify to the serving of psychological compulsion. The argument that burial of the dead is important to their spiritual future at the time of resurrection functions to counter the

horror of dissolution with a physicalized reversal that links reassuringly to the perpetuity of the soul. And while he offers natural instinct, historical precedent, respect for the dead, horror of the dead, and the future of the dead (and therefore of the living) as injunctions to bury, all of these point to a central need to remove the dead at once, to separate the dead from the living decisively and to contain them permanently in an isolable space.

Such emphasis upon particular ceremonial rites renders the physical act of burial secondary to its metaphoricity. Disposing of the dead might theoretically be as well accomplished by any other mode of formal severance between the living and the dead, by cremation or "burial" at sea or ritual dissection. The advantage of physical interment is that it visibly and securely contains the dead whilst keeping them safely out of view. To fill in a grave with dirt or to seal a tomb is to provide a substantial physical barrier between the living and the dead that cannot be breached without visible evidence of the fact: to occlude the dead and visibly to affirm that occlusion. What matters most, though, is the completion of culturally accepted rituals that say, when carried out properly and completely, "it is done. The deceased has permanently departed and will have no more business with (the) living." In this, Perkins occupies common ground with the period's dramatists, who frequently appeal to the same compulsion in their treatment of death.[44] In the closing moments of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, for instance, Octavius's desire for Brutus to be given a formal burial begins with an assertion of respect for the dead, but culminates in identifying the benefit to the living:

> According to his Vertue, let us use him
> Withall Respect, and Rites of Buriall.
> Within my Tent his bones to night shall ly,
> Most like a Souldier ordered Honourably:
> So call the Field to rest, and let's away,
> To part the glories of this happy day. (3.130

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[44] The compulsion to bury the dead has a long history and many accounts of ghost sightings from the medieval period demonstrate a similar agenda. Marshall provides a useful overview of this, pointing out that "if there is any consistent narrative" that emerges within later medieval ghost stories, "it is not one about maintaining contact between the living and the dead, but about ensuring the finality of their separation" (*Beliefs and the Dead* 17). His research suggests that the Catholic "requirement to remember the dead" and associated intercessory practices did not signal any common desire to come into actual contact with the dead (17-18).

The point here is not personal grief, but the need for (en)closure, division and separation. Like Perkins, Octavius attempts to eliminate the threat of contamination between the dead and the living through the determination of a forthcoming burial, and thereby to liberate the living from the dead. In effect, he acts to prevent the problem that Macbeth encounters when he is faced with the dead Banquo. Unable to carry out direct action, Macbeth can only attempt to dispel the presence of the dead by issuing an instruction for Banquo to complete his burial himself: "Avant, and quit my sight, let the earth hide thee" (Shakespeare, *Macbeth* 3.142). Unfortunately for Macbeth, the dead are not inclined to bury themselves.

The act, not merely of disposal, but of ceremonially committing "the dead corps to the grave" in accordance with a precise rationale is, in Derridean terms, an attempt "to conjure away" the *revenant*. As in my epigraph, Derrida frames such conjuration as a practice of containment. It is a response to the fear that "the cadaver is perhaps not as dead, as simply dead as the conjuration tries to delude us into believing" (20). Thus, such imperatives mark the instability of their own terms, for in insisting stringently upon the correct way in which to occlude the dead from the living, they reveal that the two categories are not pure terms. If the dead must be subject to a further operation in order to ensure that they do not disrupt the space occupied by the living, then neither term absolutely excludes the other. The frame of reference by which the states of life and death are understood is rendered unstable. This threat to the stability of these terms within the chain of signification and within specific discourses equally poses a threat to the project of processing death psychically. To exclude death from the space of the living requires conclusive separation between the two. Failure in that task leaves the dead other beyond the grasp of the living subject and therefore impossible to restrain or control. In his discussion of *Hamlet*, Derrida points out that the process of mourning (which incorporates the wider burial of that which is supposed to be dead, not only the instance of individual, personal grief) "consists always in attempting to ontologize remains . . . . all ontologization, all semanticization – philosophical, hermeneutical, or psychoanalytical – finds itself caught up in this work" although "it does not yet think it." It is essential that one knows:

who and *where*, to know whose body it really is and what place it occupies –
for it must stay in its place. . . . Nothing could be worse, for the work of
mourning, than confusion or doubt: one *has to know* who is buried where – and
it is necessary (to know – to make certain) that, in what remains of him, *he
remain there.* Let him stay there and move no more!" (*Specters* 9)

Townshend reads this passage from Derrida as outlining that "mourning in the
West is contingent upon the interrelated functions of knowledge and truth," thus
stimulating the intense scrutiny concerning the matter of Old Hamlet's death (and
afterlife) in *Hamlet* (73-74). In both the play and Derrida's explication, however, the
search for "truth" – or ontological classification – is a means to achieve the more
fundamental task of stabilizing the position of the dead in relation to the living. To
remove the "lothsome" dead from sight is to lighten (necessarily) the process of
mourning. It is for this reason that Gertrude instructs Hamlet "Doe not for ever with
thy vailed lids / Seeke for thy noble Father in the dust" and Claudius insists he must
"throw to earth / This unprevailing woe" (Sig. [B4v - C1r]). Although Gertrude's
part in this appears less sinister than Claudius, whose self-serving motives "are
lightly concealed under the thin veil of power administering benevolent correction,"
both require Hamlet to accept fully Old Hamlet's burial in order to liberate
themselves from the effects of the dead King's lingering presence (Stein 228). As
Bridget Lyons highlights in *Voices of Melancholy*: *Studies in Literary Treatments of
Melancholy in Renaissance England*, Gertrude and Claudius appeal to the principle
commonly expressed within early modern treatises concerning the emotions that
construe "excessive grief" as "an impious unwillingness to accept God's law" and
require it to be checked by "reason" (8). In so doing, they invoke the same
instruction that Perkins issues following his outline of burial practice: "Concerning
the living, they must see that . . . Their mourning be moderate" (Sig. L3[r]). Let the
past be buried and then let it bother the living no more.

I will examine mourning in more depth a little later, but for now it affords an
important entry into the way in which breaches of life and death equally involve the
taxonomical structures and processes of language and the psyche. In the texts
discussed thus far, the formal rites of funeral have been indissociable from the
interment of the physical body, so that the term "burial" generally conflates the two.

The discursive construction of burial is inseparable from the process of banishing the dead from the psychic and physical space of the living. It is no coincidence that both the principle and language of burial have gained a particular purchase within the psychoanalytic framework of repression, most obviously emerging in the phrase "to bury one's feelings." To bury is, in the most literal sense, to repress: "to control or keep in check," "restrain," or "put down" something that is potentially troublesome (*OED* "repress," def. 3.a, 2.a, 1.a,). This process is analogous with Freud's conceptualization of repression within the psyche, which broadly involves "*turning something away, and keeping it at a distance, from the conscious*" ("Repression" 147). In repression, an instinct arises, generating an idea or affect that is prohibited from passing into the conscious in order to attain the pleasure of satisfaction because to do so would generate a proportionately greater degree of discomfort (146-48, 152). The repression of an instinct therefore coincides with the burial of the dead in working to prohibit permanently the return of that which threatens or disturbs the conscious: indeed, the burial of the dead appears to operate as a physical register of this process.

Two important points arise here. Firstly, the process of repression requires an ongoing investment. Repression does not function as though "some living thing has been killed and from that time onward is dead". Rather, the unconscious will continue to endeavour to push the repressed material into the consciousness and, accordingly, "the maintenance of a repression involves an uninterrupted expenditure of force" (151). Secondly, the repressed instinct may actually continue to thrive in the unconscious. Indeed, "the instinctual representative develops with less interference and more profusely if it is withdrawn by repression from conscious influence. It proliferates in the dark, as it were" (149). It is this to which Perkins' disgust at the ugliness of the corpse speaks, the need to bury that which appals when in conscious view. Full and final burial would promise to cheat both processes by permanently excluding the dead – and therefore, death – once and for all. In the event of its failure, what will emerge from the dark of the tomb promises to be all the more horrifying for having been removed from conscious view and left to fester in the depths of the unconscious.

In this, we can see part of the foundation for Freud's claim that the uncanny is often experienced "in the highest degree in relation to . . . the dead, and to spirits and ghosts" ("The Uncanny" 241). The uncanny relates to a failure in the division between conscious and unconscious because it "can be traced back without exception to something familiar that has been repressed" (247). The return of the dead, then, involves a double movement in which the re-emergence of that which is repressed is made manifest in physicalized as well as psychic form, so that the seemingly external, material world that the individual inhabits becomes inseparable from the internal processes of the psyche. That which bursts forth from the dark erodes any firm division between the inner and outer worlds. Here, we may be reminded of Derrida's analysis of reading in which the fundamental metaphysical distinction between inside and outside is breached through a process of "displacement" and the folding back of oppositional terms ("Plato's Pharmacy" 104). If the dead breach the barrier of death or repression to return to the consciousness of the living, their threat to the conscious must occur through the linguistic structures that enabled the thinking of their burial. In other words, the threat that the returned dead pose to the division between (psychic) inside and (environmental) outside occurs through a linguistic operation in which these categories are exposed as impure, subject to slippage and reciprocal repetition, as that which was formulated as "outside" pervades the inside and vice versa.

At this point, it remains unclear as to why it is essential that the dead should be so thoroughly banished in the first instance though, or precisely what the threat is that they pose. In Freud's estimation, this points to a universal, primal fear of death. Suggesting that almost everyone has the thought process of "savages" when it comes to death, he argues that "no human being really grasps it, and our unconscious has as little use now as it ever had for the idea of its own mortality." Hence "the primitive fear of the dead is . . . always ready to come to the surface on any provocation" ("The Uncanny" 242). Freud thereby postulates that the human unconscious possesses a fundamental inability to accommodate its own demise through the physical process of death. This proposition is problematic in its transcultural and transhistorical assumptions, not least because he claims that this universal fear is inevitably repressed by "all supposedly educated people". This modern elite, he insists, have

"ceased to believe officially that the dead can become visible as spirits," mentally distanced themselves from apparent sightings, and adopted an increasingly rational and "unambiguous feeling of piety" in relation to "their dead" (242-43). Death, by this logic, is fundamentally incomprehensible and therefore universally frightening. Irrespective of rational dismissals of its threat, fear of death – which is at least partly fear of the unknown – persists within the unconscious. In regard to the dead themselves, Freud speculates that "most likely our fear still implies the old belief that the dead man becomes the enemy of his survivor and seeks to carry him off to share his new life with him" (242). It is a fraught proposition. The polarisation of the living and the dead is correlative to a polarisation of life (which is coded as 'good') and death (which is coded as 'bad'). But the threat of the dead man lies in his failure to die sufficiently. We are given to understand that he lives on; that his threatened return is an act of enmity; that the shared (after)life he attempts to draw us toward is fundamentally frightening, irrespective of conscious belief in its content.

Despite its flaws, Freud's speculation as to a kind of instinctive fear of the dead man dragging off the living is useful in that it suggests that death functions as a contaminant, a pathogen introduced through the vector of the dead: indeed, Zimmerman identifies this as a specific concern within early modern "popular culture" (9). The threat of the dead lies in their failure to remain safely isolated from the living so that death remains inseparable from life, the boundary between the two dangerously permeable. We might add to this that the location, construction and defence of such a boundary is specific to the cultural context and discourses through which death is formulated and understood. In Catholic constructions of the afterlife, the dead have a legitimate means to return in certain instances and the living have means to influence the state of the dead. The dead are still firmly buried – they are sent on their way with formal ritual and ceremony, they are never coincidental with the living, and they are ultimately consigned permanently to a removed spiritual locus. But what is required to keep them in their place and prevent them from posing a threat appears less forceful than in Protestant constructions of the afterlife, in which the dead must be isolated at the moment of death.[45] Hence we find Calvin railing

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[45] Greenblatt's *Hamlet in Purgatory* provides a useful survey of a number of theological writings and other responses to the doctrine of purgatory, including ghost stories of pivotal importance to Catholic conceptions of the afterlife – see especially Chapters Two and Three. Newton also outlines a range of

against Catholic intercessory practices in his dismissal of ghosts as the souls of the dead. Having established that "dead mens ghosts, have bin but sleights of satan," he insists that "men have invented service for the dead in the Popedome, that was nothing els but meere witcherie . . . . And all they that have their devotion after that fashion to pray for the dead, are witches and sorcerers" (671). For Calvin, as for Lavater and the English reformers, there is no room for middle ground or for interaction across the dividing line between life and death. Protestantism is "committed to an unremittingly binary construction of the other world," insisting upon a "stark polarity of two places in the next life" rather than the five locations of the Catholic afterlife (*Beliefs and the Dead* 193, 189).

Such polarity, however, must require total isolation of each category in order to function. In this respect, the process instituted by reformers such as Calvin and Lavater resembles Freud's conceptualization of repression, which "demands a persistent expenditure of force" to maintain ("Repression" 151). The more rigidly the categories of life and death are opposed and the firmer the boundary is between them, the more stringently the border must be policed in order to prevent cross-contamination. In Reformation England, therefore, there is fertile ground for the emergence of the uncanny within literary treatments of the returned dead, as the Protestant reformulation of the relation between the living and the dead renders the failure of burial increasingly disturbing. Where this need is not serviced, the opposition between the two falls under serious strain. In *Hamlet*, Laertes is so unable to accept the priest's abbreviation of Ophelia's funeral rites when she is excluded from burial in consecrated ground that his protest takes on the form of an alternative service: "Lay her i' th' earth, / And from her faire and unpolluted flesh / May Violets spring" (Sig. [M4r]). He then throws himself into the grave to request the fullest completion of the ceremony that he can imagine: "Now pile your dust upon the quicke and dead, / Till of this flat a mountaine you have made" (Sig. [M4v]). The absence of proper rites render Laertes so unable to disengage from the dead that he momentarily consigns himself to joining her in the grave, the living and dead merged together.

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theological interpretations of apparitions in the early modern period in "Reading Ghosts: Early Modern Interpretations of Apparitions."

Greenblatt argues that the funeral demanded by Laertes seems more Catholic than Protestant in its "ringing of bells and attendant ceremonies" and that it is suggestive of the intercessory "assistance given to the dead by the living" in Catholic practice (*Hamlet in Purgatory* 246). In this, he elides consideration of the persistence of ritualized funeral practices amongst the English population even as Protestantism became widespread, a problem that indicated not only the perseverance of some elements of Catholic belief but also the protection of "social custom" (Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead* 127-28). More importantly, he misses the point that, amidst the uncertain and shifting glimpses of a theological basis for the play's treatment of the dead, the vagueness of the foundations for belief isolates central points of anxiety by prohibiting them from incorporation into a familiar system. Irrespective of the precise nature of his religious understandings, Laertes' problem is that he can do no more to secure Ophelia's proper burial when this is essential to mourning and (in keeping with both Catholic and Protestant beliefs) to sending her safely on her journey into the afterlife.

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that Laertes' outrage focuses upon Ophelia's exclusion from the Christian order described by Perkins, in which Ophelia should be appropriately buried in order to meet the requirements of nature and indeed of God. Hence his protest that Ophelia is more worthy of Christian inclusion than the clergyman who denies her burial: "I tell thee churlish Priest, / A ministering Angell shall my sister be / When thou lyest howling" (Sig. [M4r]). In this, he shares common ground with Martha in Chettle's *The Tragedy of Hoffman*. When Martha is given news of her son's earlier murder, she mourns his exclusion from Christian burial rites as an inclusion with those who are destined for hell:

> Thou in thy end wert rob'd of Funerall rites,
> None sung thy requiem, noe friend clos'd thine eyes,
> Nor layd the hallowed earth vpon thy lips,
> Thou wert not houseled, neither did the bells ring
> Blessed peales, nor towle thy funerall knell,
> Thou w[en]tst to death, as those that sinke to hell" (Sig. I2[r]).

Thus, the additional grief or anger generated by the failure to bury is linked to the failure to exclude the dead individual, not just from the living, but also from the

damned. The dead must be isolated from the living; but equally, those of the dead who are to reach heaven must be isolated from those who are not.

Here we see once again a desire to ontologize the dead, to ensure that the burial enables the living to perceive them as safely delivered into the specific space they are to occupy in the afterlife. This suggests, in part, an ongoing investment in the wellbeing of the departed, evoking Catholic beliefs in practices such as intercession. It also resonates with both folk beliefs and classical depictions of the afterlife in which burial is essential for the process of passing into the afterlife, as in *The Spanish Tragedy*, in which Andrea's ghost complains that "churlish *Charon*" refused to ferry him across the Acheron until "My funerals and obsequies were done" (Sig. A2[r]).[46] At the same time, it testifies to the importance of recognisably banishing the deceased to a contained space in order for the living to proceed with the business of being alive.

Accordingly, when the dead fail to be as dead as they should be – when they remain literally unburied and/or when their spirit returns to the mortal plane – they often pose a direct threat to the existence of the living. In *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, King Arthur attempts to manipulate this as a means to execute revenge. Facing imminent death, Arthur declares a wish to remain unburied because he perceives that a failure to be publicly dead will punish the living through the continuation of his vengeful presence:

> No grave I neéde (O *Fates*) nor buriall rights
> Nor stately hearce, nor tombe with haughty toppe:
> But let my Carkasse lurke: yea, let my death
> Be ay unknowen, so that in every Coast
> I still be feard, and lookt for euery houre. (Sig. F4[r])

The need for an explicit, visible haunting is dispensed with here. Without burial, the dead man will never quite be dead: he can haunt the living through the mere perception of his continued presence. Martha exploits this threat in a more direct fashion in *The Tragedy of Hoffman*. Instead of ensuring her son's immediate burial

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[46] Neill associates the performance of such practices in Renaissance tragedies not only with Catholicism but also "the ancient pagan superstition that happiness beyond the grave was somehow contingent upon proper disposal and preservation of one's mortal remains" (265).

when she discovers that his bones have been left strung up from a tree, she moves to utilize his lingering presence, saying: "Let them hang a while / Hope of revenge in wrath doth make mee smile" (Sig. [I3v]). For her, burial is now to be enacted through the completion of revenge: and the skeleton's lingering presence – which serves "as a spur to her own revenge" – subsequently serves in the entrapment and execution of its own killer, Clois Hoffman (Spinrad 243). The death itself does not occur onstage: instead, the burning crown that was used to execute Otho is brought forth in readiness for use upon Hoffman immediately prior to the play's ending.[47] With the generation of yet another corpse through the same method of execution, death increasingly functions as a contaminant. It is as though the original skeleton of Hoffman's father has somehow proliferated, so that its unnatural presence calls forth the living into precisely the same state as itself. As Spinrad comments, "we may begin to wonder whether we will now see *three* skeletons hanging from the tree. We can barely see the forest for the bones" (243).

In its piling up of corpses within the space of the living, *The Tragedy of Hoffman* draws upon the principle that the unnatural abridgement of a life is a bar to full and final burial. This is a common preoccupation of tragedies, in which the dead often retain what should have been their rightful presence amongst the living. The measures that it takes to bury the dead in such circumstances are substantially greater, often requiring the additional closure provided by justice or revenge, and generating supernatural disruption where this is not achieved. In *Julius Caesar*, Antony's initial inability to put Caesar to rest properly causes him to envision the proliferation of further, horrifyingly vocal corpses, declaring "this foule deede, shall smell above the earth / With Carrion men, groaning for Buriall" (3.120). This scene echoes a more literal profusion of unburied carcases in Neville's translation of *Oedipus*. With Oedipus's inadvertent slaying of his father having already generated

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[47] J. D. Jowett argues in the Nottingham edition of the play that the use of the name "Otho" appears to be a substitution for the name Charles and would have likely been made in the 1631 edition in order to avoid the political implications of a Prince Charles being executed in the first scene ([75]). However, the substitution is not consistent and in some instances the text still refers to "Charles." As the majority of references to the character use the name "Otho" in this, the earliest extant copy of the play, I retain this name throughout in order to remain as consistent as possible with the text. As for the burning crown, this gruesome weapon was sometimes used as a method of political execution in early modern Europe. For more on this, see Paul Browne's "A Source for the Burning Crown in Henry Chettle's *The Tragedy of Hoffman*" and Richard Brucher's "Piracy and Parody in Chettle's *Hoffman*," p. 214.

the bizarre disordering of the natural world, Neville adds material that ties a more widespread failure of burial to a string of gruesome, unnatural events: "The corses in the streates do lye / and grave on grave is made, / But all in vayne, for nought it boots / the plage cannot be stayed" (Sig. [Abiiir]). The hordes die in the street so rapidly that the living cannot keep pace with the burials, physically commingling the living with the dead and escalating the "strainge sights and signes" that are pervading the land (Sig. [Abiiir]). The horror can only be brought to an end with the self-imposed exile of Oedipus, thereby formalizing the expulsion of the individual who catalysed these events through his role in prematurely ending his father's life.[48]

Such scenes manifest the irruption of that which is supposed to remain buried as a contamination of the living and of life. As the dead pervade the space of the living, they appear as that which Freud describes as proliferating in the dark, the return of the repressed that the living have failed to banish. The ontological norms of these texts cannot accommodate these figures; they disturb the living because they have no home, no place within the texts' ordering of the world. Worse still, they have no place within the pure space of the "living," – a term that functions through its exclusion of, and differentiation from, the dead – and yet here they are. In their re-emergence from the dark, they haunt the very terms of their own construction. They are dead because they were once living, once occupying the state from which they are now, by definition, excluded. But equally, the dead have never occupied the state of living, because they are always dead, always arriving before us as the dead now, for the first and only time. Hence, they mark and re-mark the very state against which they are defined, and in doing so, pose a threat to the living as a natural and pure category: a threat that the living must perpetually work to contain.

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[48] The linking of Oedipus's crimes – killing his father and taking his mother as a wife – to the supernatural disruption and plague in Thebes is not absolute in Seneca's version, in which the Chorus in the third act suggests that the cause may be the "ancient anger / of the gods" with Thebes ("veteres deum / irae" (Fitch 78-79). However, Neville transforms this Chorus to blame the matter upon fate instead, emphasizing the seeming randomness of this affliction of punishment upon a man who has led a "carefull lyfe" (Dii[r]). In both instances, the Chorus complicates, without overriding, the persistent evidence throughout the play of the link between the punishment of Thebes and Oedipus's crimes.

The Return from Within

A little earlier, I suggested that the rigidity of the Protestant boundary between the living and the dead that prohibits any contact between the two categories requires particularly careful attention in order to safeguard their mutual exclusivity. The more strict are the criteria for defining the boundaries between each term, the more difficult they become to preserve and defend. The means by which theologians address this issue is often to establish detailed structures for the life and afterlife in a bid to define systematically the order through which the living and the dead function. Lavater's *Of Ghostes and Spirites* exemplifies this, offering up a lengthy series of arguments designed to organize the spiritual space of the dead and thereby isolate it entirely from the living. The ordering of death within time plays a crucial part in this, establishing a temporal divide that reinforces the point of separation between the living and the dead. Death is avowedly unpredictable. Lavater warns us of this when he observes that, upon seeing an image that they perceive to be their own soul, many people will be "verily persuaded, that except they dye shortlie after they haue séene them selves, they shall live a very great time after. But these things are superstitious. Let every man so prepare him selfe, as if he shoulde dye to morrowe" (79). While we cannot know the point in time at which death will arrive, that unpredictability is embedded in time as the measure by which it is judged. An "untimely death," such as the Chorus attributes to Arthur in *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, does not function outside of time at all, but rather arrives at a seemingly premature point within a linear schema (44). This does not always reflect temporal chaos or a-temporality, but often that the ordering of events within time is subject to divine, rather than human, control. As Cicero puts it in Kyd's translation of *Cornelia*, "Death's alwaies ready, and our time is knowne / To be at heavens dispose, and not our owne" (Sig. [C3v]).

Thus, we cannot know the moment at which death will come, but we do know that this moment is a clear determinant of who is living and who is dead. Moreover, this division is reinforced by events immediately after death. Lavater tells us that:

> the soules of the faithfull are taken up into eternall joy: and the soules of the unfaithfull assoone as they are departed from their bodies are condemned to perpetual torment. And that this is done streightway after death, may be

> perceyved by the words that Christ spake to the theefe on the crosse, when he
> hoong on his right hand: This day shalt thou be [with] me in paradise (115).

Here, Lavater embeds the physical and spiritual transformation of death firmly within a temporal schema. If death's arrival generates an "after(life)" in which certain post-mortem spiritual events rapidly take place, it also creates a "before". That is to say, life is rendered discernible as a separate state from death by its predecession of death within linear time. This differentiation is crucial to Lavater's wider point, which is that the dead do not return: "the soules both of the faithfull and unfaithful . . . do not returne thence into the earth before the day of the last judgement" (115). Death is a one-way journey.[49]

This temporal organisation of death is accompanied, in Lavater's work and elsewhere, by an insistence upon the clear, topographical structure of spiritual space. Marshall's work points out that the medieval division of the afterlife into distinct spaces dissipates in the later sixteenth century as Protestant theologians endeavour "to dissociate themselves irrevocably from the typologies and language of pre-Reformation 'geographies of the afterlife', in particular from the notion of a 'third place,' Purgatory" ("The Map of God's Word," 111). This is evident, for instance, in Lavater's repeated assertions that there is "no third place in which soules should be delivered, as it were out of prison" (118). However, whilst this impulse is clear in the abundance of Elizabethan literature that lays siege to the notion of purgatory, the transition, as Marshall concedes, is by no means absolute. Amidst growing theological debate as to the plausibility or desirability of determining specific geographical loci or physical spaces for heaven and hell, both terms continue to function as spiritual destinations to which the dead travel and in which they take up occupancy (*Beliefs and the Dead* 192-94). Hence, neither heaven nor hell can function outside of spatial frameworks. If Lavater is adamant in his denial of the third place, he is no less certain about the allocation of souls to the other two places.

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[49] It should be noted that time lends itself equally well to oppositional constructions of the afterlife and can even add the semblance of veracity to ghost stories. Eyriak Schlichtenberger's 1580 publication of *A Prophecie Uttered By the Daughter of an Honest Countrey Man* exemplifies this in its account of a German ghost story in which a dead girl returns. It gives an exceptionally detailed account of the time, ordering, and duration of numerous events, including the time of death, the time of burial, and the number of hours until the ghost's return. In doing so, it lends the story an air of authenticity by locating the ghost's movements within the familiar and logical progression of time.

The dead do not vaguely drift into an afterlife but instead are promptly assigned specific locations: "the soules of men, as soone as they departe from the bodies, do ascende up into heauen if they were godly" and "descende into hell if they were wicked and faithlesse" (118).

Thus, an intersection between time and space provides the point at which the partitioning occurs between the living and the dead. In outlining various (and at times conflicting) Catholic allocations of space, Lavater pays particular attention to the notion that "certaine, yea before the day of Judgement, are permitted to come out of hell . . . for a season, for the instructing and terrifying of the lyving" and that "the soules which be in euerlasting joye, or in Purgatorie, do often appeare . . . . partely for the comfort and warning of the living, and partly to pray aide of them" (104-05). For him, such movement is impossible because the locus of the soul links schematically to linear time through the immediate placement of souls after death. Based upon both "the scriptures" and "the writings of the auncient fathers," he argues "that the soules of the faithful are saved, and that the soules of the unbeleevers are damned immediatly without delay, and therefore there is no Purgatorie" (156). There is no interim time or space from which they might stage an incursion back to the realm of the living and no possibility of switching locations after death.

In the theatre, the intense imagery offered by the binary topography of the afterlife provides exceptional dramatic fodder, irrespective of the often vague spiritual order at work within the terms of the play. Macbeth calls upon the Protestant opposition of spiritual destinations as he predicts that the chiming bell summons Duncan "to Heaven, or to Hell" (*Macbeth* 3.136). In *The Tragedy of Hoffman*, the mourning Lodowick renders this more heavily visual by including direction in the polarization of the two terms: "Hee that lifts us to Heaven keepe thee from Hell" (Sig. [E3r]). William Falbecke's addition published at the end of Hugh's *The Misfortunes of Arthur* imagines the topography of the afterlife literally in diagrammatic form, having Arthur's furious ghost declare "Before the conscience of *Gueneuora* / The map of hell shall hang" (Sig. G[ir]). Even in *Doctor Faustus*, where Mephistopheles offers up the argument that hell is no more than a state of being – informing Faustus, "Why this is hel, nor am I out of it" – such geographies

are crucial. By the end of the play, Faustus is physically dragged down by devils in order for his soul "to be plagde in hel," a movement that is amplified in performance through the devils' physical movement upwards and downwards through the trapdoor of the Elizabethan stage (Sig. [B2v], [F2v]).

As such examples suggest, the dramatic (and theological) force of this rigid spatial divide is that it provides a clear and distinct order for the dead that can be readily visualized. The living occupy the mortal plane; the dead occupy either heaven or hell. In determining that there is no overlap between the places inhabited by the living and the dead, this paradigmatic arrangement can brook no challenge. This is also its weakness. It cannot accommodate the breaching of these boundaries, yet nor can it prevent them. This is a problem at the outset in terms of the "metaphysics" of presence. Through a reformulation of Zeno's arrow paradox, Culler shows that, if "reality is what is present at any given instant," presence is dependent upon a complex set of relations within time and space. In Culler's example, a flying arrow is present "in a particular spot" at any moment in time and is therefore always static at that moment. Although we logically perceive it to be in constant motion throughout its flight, "its motion is never present at any moment of presence." Thus, the "presence of motion" can only be conceptualized if "every instant is already marked with the traces of the past and future. Motion can be present . . . only if the present instant is not something given but a product of the relations between past and future" so that "the instant is already divided within itself, inhabited by the nonpresent (94). The opposition between presence and absence here is exposed as illusory: in order for the arrow to be present, it must contain the properties of its supposed opposite, absence (95). As Culler observes, this demonstrates "the difficulties of a system based on presence," for "the present instant can serve as ground only insofar as it is not a pure and autonomous given. If motion is to be present, presence must already be marked by difference and deferral" (94-95).

The division of the dead into heaven and hell is subject to much the same difficulties, insofar as it similarly problematizes the presence of the soul within time and space. For theologians such as Lavater, the dead are irrefutably and permanently absent (in opposition to the presence of the living) based on their immediate

movement after death to the location of either heaven or hell. Although this transition is virtually instantaneous, it must involve movement of sorts because it is temporally based: it marks the point at which the individual's life becomes the past, and their death and afterlife become the present and future. Thus, as the dead individual's soul moves towards heaven or hell, there is a moment or perhaps a series of moments in which they are neither living nor situated at their final destination. At this moment, the soul is inhabiting neither life, nor heaven or hell; yet there is no other place. The soul in transition is instead present on the basis of its temporal and spatial relation to where it is heading (its future) and where it has been (its past). Moreover, at the very moment of death, as the individual passes from life to death, a similar problem occurs. Straddling the border between life and death, the soul's existence functions in a complex relation with the past (life) and future (afterlife), whilst it fails to manifest either state in full or in isolation. Neither fully living nor fully dead, the individual's present state is divided, inhabited by both life and death.

At the outset, then, Lavater's terms are subject to a haunting. While he works to evacuate the presence of the dead from the space of the living, the isolation and polarisation of each of the two categories is riven by their dependence upon, and manifestation within, each other. In addition, Lavater is forced to reconcile his argument that souls are immediately directed towards heaven or hell after the moment of death with the Protestant belief that, after death, the soul (and body) of the dead must wait for an interim period until the day of judgement. In this, he is entering into a wider debate amongst Reformation theologians regarding the Lutheran teaching that a dead person's soul sleeps until the final judgement.[50] Lavater remains adamant that the dead are permanently removed from the living, asserting that "soules immediatly upon their departure from their body, are caried unto a certein place, whence they cannot of themselves returne, but néeds must wait there for that terrible daye of judgement" (121). However, the "certein place" is entirely *uncertain* in either its location or nature. It is clear that it is a spot segregated from the mortal sphere, but his otherwise specific topography of the afterlife dissipates into a vague gesture towards an indeterminate location.

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[50] Marshall notes that this notion was eventually discarded, in part "because it seemed to revive in Reformed theology the notion of a third place in the next life" ("The Map of God's Word" 117). For a more detailed account of this theological problem, see Marshall's *Beliefs and the Dead*, 220-231.

Elsewhere, Lavater endeavours to negotiate between the two positions. In his summary of Augustine's writings on the topic, he asserts that "the soules of the godly so soone as they be severed from their bodies be in rest, and the soules of the wicked in torment, untill the bodies of the one bée raysed unto lyfe, and the other unto everlastyng deathe" (116). Here, the qualities of the post-death experience modulate into place-holders, with "rest" and "torment" constituting metaphysical spaces that lie between mortality, heaven, and hell whilst remaining oddly linked to the (buried) corpse within which the spirit will one day resume its place.

Lavater faces a similar problem in assimilating biblical accounts of resurrection of the dead into his core argument that the dead do not return, another prominent difficulty facing Reformation theologians. The principle that Lavater follows is not that God could not make the dead return but that he does not. In response to his Catholic opponents, Lavater argues that "al things are possible unto God," including the act of bringing "soules out of heauen or hel" in order to aid the living: but "no text or example is found in holy scripture, that ever any soules came from the dead, which did so scoole and warn men: or that the faithful learned or sought to understande any thing of the soules deceassed" (124). He then turns to address the much-cited case of Lazarus, who is restored to life after four days of death in Chapter 11 of the Book of John. This resurrection poses a particular problem in regard to the location of the soul during the four days of Lazarus's death: purgatory is an obvious, but theologically unacceptable site, a recall of the soul from hell is "inconceivable," and for Christ to have dragged the soul "from the enjoyment of eternal bliss in Heaven would seem an act of injustice" (Marshall, "The Map of God's Word" 122). According to Marshall, a number of theologians eventually dismiss it as one of those divine secrets that are best left to God. Lavater characteristically obfuscates the issue instead by reuniting the soul with the body. He argues that "Lazarus soule did not only appear, but he came againe both in bodie and soule," as "a sure token, of our true resurrection, which shall be in the last day . . . . You shal never read that either Lazarus, or any other have told wher[e] they were while they were deade, or what kynde of being there is in the other world, for these things are not to be learned and knowen of the dead, but out of the word of God" (146). Lazarus's return thereby functions as something of a preview, a promise of the resurrection yet to come for all

of the dead. He may have returned from the dead, but he does not bring death with him: the secrets of death remain behind, isolated within the spiritual realm that exists beyond the view of mortal eyes. We are to distinguish him from the traditional (and deceptive) figure of the ghost by the corporeality of his presence.

As further evidence of this, Lavater describes the opening of graves in Chapter 27 of the Book of Matthew:

> many dead bodies did arise, and appeared to many at Hierusalem. The soules of the dead did not only appeare, neither did they warne the living, or commaund them to do this or that for the deads sake, to wit, either to pray for them, or to go on pilgrimage to saints . . . . But the dead with their souls and bodies togither, came into the earth: for héerby god would shew, that he by his death hath overcom and destroyed death to the faithful, and that at the last day their soules and bodies shall be knit togither, and live with God for ever. (147)

In both accounts, the reappearance of the dead does not signify that the souls of the dead are able to make return appearances. Rather, it constitutes a miraculous reversal in which the dead return to life in both body and soul so that the linear timeline governing the usual order of death is momentarily reversed through supernatural means. That is to say, in what is essentially a preview of the eternal life promised to the faithful, the dead cease to be dead at all. They were dead, but in order to demonstrate the future for the faithful, they are now again living. What they are *not*, is the ambulatory dead invading the terrain of the living.

The emphasis that Lavater places upon the absence of contact between the living and the dead in these examples is of considerable importance. Direct communication between the living and the dead has a long history within classical, Catholic, and folk traditions, often occurring, as Lavater's argument suggests, when the dead have unfinished business or are sent to provide the living with assistance of some kind.[51]

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[51] Marshall notes certain changes in the function of ghosts during and after the Reformation, with ghosts taking an increased interest in worldly matters such as "identifying murderers, and enforcing the performance of wills," thereby reminding survivors "of their obligations towards dead ancestors" ("Old Mother Leakey" 96). Earlier Catholic ghosts had sometimes behaved similarly but also returned for more directly spiritual purposes such as confessing and receiving absolution (Thomas 713). In a variety of contexts, medieval ghosts were in any case able to expose some of the tortures of the afterlife in order to act as moral examplars. For more on this, see Schmitt's *Ghosts in the Middle Ages*, esp. pp. 125, 171, Andrew Joynes' *Medieval Ghost Stories*, p. 35, and Marshall's *Beliefs and the Dead*, p. 16. This is dramatized in pseudo-classical form in *The Spanish Tragedy*, in which Andrea's ghost tells us that in the underworld he "saw more sights then thousand tongues can tell, / Or

These earlier ghosts are often free to elaborate upon the secrets of the afterlife, but some Elizabethan ghosts become increasingly reticent, in keeping with Reformation theologians' insistence that the dead cannot advise the living of their experiences. A prominent example occurs in *Hamlet*, when the ghost hints at the dark secrets of the afterlife but refuses to expand upon the details: "but that I am forbid / To tell the secrets of my prison house, / I could a tale unfolde whose lightest word / Would harrow up thy soule" (Sig. [D2v]). Although Pearlman argues that "such an interdiction is nowhere else on record" and that the ghost's prohibition from speaking is "simply Shakespeare's bold pretext" for avoiding the traditional account of the ghost's origins, this is in fact an inversion of the Protestant proscription of speaking to the dead (76). Since Hamlet cannot resist enquiring into the matter, Old Hamlet withholds the information instead. The soul, according to Lavater, is imperilled by any venture towards eliciting such information. He insists that "God hath precisely forbidden, that we shoulde learne and search out any thing of the dead" because "He alone woulde be taken for our sufficient schoolemaster" (126). Rather like the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden, the dead represent a source of forbidden insight. Having died, they possess knowledge that the living may not access.

Here again, Lavater's methodical attempts to isolate and bury the dead are founded upon the opposition and isolation of terms that are unavoidably subject to structural inconsistencies, fractures, and repetitions. Lavater has already made it clear that there is no possibility that the living may interact with the dead. He claims that the injunction is to ensure that the living seek only God's word for insight in order to avoid the lure of false information from dubious sources (spiritual or human). However, he repeatedly specifies that we must not seek this dangerous information from the "dead": an event that is not possible, if, as he frequently claims, they do not return to the mortal realm (124-26). If the faithful understand this principle, no contact with the dead is plausible and any evidence to the contrary should be readily identifiable as an illusion. The injunction functions as a means to establish a boundary between the living and the dead that may not be crossed: but the

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pennes can write, or mortall harts can think" and then elaborates upon the precise nature of these sights ([A2v]).

prohibition of speaking with the dead is pervaded by the channel of contact between the two categories that it seeks to eliminate.

Thus, as Lavater works to disrupt any sense of continuity or overlap between the states of life and death and thereby to render the figure of the ghost redundant, his argument progressively throws up more spectres than it suppresses. Whilst instructing his audience that we must not "conjure" spirits "to tell us the truth," he endeavours to conjure the dead away entirely. At this point, Derrida's observation about the imperative to bury can again be recalled: "the conjuration has to make sure that the dead will not come back: quick, do whatever is needed to keep the cadaver localized, in a safe place, decomposing right where it was inhumed . . . . Quick, a vault to which one keeps the keys!" (*Specters* 120). The difficulty for Lavater in keeping this particular vault locked is that the dead have a troubling habit of ignoring barriers erected by the living. For him, historical images of the wandering dead appear disturbingly chaotic, persisting in a plethora of theologies and cultures despite their apparent contradiction of God's word. As Marshall observes in regard to the wider persistence of ghost beliefs, the dead increasingly appear as "illegal immigrants across a border that was supposed to remain sealed and impermeable until the end of time" (*Beliefs and the Dead* 264). The failure of the dead to stay in their place is indicative, not of an actual supernatural phenomenon, but of a dual disorder, a (mistaken) dis-ordering of God's collocation of mortality, death, and the afterlife, and a corresponding spiritual dysfunction amongst the populace.

Yet Lavater's accounts of such disorder demonstrate functional resemblances to his elaboration of the "truth," highlighting in both cases the imperative to lay the dead to rest properly and then leave them be. For instance, he conducts a survey of "Heathen" cultures that believe that "Soules should stray continually abroad" if the dead are not properly buried, ranging from philosophical and theological writings to literature and mythology. He refers us to Plato's opinion that "base and viler soules, that are defiled with the pleasures and lustes of the body" stalk the earth, appearing as ghosts and to the "Heathen" belief that "Soules should stray continually abroad before they founde rest, unlesse the bodies from which they were severed, were rightly buried in the earth" (98-99). He cites examples from Homer's *Iliad* such as Hector, who requests Achilles to return his body to his parents for burial and

Patroclus, who appears after his death in a vision to Achilles in order to ask that he "bestowe uppon him all funeral solemnities" (99). Then he moves on to a range of historical Catholic writings that describe various contexts for the return of spirits and how they may be laid to rest.

Such examples ostensibly contribute to Lavater's painting of a broad historical backdrop of cultures who have understood the afterlife incorrectly, against which he might contrast the true (Protestant) teachings of the Bible. At the same time, though, they resonate disconcertingly with the accounts he provides of purportedly accurate events. For the sake of reviewing all of the evidence thoroughly, Lavater devotes a number of chapters to providing evidence "that spirits do often appeare, and many straunge and marvellous things do sundry times chaunce," reciting a wide variety of apparently credible accounts in which apparitions of the dead have appeared to the living (53). In these examples, he presents ghost sightings that are ostensibly genuine in contrast with the numerous instances of illusion, deception, and fraud that he cites elsewhere. Often, he provides explanations as to the nature of these genuine sightings: they might be angels or "good Spirites, whiche appeare unto menne, warnyng, and defendyng them" or, more frequently, "evyll Spyrites" who God allows to test the "faith and pacience" of the faithful and to "chasten" those who are "infidels" and encourage "true repentaunce" (175-77).

However, in many of these accounts the ghosts in question do not overtly fit into either category. Instead, they seem primarily to demonstrate the importance of a proper burial in laying the dead to rest. In a chapter entitled "A proofe out of the Gentiles histories, that Spirits and ghosts do often times appeare," Lavater recounts a story in which a house is haunted by "an image or shape, as it were an olde man, leane and lothsome to beholde, with a long beard and staring haire: on his legs he had fetters, and in his hands caryed chaines which he always ratled togither." After a brief interaction with the ghost, a man requests that the authorities dig up a site to which the ghost had guided him, "whiche doone, they fynde boanes wrapped and tyed in chaynes". Subsequently, "those boanes béeing gathered togither, were buried solemnely: The house, after they were orderly layde in the grounde, was ever after cleare of all suche ghostes" (58-59). It is difficult to interpret such a ghost as anything other than the spirit of the dead man whose bones lay in the ground, and

Lavater makes no attempt to direct us otherwise. This story exemplifies the wider problem that Lavater faces: the more he tries to summon evidence for the need to banish the dead, the more he calls them forth. His injunction to bury becomes a conjuration in multiple senses.

Derrida identifies two relevant meanings for the term "conjuration" as well as a third for the related term "conjurement," all of which are directly relevant here. Firstly, conjuration denotes "the conspiracy (*Vershwörung* in German) of those who promise solemnly, sometimes secretly, by swearing together an oath (*Schwur*) to struggle against a superior power" (*Specters* 50). Lavater's text endeavours to achieve precisely such a conjuration, to call the reader into a pact that seeks the death of death. The faithful reader – the reader who reads well – is to understand that Christ will "come again in the latter day, to raise up the dead bodies, to glorifie them, and to carry them with him, into eternal blisse" (146). All they must do to banish the spectre of death is to swear, to subscribe to the Protestant doctrine that will see them live forever. To do away with the spectre of death though, one must also remove its evidence – more specifically, the dead.

In effect, this requires a "conjurement," an act of "magical exorcism that . . . tends to expulse the evil spirit which would have been called up or convoked" (Derrida, *Specters* 58). The struggle to fulfil the oath requires the expulsion of the dead, which Lavater endeavours to achieve through imposing order upon them – sealing them off from the living in time and space. The living who have sworn to the oath must participate in this. They must bury the dead properly and disallow their return. If faced with an apparition, they must not doubt that burial. They must not speak to it, nor endeavour to drive it away physically or through rituals, "cursing," or "banning": for it is not the dead but rather another form of spirit, which can only be dispelled through "the sword of the [Holy] Spirit" (Lavater 215). The act thus fulfils the criteria of magic, not in the sense of an exercise of magical power on the part of an individual, but in the sense of an entry into a supernatural event through a particular ritualized set of behaviours. It fits precisely into what Derrida describes as an "attempt both to destroy and to disavow a malignant, demonized, diabolized force, most often an evil-doing spirit, a specter, a kind of ghost who comes back or who still risks coming back *post mortem*" (59). The man in Lavater's story of the ghost in

chains participates in this fully, driving the ghost away, not by his own endeavours, but by ensuring that the corpse to which the ghost leads him receives a proper and "orderly" burial. The ghost's subsequent disappearance is effectively the disappearance of the spectre of death; a proper reward for one who has obeyed the injunction to bury.

But in drawing upon this properly enacted burial, Lavater creates a paradox. His injunction to bury requires the action of proper rites followed by active inaction: effectively, a stuffing of the contents of death into a coffin and sitting firmly on the lid thereafter. The difficulty is that, in order to outline this conjuration, Lavater's text simultaneously summons the dead, thereby carrying out a further conjuration. The old man can only lay the ghost to rest by following the proper protocol for full and final burial, but the story thereby contradicts the most crucial point of all, which is that the dead cannot return in the first instance. As Derrida's definition for "conjurement" suggests, in order for something to be conjured away, it must first be "called up or convoked". It is perhaps inevitable then that Lavater's conjuration must also involve the further signification that Derrida notes for "conjuration," "the magical incantation destined to *evoke*, to bring forth with the voice, to *convoke* a charm or a spirit" (*Specters* 50). It is necessary to bury in order to remove the dead permanently from the space of the living but this imperative is therefore marked by the possibility of the dead's return. Thus the text becomes the very site of the spectrality that it seeks to banish. Lavater endeavours to position the prohibition of the dead as an external actuality, a state of spiritual and physical affairs that he is merely relaying. But as Derrida points out, "conjuration . . . makes come, by definition, what *is not there* at the present moment of the appeal. This voice does not describe, what it says certifies nothing; its words cause something to happen" (*Specters* 50). The dead are nothing but absent until Lavater calls them forth; and the harder he tries to lay these ghosts to rest by elaborating upon the impossibilities of their existence, the more of them he summons. His text manifests precisely the phenomena it endeavours to destroy.

Of course, Lavater's conjuration ideally seeks its own end. Derrida observes that "a conjuration . . . is first of all an alliance . . . a plot or a conspiracy. It is a matter of neutralizing a hegemony or overturning some power" (58). If the oath is successful,

if the text successfully conjures away the spectre of death by divorcing the "spirites," "straunge sightes," and "straunge and marvellous things" that are often mistaken for the returned dead, the conjuration is complete (Lavater 9). But *Of Ghostes and Spirites* fails in this project, in part because it leaves no means by which the spectres it conjures may be assimilated into the framework of burial. Freud points out that the repetition begins to move into the uncanny where it emerges without intention, compulsively appearing in a way that engenders the sense "of something fateful and inescapable" ("The Uncanny" 237). Lavater encounters precisely this problem as his attempts to deny the presence of spectres instead seems to secure their proliferation, emerging again and again within the most stringent arguments. The harder he tries to banish the dead, the more apparent it becomes that the dead *cannot* leave; death cannot be isolated from the sphere of the living. If the faithful are required to swear in order to banish death, it is because, like those who are "infidells," they too must die; and they must do so before living forever. Death may be overcome at a future date, on the final day, but it may not be avoided by the living; nor may it be experienced by the living, for at the moment of experience, they are no longer alive. In tracing the spectrality that emerges through the language of the injunction to bury, we therefore arrive on the threshold of the psyche, the site at which death and the dead are accommodated and at which the failure to accommodate them moves us further into the realm of the uncanny.

Mourning and Melancholy

The haunting of the terms in Lavater's attempt to separate the living from the dead brings into view the problem of death as an event that can neither be contained nor known. If we return to Freud's claims that the unconscious is unable to comprehend the concept of its own death and that fear of the dead is a "primitive feeling" perpetually ready to arise, we may now find that it is more useful in its gesture towards the menace of death's opacity. In "Fiction and its Phantoms," Cixous expands upon Freud's outline of death, arguing:

> Our unconscious makes no place for the representation of our mortality. As an impossible representation, death is that which mimes, by this very impossibility, the reality of death. It goes even further. That which signifies

without that which is signified. What is an absolute secret, something absolutely new and which should remain hidden, because it has shown itself to me, is the fact that I am dead; only the dead know the secret of death. Death will recognize us, but we shall not recognize it. (543)

Here, death begins to seem like an alien piece of theatre that embodies its own incomprehensibility, unable to transmit meaning to the viewing mortal audience but thereby enacting its own relationship to that audience. In so doing, it exposes something additional, something disturbing. As the watching audience, we may not be able to comprehend what we see, but we see nevertheless; we see that what is enacted is strange and unassimilable but also interior; and we see that the incomprehensible, frighteningly, comprehends us. This is what Derrida describes as the visor effect. Like Old Hamlet's ghost, "this Thing . . . looks at us and sees us not see it even when it is there" (*Specters* 6). Death's visibility lies not in any form of transparency, but in its gaze: we know it is there because we know that it knows us: more than that, it *constitutes* us. We are reminded of this at every turn, at every death in which we discover that another mortal being knows – has known all along – how to yield to the end of (its) time. The living self can never achieve the containment necessary to exclude that through which it is constituted.

This sense of an illicit information exchange that escapes understanding and yet pervades the unconscious speaks of an intrusion and simultaneously a sense of being drawn out. If "only the dead know the secret of death," that secret should remain veiled, relegated to a future that is hidden from the living who are always here and now. This is why the imperative to bury functions irrespectively of whether the dead other is a loved one or a complete stranger: without mourning – without burial – his dead presence brings forth the spectral presence of death, not as an external fact but as something that lurks within. While biological death is always deferred, always located within an indefinable space and indeterminate future, metaphysical death is less easily contained. If it is a condition of mortal life that it must ultimately reach an end, then death inscribes itself within the very act of living and it is this to which the dead speak. As Derrida suggests more generally in regard to the spectre, "this spectral *someone other looks at us*, we feel ourselves being looked at by it, outside of any synchrony, even before and beyond any look on our part" (6). The purpose of

burial begins to crystallize. The dead are abhorrent because they are never dead enough; never so dead that they are not a threat to the territory of the living, never so firmly relegated to the past that they do not threaten to bring the future (death) into the present. Death is the one future event that is assured, but as such, it cannot do otherwise than stake a claim upon the present, even if it does so as the signifier of an absence that cannot be read. At the same time, since death is always deferred – because for the living, it has never yet arrived – it must infuse the present with a future that does not yet exist.

Just as this renders the imperative to bury essential in order to isolate the state of death from living, it also prohibits it from achieving this aim. On this problem, Derrida suggests that:

> the dead have never buried anyone. Nor have the living who were not also *mortals*, that is, who properly bear within themselves, that is, outside themselves, and before themselves, the impossible possibility of their death. It will always be necessary that still living mortals bury the already dead living. The dead have never buried anyone, but neither have the living, the living who would be only living, the immortal living. The gods never bury anyone. Neither the dead as such, nor the living as such have ever put anyone in the ground. (*Specters*, 143)

The living are always already dead but not yet privy to the secret of death. They are inscribed with the mark of their (future) death, an inscription that is reified through the figure of the corpse. Hence, burial always has more than one subject. The living bury not only the dead but also their own futures; but because the spectre of that future is so thoroughly *present*, no amount of burial will banish it. What is supposed to accompany the corpse into the grave to be hidden thereafter is the dead within: the (present) future to which the dead attest. Death is no respecter of temporal constraints though: it cannot be relegated to the past if it remains, unknown and yet ubiquitous, within the present and future.

In finding that burial relates as much to the dead within as without, we return to the issue raised earlier regarding the act of burial as a task that is essential to the project of mourning. More specifically, it plays a role in the "introjection" of mourning. This is a process that   and Torok describe as a "casting inside," in which the ego "partially" identifies with the object it has interiorized, thereby rendering it

"possible both to wait while readjusting the internal economy and to redistribute one's investments" (127, 111). They define introjection as "the process of including the Unconscious in the ego through objectal contacts," so that it results in expansion, "broadening and enriching the ego". This is because it does not simply involve the introjection of the "object" but of "the sum total of the drives, and their vicissitudes as occasioned and mediated by the object" (113).[52] Subsequently, this "puts an end to objectal dependency," or, as Freud puts it, the withdrawal of the "libido . . . from its attachments to that object" (Abraham and Torok 114; Freud "Mourning and Melancholy" 244). It is, as Alexander Welsh observes, a paradoxical process of "remembering in order to forget" ("The Task of Hamlet" 484). (This calls to mind the grieving Antony in *Julius Caesar*, who declares during his eulogy: "My heart is in the Coffin there with *Caesar*, / And I must pawse, till it come backe to me" (3.121).) The process of mourning through introjection is subject to a kind of "reality-testing," as Freud terms it, for the attachments to the object and the liberation of the ego are only achieved through acceptance of "reality" as the subject progressively grasps that the lost "object no longer exists" ("The Uncanny" 249; "Mourning and Melancholia" 244, 255). The ego, driven more strongly by the need to survive than to maintain its attachments to that which has been lost, responds by progressively severing those attachments (255). In this equation, we might consider burial to be a means of instituting "reality": full and final burial promises to render the dead fully and finally dead, providing a concrete proof of the fact in order to enable successful mourning.

However, the completion of mourning is not as simple as this might suggest. Derrida suggests a distinction between "possible" and "impossible" mourning. In possible mourning, which modifies Freud's formulation, we "interiorize within us the image, idol, or ideal of the other who is dead" ("Mnemosyne" 6). In this event, the "interiorizing idealization takes in itself or upon itself the body and voice of the other, the other's visage and person, ideally *and* quasi-literally devouring them" (34). This does not suggest that the other lives on within us (for "the other is dead and nothing can save him from this death, nor can anyone save us from it") or that this

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[52] This definition forms part of Abraham and Torok's wider attempt to clarify the frequent conflation of incorporation and introjection. For a more detailed account of the differences between the two, see *The Shell and the Kernel*, esp. pp. 110-16.

process can be reduced to "a narcissistic fantasy in a subjectivity that is closed upon itself" (21-22). The other is "already installed in the narcissistic structure" through the marking out of the "self," so that "the being 'in us' of bereaved memory becomes the *coming* of the other . . . . And even, however terrifying this thought may be, the first coming of the other" (22). Thus, mourning concerns a reciprocity between subject and object, self and the dead. After death, the friend or object no longer exists: "he lives only in us. But *we* are never *ourselves*, and between us, identical to us, a 'self' is never in itself or identical to itself. This specular reflection never closes on itself; it does not appear *before* this *possibility* of mourning" (28). Thus Derrida perceives that the self that mourns does not exist prior to, or externally from, the dead, but instead is constituted through the act of mourning; hence his famous statement, "I mourn therefore I am" (*Points* 321).

We may think here of Cixous's comment, "to begin (writing, living) we must have death. I like the dead, they are the doorkeepers who while closing one side 'give' way to the other" (*Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing* 7). The division between life and death is generative. In *Cryptomimesis*, Jodey Castricano helpfully expands upon Cixous's observation with the interpretation of "the other being the dead in us, in whose memory we live and by whose death – or at least by the possibility of whose death – the 'within me' or 'within us' becomes possible. This spacing is what the dead 'give'" (3). As we recognise absence, there must also be presence; for the dead to draw forth the dead within us, this can only be discernible alongside space for the living. The future secret that the dead hold now, the secret that recognises the living and worse still, resonates within, is part of what creates a space for "within" to exist. "I have that within which passes showe," says Hamlet, "These but the trappings and the suites of woe" (Sig. [B4v]). Sarah Beckwith remarks in "Stephen Greenblatt's *Hamlet* and the Forms of Oblivion" that this complaint is "less a claim about an unreachable inner self than a complaint against the failure of phony ritual to incorporate particular sadnesses" (274). However, we should not separate the two quite so readily. Hamlet refers to mourning as an inner enactment, in contrast to the semblance of mourning visible from the outside, but at the same time, "that within" – his experience of mourning – is not only what is contained but also what is constitutive of "within." There is no inner Hamlet that

exists anteriorly to the mourning of the dead within. The fact that, for the audience, there is no Hamlet that exists prior to the mourning of the dead father (for the mourning Hamlet is the only Hamlet we see from beginning to end of the play), provides a specific, transparent performance of this entrance into being.

Where a haunting occurs, it not only disrupts "possible" mourning of the living through the intrusion of the dead, but also the space of the dead themselves. In the original Latin version of *Octavia*, Agrippina asks at the end of her soliloquy, "why am I slow to hide my face in Tartarus, I who blight my kin as stepmother, wife and mother?" ("quid tegere cesso Tartaro vultus meos, / noverca coniunx mater infelix meis?") (Fitch 574-75). Having lingered, she is preparing to depart the mortal sphere in which she has functioned in specific, gender-delineated roles. In Nuce's translation, Agrippina instead asks: "why ceasse I, with Hell to hide my face, / Wyfe, stepdame, mother dire, in my life space[?]" (Sig. [Fiv]). Her "life space" is seemingly the space in which Agrippina was once "wfye, stepdame, mother dire" – the space in which she lived. But here she is now, she is not presently hiding her face in hell and her space is no more a relic of the past than her function as the murdered mother. Here, the spacing given by the dead for the dead to live within and for the self to emerge is given by the dead *to* the dead. Agrippina's burial has failed utterly. Where the living carry death within and before their selves, the dead Agrippina refuses to relinquish the self, to be buried and thereby "'give' way to the other" (Cixous, *Three Steps* 7). In functioning as a spectre, she carries the space of her (past) life into the presence of her death so that her return erodes the division between the two.

Agrippina is haunted herself by the function of memory, her continuing remembrance of her living self. She mourns, as the living do, that which cannot be grasped or retrieved. Derrida points out that memory is essential to the process of mourning, because it is all that remains when "nothing is coming or to come, from the other to the present" ("Mnemosyne" 33). But memory is also contingent upon mourning:

> This terrible solitude which is mine or ours at the death of the other is what
> constitutes that relationship to self which we call 'me,' 'us,' 'between us,'
> 'subjectivity,' 'intersubjectivity,' 'memory.' The *possibility* of death

> 'happens,' so to speak, 'before' these different instances, and makes them possible. Or, more precisely, the possibility of the death of the other *as* mine or ours in-forms any relation to the other and the finitude of memory.
>
> We weep *precisely* over what happens to us when everything is entrusted to the sole memory that is 'in me' or 'in us.' But we must also recall, in another turn of memory, that the 'within me' and the 'within us' *do not* arise or appear *before* this terrible experience. Or at least not before its possibility, actually felt and inscribed in us, signed. ("Mnemosyne" 33)

Memory is rendered solely our own domain, for death marks the cessation of input from the dead, but memory does not precede the possibility of death any more than the self does: "we know, we knew, *we remember* – before the death of the loved one – that being-in-me or being-in-us is constituted out of the possibility of mourning. . . . we begin by *recalling* this to ourselves: we come to ourselves through this memory of *possible* mourning" (34). As Hamlet observes and Derrida so often repeats, "the time is out of joint" (*Spectres* 20). We are faced with the logic of "hauntology," as the possibility of a teleological or linear account of the self's emergence is subsumed by the ceaseless and a-temporal relationships between death, memory, self, and other. The other that we mourn moves as a spectre, the figure whose absence, before it occurs, has already entered within to create the space for the "us" to register and remember its absence. There is no "before" here, nor any "after": there is only, always, the paradoxical departure and entry of the dead other that produces the simultaneous identification with, and differentiation from, the emergent self.

Derrida thus finds a second approach to mourning that diverges from that established by Freud and refuses the accomplishment of interiorization. He asks:

> Is the most distressing . . . infidelity that of a *possible mourning* which would interiorize within us the image, idol, or ideal of the other who is dead and lives only in us? Or is it that of the impossible mourning, which, leaving the other his alterity, respecting thus his infinite remove, either refuses to take or is incapable of taking the other within oneself, as in the tomb or the vault of some narcissism?" (*Mnemosyne* 6).

This process of "impossible mourning" functions in stark contrast to the psychoanalytic understanding of mourning through incorporation or introjection. Townshend observes that it "succeeds in the very failure of internalization, that is, in

the respectful acknowledgment of the insurmountable otherness of the dead" (94). It is impossible because without the interiorization of mourning, there is no self from which to distinguish the alterity of the other. As Sean Gaston puts it in *The Impossible Mourning of Jacques Derrida*, "mourning is impossible, and for *us* most of all. The 'trace of the other', the other who has died and that remains *other*, is at once inside and outside of us, marking a gap that *moves* in 'us', as 'us' – the living who sign our name" (122). We can neither fully exclude nor fully interiorize the dead other whose mourning is generative of "us," nor erase the gap within. Therefore, impossible mourning encompasses the exposure of the spectral, the inevitability of burial's failure.

At the opposite extreme of this distancing, burial is enacted internally. Earlier, I quoted Derrida's assertion that mourning requires always the ontologization of "remains" in order to identify and affix – to bury, properly – the lost object (*Specters* 9). In impossible mourning, the burial occurs, not through internalization but through interment at a distance, the establishment of permanent remove between the living and the mourned, even though a spectral relationship persists. In melancholia, in which mourning fails, the other is consumed in a process that focuses upon incorporation rather than introjection. Freud suggests that this incorporation combines the interiorization of mourning with the regression to "original narcissism," so that it manifests a connection with "the oral or cannibalistic phase of libidinal development" ("Mourning and Melancholia" 249). The result, as Abraham and Torok describe it, is the construction of "a secret tomb inside the subject," the "swallowing" of "that which has been lost, as if it were some kind of thing" (130, 126). As a consequence of the refusal of mourning, we refuse "to reclaim as our own the part of ourselves that we placed in what we lost," or to accept "the full import of the loss" (127). Reformed through the subject's memory, "the objectal correlative of loss is buried alive in the crypt as a full-fledged person" (130). Freud describes the resulting depression, inhibition, and masochism of melancholia as a movement from the conscious loss that is suffered in mourning to one that is unconscious ("Mourning and Melancholia" 245). Unlike in mourning, the ego cannot be liberated to form a new libidinal connection with a different "object": instead, the withdrawal of the psychic libido from the object leads to a narcissistic withdrawal into the ego itself, so

that "an *identification* of the ego with the abandoned object" arises. As a result, the "object-loss" morphs into "ego-loss," leaving the ego "poor and empty" (249-250, 246).

This failure of mourning is, of course, the problem that pervades *Hamlet* so markedly, and indeed, Freud cites Hamlet as exemplifying the antipathy towards himself and others that is characteristic of melancholia (246). Numerous critics have addressed *Hamlet* as a text in which mourning is both pervasive and unsuccessful.[53] Townshend usefully summarizes the core of the problem when he observes that *Hamlet* "is marked by a profound inadequacy where matters of ritualized grief are concerned," pointing in particular to Claudius and Gertrude's inappropriate responses as leaders and their attempts to force Hamlet to cease mourning at all. Townshend interprets such scenes as "severe proscriptions against the thorough mourning of the dead" (75). This is in keeping with Greenblatt's reading of the problem, which links the disruption of burial rituals to the unease generated through the abolition of purgatory (*Hamlet in Purgatory* 246). However, we might further clarify these scenes as reactions to such proscriptions, the failure of burial and concomitant disruption to mourning being responsible, as it were, for the subsequent upheaval and string of deaths. The prohibition or incompletion of mourning, if the events of *Hamlet* are any measure, is not to be recommended.

For my purposes, it is most significant that Hamlet's melancholia bears a direct relationship to the presence of the ghost. As Watson observes, "Hamlet attempts to sustain his father's existence by identifying with him, even if that means joining him in death": hence his wish "not to be". In his grim state of mourning before the ghost appears, with his "closed or staring eyes" and his desire to be "out of the sun and into his grave," Hamlet effectively endeavours to conjure "the dead man into presence, with all his absentness intact" (80). In a sense, this reading resonates with

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[53] The list of critical readings in regard to Hamlet's melancholy is extensive, but earlier examples - include A. C. Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy* (esp. pp. 117-25) and Lawrence Babb's *The Elizabethan Malady: A Study of Melancholia in English Literature from 1580-1642*. The latter describes Hamlet's "moody unsociability, "satirical outbursts," "self-castigations," and tendency to overthink as primary symptoms of his manifestation of a melancholic condition as Elizabethans understood it (107-08). In a related vein, Lyons devotes a chapter to the problem, identifying ways in which Hamlet performs a series of "melancholy roles" in keeping with contemporary understandings of the condition (80). In "Desire and the Interpretation of Desire in *Hamlet*," Jacques Lacan conducts a psychoanalytic investigation into the connection between the failure of mourning and structures of desire in *Hamlet*, arguing that "from one end of *Hamlet* to another, all anyone talks about is mourning" (39).

Renaissance understandings of the power of melancholy to stimulate the appearance of an apparition. In his classic treatise *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, which draws on a range of theological and philosophical sources, Robert Burton claims that the "Divell" may influence the "*Phantasie*" by "mediation of humours" and perhaps even induce the "humour of melancholy": hence melancholy is known also as "*Balneum Diaboli*, the Divels Bath". At the same time, he draws upon the writings of Agrippa and Lavater to suggest that where melancholy of any origin is present, it "invites the Divell to it" so that "Melancholy persons are most subject to diabolicall temptations, and illusions, and most apt to entertaine them" (Sig. [E2v] – E3[r]).[54] This common belief suggests that Hamlet's vision bears a link to his melancholic state through an oddly circular pattern that denies any origin within the parameters of the play. The melancholic Hamlet is more inclined to see an apparition as the result of his psychological state. The apparition that he sees, if we employ this Protestant perspective, is likely to be the work of the devil, which then, in turn, further increases the severity of Hamlet's "humour." But while his melancholy appears both to summon, and to be aggravated by, the appearance of the ghost, it extends beyond his own vision to incorporate that of his companions as well; indeed they see this vision well before he does, despite none of them appearing to suffer from any similar sort of complaint. The ghost bears a direct relationship to Hamlet's melancholic state, but in a way that defies a causal link between the two, or any firm assimilation into the possibility that it is solely the devil's work.

Of course, refused or failed burial often leads to haunting and the generation of the uncanny. Townshend observes that "psychoanalysis is at its most Gothic when pathologies of mourning are at stake," for "ghosts, spectres, tombs and crypts are the foreseeable consequences of failed acts of grief" (93). As Abraham and Torok put it, "sometimes in the dead of the night, when libidinal fulfillments have their way, the ghost of the crypt comes back to haunt the cemetery guard" (130). Where the melancholic buries the object in a form of psychic entombment, as Abraham and

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[54] Burton's text was published in 1621. Another important source of early modern understandings of melancholy is Timothie Bright's *A Treatise of Melancholy*, which was published in 1586. Angus Gowland's "The Problem of Early Modern Melancholy" provides a substantial survey of early modern understandings of melancholy and their evolution across the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including a brief look at the relationship between melancholy and visual hallucinations or illusions. See esp. pp. 92-93.

Torok describe, this act seems inevitably to invite the moment when that which has lain buried and proliferating in the dark can remain hidden no longer (136). The already spectral relation between the living and the dead requires little to burst into view. Claudius acknowledges that Hamlet is not mad but worries instead that:

> there's something in his soule
> Ore which his melancholy sits on brood,
> And I doe doubt, the hatch and the disclose
> Will be some danger" (Sig. [G3v]).

Although Claudius's concern is undoubtedly for the material consequences that might arise from Hamlet's melancholy, his phrasing oddly reflects Hamlet's inner harbouring of his dead father's ghost. While Old Hamlet's unburied form remains out there, itinerant, visible as an external, corporeal form, Hamlet has no possibility of mourning successfully. Abraham and Torok suggest that "as long as the crypt holds, there is no melancholia. It erupts when the walls are shaken," as, for example, when the spectre of Old Hamlet emerges (136). Prior to this, Hamlet merely seems gloomy and sullen. After the ghost's emergence, his melancholia erupts into public performance. Faced with the shock of the ghost's revelations, the discovery that Denmark is "rotten," and his emotional isolation, his mourning turns to ineffectual, endless melancholia and a pursuit of revenge that seems to merge his own subjectivity as the bereft son with the wronged husband and King (Sig. D2[r]). The entombment is clear: "Never to speake of this that you haue seene / Sweare by my sword" he demands of his companions, that the dead King may thereby be repressed (Sig. [D4v]). The identification between the two is at this moment complete, as they act of one accord. As Old Hamlet instantly repeats the demand – "Sweare by his sword" – Hamlet responds enigmatically with "Well sayd olde Mole, can'st worke [i' th'] earth so fast, / A worthy Pioner" (Sig. [D4v]). They seem as one in the work of burial.

But it is a burial that, rather than putting the dead to rest, will only serve to proliferate the threat of the dead as it lies within the dark, waiting, as Claudius fears, to re-emerge and stake its claim upon the living. Claudius cannot see death, cannot see the ghost or view directly the threat, but he seems to sense that death can see him.

He senses it in a way that Gertrude does not, because although her hasty marriage to her dead husband's brother is morally dubious, Claudius is the murderer. Responsible for the improper abridgement of Old Hamlet's life, he is primarily responsible for the consequent failure of the burial. This often manifests itself within popular and literary accounts of the return of murder victims, as the pagan belief that "the soules of those which are slayne, do pursue their murtherers" persists during the Reformation (Lavater 100). Burial of the murdered is difficult to achieve because in such cases the dead have a particular reason to remain. In terms of social history, this is one of a number of situations in which the dead return because they have a public function to fulfil such as the institution of justice (Thomas 713).[55] In terms of psychoanalysis, it is also a logical product of the disruption of burial and mourning. Lacan argues that rituals are essential to the process of mourning because they produce "some mediation of the gap" that it generates (40). Given that popular ghostlore produces "ghosts and specters in the gap left by the omission of the significant rite," it is unsurprising that a ghost should emerge in *Hamlet* when, throughout the play, "the rites" of the dead are "cut short and performed in secret" (39-40). The lack of a psychological seal through the process of detachment translates into the disintegration of burial itself.

Whom the ghost haunts in such circumstances is particular to the terms of the text and the relations of the characters to the dead. In *Hamlet*, it is the melancholic son who is haunted most directly, although in internalizing the dead father so radically, it is he who then haunts Claudius. As Greenblatt suggests in response to Hamlet's declaration near the end, "I am dead," Hamlet becomes oddly resonant with the ghost, as though Old Hamlet's "spirit . . . has been incorporated by his son" (Shakespeare Sig. O[1r]; Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory* 229). The failure of mourning affects, not only the psychic space of the living, but the very division between self and other. In *Julius Caesar*, the dead Caesar appears, not to Antony – who has subsequently staged an extended burial and topped it with an incitement to

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[55] Historians ascribe the persistence of ghosts during the Reformation to a complex range of factors that include the disparities within official Church doctrine and theological approaches, the popular subscription to folk beliefs, and the lingering influences of Catholicism: but also to the need for ghosts to perform social functions. Marshall's "Old Mother Leakey" looks at a typical ghost story of this type. He observes that the specific types of social acts carried out by early modern ghosts preserved the responsibilities of the living towards the dead "and thus helped to preserve the stability of a society based on lineage and inheritance" (96).

revenge – but to Brutus, for whom the closure of Caesar's life is impossible because of his participation in Caesar's untimely end. Brutus's role in Caesar's murder effectively inscribes his presence within Caesar's early death. Hence, Brutus is inevitably haunted in turn by the marking of Caesar's death within his own life.

This is a matter of more than mere psychological projection. The ghost who appears only to a single onlooker is common within Elizabethan spectrology and manifests, not merely guilt or unfinished business, but an inability for the living to claim a space, a *self*, free of the dead. It is not simply the projection of an inner state upon the external world, but rather the erasure of the division between the two so that the appearance of the ghost both signifies and catalyses a breaking down of causal connections within time and space. Where the spectre appears, the basic organisations necessary to determine ontological status – the linear temporality of genesis, the spatial and metaphysical distinctions between spiritual, material, and psychological planes, and the distinction between self and other – are already buckling under the strain.

Where mourning turns to melancholy and the burial becomes radically internalized, this process appears almost inevitable. Abraham and Torok argue that melancholia does not automatically arise from the failure of mourning but is further a product of suppressing the expression of loss or the nature of the pleasures obtained from that object – the swallowing of one's words accompanies the swallowing of the lost object (130). Thus incorporation involves a suppression of the subject's relationship to the object: where "a shameful secret is the love object's doing and when that object also functions for the subject as an ego ideal," the "*object*'s secret . . . needs to be kept, *his* shame covered up" (131). Crucially, those in this condition must "undermine anyone who would shame" their "ideal object" in order to preserve it (132). This principle resonates remarkably with the problem of Hamlet's mourning. Townshend argues that Hamlet's inability to mourn seems to suggest that this is not the primary factor in generating the return of his father's spectre, particularly as Hamlet himself implies that the cause is Claudius having murdered his father without giving him opportunity to repent, "Withall his crimes br[oa]d blowne, as flush as May" (Shakespeare Sig. [I1v]). Furthermore, others in the play who are not accorded proper mourning or burial – particularly Polonius – do not return

(Townshend 96 n.15). However, it is significant that Hamlet's pursuit of revenge aims to punish those responsible for degrading the idealized father with whom he now identifies so closely. It is not sufficient to attack only the murderer. Gertrude too must be punished for exchanging Old Hamlet, with his "*Hiperions* curles," "eye like *Mars*," and "a forme indeed / Where every God did seeme to set his seale / To give the world assurance of a man" for the "mildewed eare" that is Claudius; and Polonius is rendered expendable as a "rash, intruding foole" (Shakespeare Sig. [I2v]-[I3r]). Hamlet can only preserve the ideal father through a vendetta against those who play a role in preserving (even post-mortem) his mortal sins and his shame. Old Hamlet's return becomes both the product of, and catalyst for, Hamlet's need to protect the integrity of the father-object he carries within.

    A similar problem occurs in Chettle's *The Tragedy of Hoffman*. Unlike *Hamlet*, this play has no ghost, but one emerges nevertheless as Clois Hoffman's melancholia transforms the corpse of his dead father into a spectre that presides horribly, as Duke Pesta describes it, "over every scene in the play" ("Articulating Skeletons: *Hamlet*, *Hoffman*, and the Anatomical Graveyard" 27). The resonances between this play and *Hamlet* are substantial in this respect, with each son's pursuit of revenge fuelled by a melancholic attachment to the father who cannot be buried.[56] Like Hamlet, Hoffman's inability to mourn successfully appears linked to the supposedly wrongful abridgement of his father's life. As such, it is one of a string of Elizabethan plays in which "madmen" are "crazed by grief" in a fashion that would have been understood to be the manifestation of a generalized "melancholy madness" (Babb 113-14). Hoffman considers that his father had served the state faithfully before being be forced into exile and piracy when unfairly named "A proscript out law for a little

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[56] As the earliest published version of *The Tragedy of Hoffman* is from 1631, it is uncertain as to whether the resonances between this play and *Hamlet* were all present at the outset or to what extent one or both of the playwrights might have drawn upon each other's work. Some similarities may well be due to the influence of the earlier lost play, the *Ur-Hamlet*. *The Tragedy of Hoffman* appears to have been entered into the Stationers' Register in 1602 (although the titling is not absolutely clear) and according to the work of Nicolaus Delius, was probably completed at around the same time as the first quarto of *Hamlet* (Thorndike 135, 181-82). Some scholarship suggests that Chettle's play may have functioned as a rival production to earlier versions of *Hamlet* and any interrelationship may well have been present in the first instance (see Ashley Thorndike's "The Relation of *Hamlet* to Contemporary Revenge Plays" 135, 181-82). Thorndike voices a typical prejudice in assuming that Shakespeare could not have drawn at all from the work of Chettle the "hack writer," and concludes that any similarities between the two plays are primarily reflective of their both belonging to the revenge tragedy genre (182). In this, however, Thorndike does not sufficiently consider the precise nature of the relationship between son and dead father.

debt," (Chettle Sig. [B3r]). Unlike Hamlet, Hoffman's perspective here is in considerable doubt. While critics such as Browne accept this claim at face value, Hoffman is by no means an impartial witness and we are given little in the way of independent corroboration: hence, as Spinrad observes, it remains uncertain as to whether the father was killed "justly or unjustly" (Browne 298; Spinrad 242). Otho, the son of the Duke who is implicated in the elder Hoffman's execution, admits to "new doubts" about his crimes: but given that he says this as an enraged Clois Hoffman calls for a murder weapon (the "burning crown"), he may quite well be concerned only with self-preservation (Sig. [B3v]). On the principle that the apple does not fall far from the tree, we may well suspect that Hoffman's father was guilty and that Hoffman's revenge campaign is therefore an expression of inherited criminality, whether he is aware of it or not. Whichever is the case though, Hoffman quite certainly considers himself to function in the same role as Hamlet, avenging the wrongful murder of an innocent father.

 And if an explicit, externally imposed paternal call to revenge is absent, it is sufficiently implicit to evoke a discernible, if shadowy presence: inanimate though the skeleton may be, its fixity does nothing to prevent its "pretious twines of light" from watching Hoffman's every move throughout the play (Sig. [B3v]). Indeed, Hoffman is so unable to relinquish his attachment to his father that he seeks to preserve his presence through retention of the corpse. Having initially been forced to pass a vow "never to steale / My fathers fleshles bones from that base tree" (the gallows) in order to secure his release from a dungeon, he subsequently swears instead that "I never would release them from those chaines / Never intombe them, but immediately / Remove them from that gallowes to a tree" – the tree from which they now hang before the audience (Sig. [B3v]).[57] Pesta suggests that the action turns the skeleton into "the metaphysical terrors associated with unburied bodies," constituting "a monstrous impiety against the sanctity of the human body". He also identifies the event as "a grotesque parody and violation of the relationship between father and son" as well as an "act of anatomical reconstruction" that links to an

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[57] Hoffman's second vow takes place after a woman in a position of power (probably Martha, the Duchess of Luningberg) requests that he is released from the first vow as an act of mercy. Chettle's phrasing renders it unclear as to whether the second vow is solicited from him in return or whether Hoffman chooses it of his own will. In either case, the act of preserving rather than burying the body plays a crucial role in the enactment of Hoffman's melancholic attachment to the father.

ongoing positioning of Hoffman as a kind of metaphorical "anatomist" (28). I would add that this radical breaching of the injunction to burial is a means of avoiding the severing of ties between father and son through their physicalized preservation. The failure to mourn fully is reified in the enduring relation between living son and dead father but thereby becomes a morbid physical expression of the collapsing of distinction between the living and the dead.

Like Hamlet, Hoffman is unable to stand the damage done to the integrity of his dead father through his execution, an event that Hoffman considers to have been utterly unjust. Spinrad argues that "by manipulating the symbols of death," the play's "characters create the illusion that they are in control of death" but "deny their own human response to it" – hence the lack of proper emotional responses such as empathy, mourning, or "consolation" in the play (243). However, this denial equally suggests an excess of attachment, an inability to mourn properly that transforms individual grief into a campaign of revenge that enables escape from, rather than completion of, the release of the dead through the process of mourning. From the very beginning, Hoffman's rhetoric manifests the inner burial of the melancholic. His absolute identification with his father appears linked to the rhetorical question Hoffman poses to his co-conspirator Lorrique:

> Could duty and thy love so different prove,
> Not to avenge his death whose better part
> Was thine, thou his, when he fell part of thee
> Fell with him each drop, being part thine owne" (Sig. B2[r]).

For Hoffman, the enduring attachment to his father is so intense that he effaces the distinction between the two of them. The inheritance that sees them share mutual characteristics – the "better part," the "drop" of blood – is transmuted into singular identification. While leaving his father's body on display, gruesomely present as the unburied dead other, Hoffman proceeds with the utter entombment of his father, his self not only marked by, but actually inseparable from, that which he incorporates within. He makes this explicit when he declares: "He was my father, my hart still bleeds / Nor can my wounds be stopt, till an incision, / I've made to bury my dead father in" (Sig. B2[r]). Pesta links Hoffman's interment of "his father's memory at

the essential centre of his own being," to the period's understanding of anatomization and dissection as a process that refers to "the mysterious centre . . . deep within the fabric of the human body" (28). It is also a more direct psychological process though, in which the inner entombment is inseparable, not only from the father's memory, but also from his lingering remains. For Hoffman, leaving the father unburied constitutes a refusal of mourning that leaves him unable to grieve or to accept his father's alterity: with the only burial taking place interiorly, he is left with no conscious capacity to do other than pursue revenge for what has been taken, not from his father, but from himself. The unburied dead man becomes a spectre whose presence is felt at every turn, as he haunts both Hoffman and his victims.

Thus, *The Tragedy of Hoffman* exploits a problem of mourning that sends the standard narrative of the revenge tragedy and the stock figure of the ghost into the realm of the uncanny. In this, it resonates oddly with similar disturbances in earlier works such as the Senecan translations. In one of the most gruesome episodes of the translations, Studley's rendition of *Agamemnon* expands Thyestes' inadvertent act of cannibalism into a monstrous reification of the live burial that takes place in failed mourning. In Fitch's translation of *Agamemnon*, Thyestes' ghost confesses to his pre-mortem crime thus: "I Thyestes shall outdo them all by my crimes. Could I be outdone by my brother, when filled with three children buried within me? I have devoured my own flesh and blood!" ("vincam Thyestes sceleribus cunctos meis. / a fratre vincar, liberis plenus tribus / in me sepultis? viscera exedi mea.") (128-29). Studley's Thyestes, in contrast, concedes his brother to be the greater villain only reluctantly and then launches into an appallingly detailed account of his own crime:

> Thyestes I in dryrye dedes
>   wyll far surmount the rest,
> Yet to my brother yeld I (though
>   I gorged my blooddye brest,
> And stuffed have my pawmpred panche
>   even wyth my chyldren three,
> That crammedly with in my rybbes,
>   and have theyr tombe in mee,
> The bowels of my swalowed babes,
>   devowred up I have (Sig. Bii[r]).

The relish with which the ghost recounts this cannibalisation of his own flesh and blood disturbs any sense that this appearance might allow him to rest. His physicalized presence onstage and his account of the misdeed are quite at home within the classical tradition; but his grotesque description of the consumption of his children, with their corpses squashed up against his ribcage, their innards "devowred" by the appetite of an all-consuming father, fixes the crime within a very real, disturbingly corporeal present. The act of eating, the gorging of himself, takes place in the past tense, but the explicit positioning of the children's corpses within Thyestes' abdomen, phrased in the present tense, renders them all but visibly present onstage.

Thyestes' past crime is always, immediately now, the evidence and consequences of his actions permanently inscribed within the body that reifies his presence post-mortem. His account of his crime transforms the interiorization of mourning into a mechanical process, a physical consumption of the other that swallows them whole and inscribes them – in a bizarrely somatic fashion – within the self who stands identifying himself as "Thyestes I." Thus we see the children of Seneca's Thyestes entombed within a ghost that is now itself interiorized within the Englished figure before us, this "I" who proclaims its self present and full of death. Thyestes' account is another conjuration: the burial of Thyestes' "chyldren three" within his own dead body has not repressed them, removed them from view or rendered them inert by confining them to a safely isolated place. On the contrary, their "tombe" is precisely what renders them present and almost visible, conjured forth into the present by the corruption of the burial process.

This passage reifies the process of "faithful interiorization" that Derrida questions, in which mourning "makes the other a *part* of us, between us – and then the other no longer quite seems to be the other, because we grieve for him and bear him *in us*, like an unborn child, like a future" ("Mnemosyne" 35). At the same time, it attests to the impossibility of this process, for as Thyestes proclaims his consumption of his children, they remain utterly other – horrifying because their burial preserves, rather than assimilates, their dead bodies. Thus, Studley's translation manifests, in graphic visual form, the menace of the failure of mourning and burial. Like other texts of its period in which the figure of the ghost moves

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towards the uncanniness of the spectre, it exposes the impurity of the terms of life and death. It exposes the instability of the oppositions through which the living and dead are understood as they increasingly inhabit one another in contravention of all injunctions to the contrary. And where assimilation of the present dead becomes impossible, it suggests the readiness of that which is suppressed to return from the dark with renewed potency. The more vigorously the space of the living is defended, the more disturbing the presence of these spectres becomes. No burial vault can really be sealed hermetically and permanently, it seems, although it appears integral to the project of living that the attempt is made. What emerges from the darkness of the leaking tomb is troubling, not for what it says about the dead, but for its revelations about the inner space of the living subjects that form, not only the text's characters, but also its audience.

Chapter Three

The Hauntings of Inheritance

The trace of remembrance

In the fifth scene of *Hamlet*'s first act, Hamlet swears to remember his father. More precisely, for they are not quite the same, he swears to remember his father's ghost. As the spectre of Old Hamlet disappears with the parting directive "Adiew, adiew, adiew, remember me," his son replies:

> remember thee,
> I thou poore Ghost whiles memory holds a seate
> In this distracted globe, remember thee,
> Yea, from the table of my memory
> Ile wipe away all triviall fond records,
> All sawes of books, all formes, all pressures past
> That youth and observation coppied there,
> And thy commandement all alone shall live,
> Within the booke and volume of my braine
> Unmixt with baser matter (Sig. [D3v])

But how is one to remember a ghost, to recall it from the past in order to bear it in mind, and in the present mind, when its very existence is disruptive of the temporal divisions that this instruction seeks to bridge? The so-called madness that afflicts Hamlet subsequent to this promise attests to the impossibility of this vow. In order to remember, to carry with him the ghost and all that it calls forth, he perceives that he must expunge his memory. He can remember the ghost only while "memory holds a seate," but memory is also a "table" that catalogues the "sawes" – wisdom, maxims, and information – of books; and that table is to be cleared of everything in order that the ghost's "commandement all alone shall live" (*OED* def. "saw"). The table is now an almost-blank page, a space with only one inscription: the ghost's

parting directive to "remember me" (Sig. [D3v]).[58] Emptied of all means by which

he might interpret the ghost's existence, Hamlet promises to remember that which

erases his capacity for understanding.

Hamlet's vow poses the problem of what it might mean to follow such an

imperative when the "me" to be remembered manifests absence at its core *before* it

has departed. The passage is a key moment in Hamlet's incorporation of his father

as well as a critical event in determining the course of his revenge thereafter.

Greenblatt observes in a generalized way that the repetition of Hamlet's incredulous

response – "remember thee?" – highlights the "absurdity" of the ghost's "spectral

command," since it is scarcely likely that Hamlet will forget what he has witnessed

(*Hamlet in Purgatory* 207). Attention to what a "spectral command" might mean,

however, raises important issues in regard to its perlocutionary effect. The command

of a spectre to "remember me" cannot produce the same effect as an identical

command from a living mortal because the signifier "me" alters radically in

accordance with the ontological state of the speaker. Hamlet might indeed have no

choice but to remember, but this does nothing to resolve the problem of what it might

mean to do so when he commits to internalizing the figuration of a gap, the spectre

that both perpetuates and evacuates the presence of the father.

Richard Kearney comes closer to identifying the problem in "Spectres of

Hamlet," where he observes the commandment to "remember thee" to be impossible

because if the nature of the spectre is uncertain, so too is the commandment.

Kearney argues that the ghost is neither suggesting that Hamlet celebrate his father's

past life nor that he must remember the detailed revelation of his murder, but rather

his obscured account of his spectral origin (158-59). For Kearney, "the very secret

that the father is bidding his son to *remember* is a 'tale' that the father is actually

forbidden to tell." Even though the ghost is "forbid / To tell the secrets of my prison

house," it is this – the unspoken tale of his locus within death – that he calls upon

Hamlet to remember and that subsequently induces the prince's "crisis of narrative

memory" (Shakespeare Sig. [D2v]; Kearney 159). Although it is by no means clear

that this is in fact what the ghost means when he says "remember me" (for he has

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[58] For detailed consideration of the significance of, and historical context for, Hamlet's choice of a
"table" as an aid to memory, see Stallybrass, Chartier, Mowery, and Wolfe's "Hamlet's Tables and
the Technologies of Writing in Renaissance England," esp. pp. 414-19.

said a good deal upon different matters in the interim), Kearney is correct in that this is an effect of the ghost's command. Nothing whatsoever can be remembered about the ghost without also remembering its problematic post-death journey and paradoxical state of being, neither of which is resolved. Such problematization of the ghost's command draws attention to the difficulties raised when the speaking subject is also a spectral object.

A number of critics have responded to this problem by construing the ghost as a product of the imagination or memory alone. This circumvents the issue of what the ghost's command signifies and does by channelling it through Hamlet's psyche. For instance, Welsh construes Hamlet's response to the ghost as a desire to surrender "all but the memory of his father and his discovery that the world . . . is a place of cheating and deception." Hence, instead of establishing "as his 'Word' . . . the ghost's imperative 'Revenge," he instead internalizes the instruction to remember (485). Going one step further, Greenblatt asserts that the apparition "is not physical reality" (a decidedly problematic concept in this context) but is instead an "embodied memory" (*Hamlet in Purgatory* 212). Such a reading eschews the effect of the ghost's physical presence onstage. Whilst the onlookers may read the apparition through their recollections of the living King and, indeed, of his death, the ghost functions nevertheless as an independent entity onstage, and Greenblatt contradictorily treats it as such at other points in his interpretation. Insofar as the ghost has autonomy, agency, and physical form, it cannot be the product of memory alone.

Garber provides a more accurate summary of the problem when she describes the ghost as "a memory trace . . . the sign of something missing, something omitted, something undone. It is itself at once a question, and the sign of putting things in question." It is also, she observes "a cultural marker of absence, a reminder of loss" (129-30). In this psychoanalytic reading, there is no firm divide between the ghost's presence, Hamlet's mind, or the cultural conditions through which the loss is understood. The ghost manifests some kind of gap, uncertainty, or instability, but is not confined to the production of those problems alone. We might add to this that the ghost not only troubles but actually exceeds the principle of memory that implies a retrieval or preservation of the past (event) within the present (recollection and

representation). Aristotle accounts for this aspect of memory when he suggests that "the present is object only of perception, and the future, of expectation, but the object of memory is the past. All memory, therefore, implies a time elapsed" ("On Memory" 714). Drawing upon much the same principle, Michelle O'Callaghan has recently argued in "Dreaming the Dead: Ghost and History in the Early Seventeenth Century" that ghosts function as "a device for addressing anxieties concerning memory, in particular, the failure to memorialise the dead" (83). She suggests that the ghost's troubling of the relation between past and present problematizes the continuity and "cultural transmission" between the two. The ghost can only maintain a role within the mortal world "through the agents and agency of memory," but its lack of independence – its lack of total *presence* in the present – thereby undermines "the ability of the past to speak purposefully to the present".

O'Callaghan's wider point is that, while ghosts disturb "linear temporality," they simultaneously disturb their own disruption – they embody "death . . . by introducing processes of decay" (83). But this seeming reinstatement of the finitude of physical mortification by no means allows us to reduce their destabilization of time to an issue of personal memory and the comprehension of history alone. Old Hamlet's ghost goes much further than this in refusing distinctions between phases of time and the perception of presence or absence. If the ghost is considered only as a figuration of the living King, its statement might be taken to request the remembrance of the "me" who was formerly living, or rather the externally perceptible manifestations or productions of that self. To remember the mortal Old Hamlet might mean to remember his deeds as King, warrior, father, or husband; to remember his physical form or his speech; to remember his "valiant" leadership in battle or his "foule crimes" (although it is only the ghost itself who appears aware of the latter) (Sig. B[2r], [D2v]). When the spectrality of the ghost is taken into account, however – when we consider that the ghost coincides with both the living entity and the dead other whilst being synonymous with neither – these configurations of self are both subjoined and split asunder. The figure who issues the commandment to "remember me" is no longer the same "me" as the living King: yet nor is he anyone else. While the various aspects of the living King function as remembered relics of his living self, they equally function as relics of a dead self. The commandment to remember

is contingent upon the fact that the figure who speaks – and must be present in order to speak – requires remembrance because he is dead and therefore absent.

Moreover, the "me" whom Hamlet is to remember is now marked by the experience(s) of death: the coursing of Claudius's poison like "quicksilver . . . through / The naturall gates and [al]lies of the body"; the experience of betrayal and posthumous desire for revenge; the "tale" of the afterlife "whose lightest word / Would harrow up thy soule" and "freeze thy young blood"; the knowledge of what it is to remember, rather than merely be, living (Sig. D3[r], [D2v]). These additions mark out the ghost as the supplement of the living Old Hamlet. Garber observes that the functions of the supplement characterise Shakespeare's ghosts generally, forming "the source of their power, and their danger." Where a ghost becomes uncanny is where we see its "manifestation as a sign of potential proliferation or plurality" and its exposure both "of the loss of the original" and its erosion of "the concept of origin" (15). This is particularly true of Old Hamlet. Although partially assimilated into the framework of the Catholic doctrine of purgatory through his oblique reference to a "certaine tearme" in which his sins "Are burnt and purg'd away," Old Hamlet's ghost functions to succeed the living King and to add to the sum of his presence whilst refusing either the separation or duplication between the two (Sig. [D2v]). The ghost replaces the mortal King, both in the sense that he succeeds the living King chronologically (where the mortal King formerly stood in the past, the ghost visibly stands in the present) and in that he takes his place (occupying the same self, memory, agency, and rights as the mortal King). The ghost is "like the King" we are told repeatedly, but with the additional transformative experiences of betrayal, death, and the afterlife (Sig. [B1v]). What ends the King's life completes it and therefore appears to complete him since prior to his death he has not yet undergone the supplementary effects of the ending of his life. At the same time, this supplementarity renders the ghost spectral because it exposes absence within a presence, the breaching of the anterior term's integrity, and the corresponding disruption of isolable categories.

Looking at the spectre of Old Hamlet from this perspective, we might observe two key functions. Firstly, the ghost's supplementarity testifies to an inherent deficit within its anterior sign, that of the living Old Hamlet. What is forwarded as the

originary presence – the being of the King – is not a self-contained, positive term but rather one that is characterized by a deficit and is therefore contingent upon supplementation.[59] The mortal King is what he is in life in part because of what he is in death: death is integral to his living being. This is true not only in a general sense – a linguistic reflection of the psychoanalytic paradigm in which the dead lies within – but also within the specific context of the play's narrative structure. The living King is only introduced to the audience subsequent to his death: he becomes familiar to us through the combination of memories (his own and that of other characters) and his post-mortem appearances. Our conceptualization of his living self is therefore inscribed with the knowledge of his death – not just the fact of his death but its experience, its causes, its consequences, and its lingering presence. This supplementation leads to a radically shifting territory that has none of the certainty of a middle ground. Neither his life nor death, his status as the living nor the dead, reaches a full and final measure of presence but rather manifests a spectral existence in which each is characterised always by further absence, further presence, and always deferral. Secondly, and consequently, the ghost's instruction to remember is, at the outset, troubled by the fact that the "me" who issues it is not identical with itself. The command is riven, at odds with the purported unity of its own directive. This instruction to Hamlet therefore becomes spectral, not because of the mere fact of being issued by a spectre, but because its object – and therefore its action – is riddled with spectral contradictions.

But there is something more here that generates a sense of unease, a sense of the missed glance or missed communication that is rendered more unsettling by its own inevitability. Faced with an impossible spectral commandment, Hamlet returns an infinitesimally altered pledge. In the midst of swearing to remember the ghost, it is the "commandment" that he promises to preserve in solitude: twice he reflexively repeats the ghost's instruction back to him ("remember thee") and then he declares it is "thy commandement all alone that shall live" within his memory. A gap opens before us. To inscribe the commandment "remember me" within one's memory, to

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[59] This is not to suggest that the ghost is now a complete presence, its signification and limits established and fixed: rather, its function as supplement is specific to the particular relationship between these two particular figures. It therefore neither defines nor limits the ways in which they might function in other figurations or in relation to other terms for, as Garber observes, Old Hamlet's ghost might equally be considered the supplement to Hamlet, Claudius, Denmark, and so on (15).

preserve that alone in the almost-blank space, is not quite the same thing as to inscribe the ghost/father. It is not even the same thing as to inscribe the incitement to revenge. As Welsh argues, "revenge" is "a function of mourning" in this play (482). In swearing to remember, he is of course consigned to revenge because the "me" to whom he has sworn is now marked by its summons. That is to say, with the ghost having returned because the murder has unnaturally "Cut off" his life, his presence is now indelibly marked by, and a manifestation of, the need for closure through revenge. Remembrance of the ghost is therefore contiguous with remembrance of the crime and the ghost's call to "beare it not"(Sig. D3[r]).

However, the phrasing of Hamlet's vow also does something further. In *Memory and Forgetting in English Renaissance Drama*: *Shakespeare*, *Marlowe*, *Webster*, Garrett Sullivan Jr. links Hamlet's compulsion to remember with his performed identity, pointing out that "the 'I' that swears performs an act that is built upon the previous erasure of Hamlet's memory" (13). In swearing to expunge his memory and endeavouring "to reconstitute himself in terms of remembering the Ghost and his commands," Hamlet works to perform his role as "the Ghost's remembrancer" – a role integral to his identity as the ghost's son and revenger – in a way that is inseparable from the act of erasure (13). Subsequently, he does not forget, but nor can he remember, insofar as he "cannot become identical to the self generated and presupposed through the Ghost's call to remember" (14). In swearing to remember, Hamlet adopts the identity of the remembering and revenging son but his "selfhood is not formed in untroubled accordance" with the ghost's demand and its implications, especially the call to vengeance. Sullivan suggests that this is because Hamlet's "subjectivity" arises through Hamlet's compulsion to forget, not in the sense of a loss of memory but as an active pursuit of compulsions that are other than those that fulfil the criteria of remembrance (14).

It seems to me, however, that Hamlet's selfhood after the injunction to remember is marked by another, more corrosive effect. Jonathan Goldberg observes in *Voice Terminal Echo* that "for the memory to be supplemented, it must also be supplanted." For Hamlet, the mind "is a book. . . a scene of writing" that is "staged with the ghost in this scene of inscription" (98-99). The relation between the two, crucially, links

the problem of Hamlet's interiority and identity to the inseparability of ghost from son:

> Hamlet's divided identity – and with it his delays and deferrals, his resistance to the ghostly plot, his inability to act and his compulsions to repeat – are the result of his *identification* with his father's words. It is identification that splits Hamlet. The depth of his interiority is his foldedness within a text that enfolds him and which cannot be unfolded. . . . Thus Hamlet ends the scene of writing, and his reiteration of his father's word as his own follows that inscription. (99)

In staging the inscription in a way that not only internalizes it but actually substitutes it for his own memory, Hamlet's conscious merging with the words of the ghost erases the margins that might mark his own being as separate, individual, or contained to encompass them instead within the mystery of the ghost. Yet he is neither synonymous with the ghost nor in command of the mystery that it offers up for him to write upon his own mind. He cannot now function in conjunction with, or independently from, the spectre or its effects.

In committing to replacing the contents of his memory with the ghost's "commandement all alone," Hamlet promises to engrave within his memory the inscription of a trace and thereby to live within, beside, and through this alone. But this is a commitment to the trace of a trace that installs death within the very centre of life. It is a trace that, above all, erases the possibility of taxonomizing life and death separately and thereby troubles the very possibility of being. It is not the ghost's perpetual presence that will mark Hamlet's memory thereafter, nor any other form of his father's presence, living or dead. Indeed, remembrance paradoxically becomes the only means by which the ghost may be conjured away: and there is nothing that the melancholic Hamlet requires quite so much as this conjuration. While his incorporation of the dead father may demand the preservation of the other within, this is an impossible state to maintain when the dead other persists in a public parade of its alterity. Hence Hamlet's actions thereafter ostensibly endeavour to silence the ghost, as he concludes his pact with Marcellus and Horatio with the instruction to the ghost: "Rest, rest, perturbed spirit" (Sig. [D4v]). It is worth noting at this point a direct link between writing and melancholia in early modern thought: Engel points out that "according to popular views on imagination as the melancholy

breeding ground of 'idle thoughts and fantasies,' monstrous textual scions reflected and were caused by melancholy." In addition to the influence of Saturn and the "dark humour" that affected the inner being, "idleness took care of the rest – for writing was the prerogative of the melancholy man." In this respect, "writing of melancholy" was both "poison" and "remedy" (*Mapping Mortality* 116-17).[60] When Hamlet writes the trace of remembrance across his mind, then, it becomes both the product of, and catalyst for, the perpetuation of his melancholy. His writing is both the means to cure the lingering presence of the ghost and that which prohibits its own success.

The inscription of the commandment or the trace of Old Hamlet compounds the indeterminacy of the figure of the ghost. If that figure is not the manifestation of an absolute presence, then the same is true of the living King, the dead King, and the commandment to remember itself. I mentioned in Chapter Two that Derrida observes that "no element can function as a sign without relating to another element which itself is not simply present." Therefore, "nothing, either in the elements or in the system, is anywhere simply present or absent. There are only, everywhere, differences and traces of traces," or what Culler describes as a "structure of infinite referral in which there are only traces" (*Positions* 23-24; Culler 99). Hamlet's remembrance is contingent upon a spectral manifestation of this structure of shifting signifiers. Garber argues that while Hamlet "claims to record" the ghost's commandment, this act is analogous to Moses' recording of God's commandments in Exodus, in which Moses is compelled to register God's words in the absence of a visual presence. With the first carved tablets broken, God creates a second copy so that the founding Law for the Israelites "is a copy and a substitution" (152). For Garber, Hamlet's inscription of the ghost's "commandment" similarly exhibits "the operation of substitution . . . through erasure, the inscription on the tables of 'thy commandment,' which is – to revenge? to remember? to do the one through the agency of the other?" (152). This act of "ghost writing" is the reproduction of a text that is "already a copy, a substitution, a revision of an original that does not show its

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[60] For more on the role of Saturn and the humours in generating melancholy, see Lyons, pp. 2-6. Babb identifies such a strong link "between melancholy and learning" in the Elizabethan period that "scholars of the drama tend to be melancholy" and "melancholics tend to be scholarly." Indeed, he suggests that "melancholy men so often come upon the stage reading a book that reading almost seems to be a conventional dramatic symptom of melancholy" (100).

face" (153). Garber draws no conclusion as to what the commandment governs precisely, leaving its function uncertain. However, its influence upon and presence within subsequent events demonstrates that its function is in fact crucial to the haunting of Hamlet (153). The inscription of the trace marks Hamlet's memory with a series of disjunctive properties that are simultaneously analogous and at odds with his external world. The "copy" to which Garber refers is by no means a simple command or even a relic; it constitutes a trace of something that is both present and departed.

In order to follow the effect of that trace on Hamlet's memory subsequent to the ghost's departure, it is therefore necessary to consider the functioning of the trace.[61] Here, Gaston's work is particularly helpful. In response to Hegel's call for a philosophy that begins with "the aim of the whole" in order to avoid an approach in which "'the wood is not seen for the trees'," Gaston outlines an alternative in which the trees (and therefore wood) become in-isolable from the logic of the trace.[62] He observes, "neither a part nor a whole and the possibility of the part-whole relation, the trace resists all induction and deduction. A philosophy of the gaps between the trees, of traces, would be an in-de-duction that can never complete itself: 'the trace as gap [*la trace comme écart*]'" (25). (Here we may be reminded of Benjamin's image of translation, calling into the trees of the "language forest" and receiving in return an alien echo that is neither part nor whole of the original text, nor pure divergence either [77].) The gaps between the trees in this paradigm are, of course, as fundamental to the existence of the trees (and therefore the wood) as the trees themselves: one is not perceptible, indeed does not exist, without the other. That is to say, the gaps are neither wood nor trees but a condition of the possibility of both and of the relation between the two.

Gaston builds upon Derrida's argument that if signification is made possible only by the existence of the unbridgeable gap (as Husserl argues), it is with the specific

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[61] Engel explores the relationships between death, memory, and the production of traces in *Mapping Mortality: The Persistence of Memory and Melancholy in Early Modern England*, although he conceptualizes the trace somewhat more broadly as a "simulacrum," a remnant that passes from one state into another, and a well-travelled pathway (12-13). Engel focuses primarily upon devices employed within such registers as iconography, writing (both theological and poetic) and cartography.
[62] Gaston refers here to Hegel's argument that, in considering the history of thought and philosophy, it is essential that we first develop an understanding of the "universal" because it is this that determines the significance of the "particular" (*Lectures on the History of Philosophy* 28).

proviso that the gap can "*be put to work*" (Gaston 6).[63] Drawing also upon Marc
Bloch's elucidation of the trace in *The Historian's Craft*, Gaston observes that where
a phenomenon leaves behind a discernible, historical mark, "this mark is at once
visible" and "the remainder of a phenomena that has become *invisible . . .* impossible
to grasp, to catch". This mark or "trace" is "always somewhere *between* the past and
the present" as the result of "an irreducible 'gap [*lacune*]'" that prohibits its fixed
occupation of either one (26). The trace, as Royle puts it, is therefore a "phantom
effect" or "the revenant at the origin," by virtue of the paradox that origin ceases to
have a place here (*The Uncanny* 281). The presence of the trace is essential to
signification but, like a ghost, it disrupts or displaces the taxonomical fixity that
signification purports to convey, refusing the fixity of presence within time and
space. When Hamlet swears to remember the ghost's commandment "remember
me," he swears to inscribe upon his memory what is already the trace of a trace. The
commandment functions as a verbal score that the ghost leaves behind, hanging in
the air after his exit: Hamlet repeats the command verbatim ("remember me") as well
as reciting it reflexively ("remember thee") twice more in his soliloquy following the
ghost's exit. No longer visible onstage, the ghost's presence therefore lingers
through a phrase that is meaningful solely within the context of the ghost's absence
and its past: but the past to which this gestures is in itself subject to the same slippage
in relation to the figures of the living and dead King.

Thus, the phrase that is so remarkable in its impact upon Hamlet is the trace of the
already spectral trace of the mortal King. The ghost is what *constitutes* the King
within the onstage narrative whilst testifying to an unbridgeable gap. The trace, then,
is integral to the ghost's function as the living King's supplement. Old Hamlet has
no prior claim to a place within the play: his life and death both precede its events.
Some form of aftermath is inevitable given the recentness of his demise, but a trace
that is both visible and integral to the course of events is quite another thing. The
apparition functions as a visual remnant of both the living King (stalking across the
stage, covered "from top to toe" in the King's former battle armour) and the dead
King, whose deadness is a necessary condition of the ghost's appearance. The figure
is neither of these things – neither the living nor the dead King, who must, after all,

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[63] See Derrida's *Speech and Phenomena*, esp. pp. 29-32.

be mouldering in his grave – and yet within the confines of the play, it is what renders both states immediately discernible. Zimmerman goes so far as to state explicitly that the figure beneath the armour is "a corpse" although this places a somewhat excessive emphasis upon the figure's corporeality: the power of the armour lies in the way that it denies certainty as to what lies beneath. As she acknowledges herself, although the ghost reports his skin to have been horrifyingly corrupted by the poisoning, none of his witnesses mention that the face, "visible inside the raised beaver," is "crusted over or corrupted" (183, 187). At the same time, she locates the ghost's power within "its indeterminate status, its half-life half-death . . . literally figured as a contradiction: steel exterior vs. 'no/thing', an outside enclosing and containing an unviewable inside" (183). For Zimmerman, the main point is that Hamlet cannot reconcile "the tension between what he can view and what he cannot and dare not view, the corpse evoked by the ghost's own narrative" so that "the ghost's two avatars" (the idealised "demi-god" and walking dead) "seem at once inextricable and incompatible" (187). For us as an audience, this slippage is no less unsettling. The ghost functions as the totality of both living and dead states but at the same time exceeds that totality by functioning between and beyond them. This is true in terms of its form (visible, corporeal, yet insubstantial), its spiritual state (neither belonging to nor divorced from the mortal body and the realm of the living), its functioning between past and present, and – crucially – its role in the play's events.

When the ghost then leaves an additional trace – "remember me" – it thereby perpetuates all that has passed whilst rendering that past a present and future imperative. In vowing to inscribe this trace upon his memory at the expense of all else, Hamlet subscribes to, and immerses himself within, its spectral illogic. He vows to be governed thereafter by a trace that prohibits even the illusion of breaking from the past, of the living functioning independently of the dead. This trace prohibits the completion of mourning by exposing that the living cannot be isolable from the dead, or the dead from the living. In disrupting the linear functioning of time, it prohibits a linear progression in plot, so that Hamlet is no more able to pursue a logical, timely execution of justice than he can correct the temporal breach that sees his father return. This is a problem to which I will return a little later, but

for now it is sufficient to note that if the trace prohibits the clear organization of time and space, it prohibits the ordering that is possible only through such organization. And if, instead of remembering the ghost, Hamlet instead remembers its command as a trace of its presence, then it is not the figure of the ghost or the purpose of its agenda that he bears with him as he proceeds. Rather, in remembering the singular, stark phrase "remember me", in agreeing to be *governed* by the trace of a trace, he subscribes to a position in which the endless "play of differences" or system of "syntheses and referrals" denies him the clarity necessary to perceive a beginning or end, or to proceed logically between the two (Derrida, *Positions* 23).

Hamlet's subsequent chaotic descent into unfocused aggression, illogic, distraction, and ineptitude makes considerably more sense when considered in light of this. The issue of this 'madness' has stimulated intensive debate amongst Shakespeare's critics. Garber argues that the ghost's two requests – for Hamlet "to remember and to revenge" – are not only disparate but "functionally at odds." As Hamlet remembers obsessively the ghost's directive, he becomes inevitably "trapped in a round of obsessive speculation," with the result that the introspective and static process of remembrance prohibits the action of revenge for which it calls. "What Hamlet needs to do," insists Garber, "is not to remember, but to *forget*" (154). In terms of fulfilling his quest for revenge, this may well be true, although it is also impossible in that forgetting would erase the imperative to revenge. But at the point of swearing, what Hamlet should do in an ideal world, in a world in which it is possible to encounter a ghost and continue upon one's way in a rational, productive, and linear fashion, becomes a distant, isolated fantasy rather than a viable road not taken. Having willingly emptied himself of all but this trace, he can no more choose to evade its effects than he can turn back time: and linear progression through time has ceased to have application here. As Hamlet so famously complains, "the time is out of joynt" (Sig. E[1r]).

Frederick Nietzsche observes in *The Birth of Tragedy* that Hamlet's cursed mission, his failure to carry out revenge is not the result of excessive reflection arising from too many "possibilities" (as so many critics claim), but rather his "insight into the terrible truth, which outweighs every motive for action" (40). As Prendergast rephrases it, Hamlet's problem is not "that he thinks too much, but that

he thinks too well. . . . the sheer lucidity of his thinking corrodes the ground of all possible action in a world dominated by an instrumental logic of ends and means" ("Derrida's Hamlet" 44-45). Nietzsche finds Hamlet similar to "Dionysiac man" in this respect, for both have discovered that they are powerless "to change the eternal essence of things," and accordingly find it ludicrous that they should be required to restore the world to order. Hamlet rejects "existence . . . along with its treacherous reflection in the gods or in some immortal Beyond. Once truth has been seen, the consciousness of it prompts man to see only what is terrible or absurd in existence wherever he looks" (40). Perhaps for "truth" we might better substitute death: not death as Hamlet formerly knows it when he bemoans God's prohibition of "seal[f] slaughter" and can put a time to his mourning for the father who is "two months dead," but rather the death of death, of its embeddedness within time and its corresponding ordering of life (Sig. [C1r-v]). To repeat Derrida's claim, "nothing could be worse, for the work of mourning, than confusion or doubt" (*Specters* 9). To mourn, to introject the other, to bury the dead in order to proceed with the business of living, order is requisite. Once Hamlet has seen death function outside of temporal and spatial constraints, he can no longer proceed as though living is not subject to the same dissolution of boundaries. In other words, if his conceptualization of life and death is dependent upon their ordering within time, it is impossible to comprehend either in the midst of the spectral or to pursue a logical or linear course of action thereafter.

It is this disorder and disordering of time that corrupts Hamlet's future and that he must address in choosing his inheritance. Hamlet's full complaint in the wake of the ghost's departure is "The time is out of joynt, ô cursed spight / That ever I was borne to set it right" (Sig. E[ir]). Derrida notes that Hamlet "opposes the being 'out of joint' of time to its *being-right*, in the right or the straight path of that which walks upright. He even curses the fate that would have caused him to be born to set right a time that walks crooked. He curses the destiny that would precisely have destined him, Hamlet, to do justice, to put things back in order" (*Specters* 23). Derrida argues that it is not "so much the corruption of the age" that Hamlet curses, as the "unjust effect of the disorder," the requirement that Hamlet becomes responsible for putting "a dislocated time back on its hinges," through the process of retribution and the

restoration of justice. Hence Hamlet curses his own "mission: to do justice to a de-mission of time," and thereby puts himself "'out of joint'" (23). Hamlet's curse scarcely functions as the originary or causal root of his problem: indeed, the curse, along with the mission itself, arises out of the absence of a start, the destruction of origination or of ending, the collapse of intermediate or intermediary structures. But his curse harks back to his inscription of the ghost's commandment to "remember me". He has already sworn to wipe his memory clear, to erase his understanding of anything other than the ghost's injunction to remember and therefore to avenge, to reinstate order, to restore the possibility of logic, ending (burial), and time. Now, he inscribes anew, not erasing but rather overwriting the first so that the inscription to remember and to do nothing but remember becomes indistinguishable and inextricable from the cursing of the same.

Hamlet's problem is shared in many respects by *The Tragedy of Hoffman*'s protagonist, whose failure to bury his father or to mourn is both marked and perpetuated by his father's trace within his memory. Hamlet initially mopes about with an inward grief that surpasses "the trappings and the suites of woe" but is ready "with wings as swift / As meditation" to "sweepe to my revenge" when Old Hamlet's ghost asserts that if Hamlet "did'st ever thy dear father love" he will "revenge his foule, and most unnaturall murther" (Sig. [B4v]; [D2v]). In the opening scene of *Hoffman*, the grieving Clois Hoffman appears in the midst of precisely the same transformation as he casts off his melancholia in order to swear that he will punish his father's killers:

> Hence Clouds of melancholy
> Ile be no longer subject to your s[ch]ismes,
> But thou deare soule, whose nerves and artires
> In dead resoundings summon up revenge,
> And thou shalt hate, be but appeas'd sweete hearse
> The dead remembrance of my living father (Sig. B[1r]).

With this, he throws open a curtain to expose Hans Hoffman's corpse suspended from a tree.

Having considered Hamlet's promise to erase his memory in favour of his father's commandment, we might immediately see that Hoffman aims here to achieve

something similar. He will "no longer be subject" to the "Clouds of melancholy" but instead will turn himself over to the dead "deare soule" whom he seeks to appease (Sig. B[1r]). By "melancholy," he does not of course refer directly to melancholy as we now understand it in the wake of Freudian theory, but rather a more generalized emotional disturbance that appears most likely to imply enduring grief and, it appears, a similar inertia to that which Hamlet experiences prior to his sighting of his father's ghost.[64] Hoffman's specific reference to "schisms" is crucial. It is not just a sense of general melancholy that Hoffman attempts to cast off, but an associated rupture or cleft of some kind. The phrase is evocative of the internal division produced through the walling off of the incorporated father but perhaps speaks more immediately of the emotional disruption he experiences in response to his melancholia. His incorporation of the father has isolated him from the external world at the same time that it has damaged his interior being and rendered him inert. In refusing to bury the body physically, he has sworn to refuse to allow an end to his father's death or its perceived injustice. He has turned himself over to the trace of his father's memory. Now, like Hamlet, he endeavours to reinscribe his memory with another trace, writing over his melancholic inertia with the corpse's silent summons to revenge.

Again, the call to revenge is implicit within the act of remembrance. What summons Hoffman to revenge are the decaying tissues of the body, or more specifically, its "dead resoundings". The verb "resound" means "to ring or re-echo," suggesting both origin and reflection – but of what? (*OED* def. 1). It is not a sound to which Hoffman refers, but some other kind of resonance, one that can only occur in the relation between Hoffman's memory and the corpse. A body is just a body: in fact, the subsequent revelation that Hoffman removed the "bare anatomy" or "naked bones" from the gallows indicates that this particular body is little more than a skeleton (Sig. [B3v]). The skeleton should perhaps signify little else than the physical remnants of the living man. Indeed, in this state of decay, it should be

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[64] Gowland indicates that, in "non-technical literary contexts" and presumably also in popular usage, the term "melancholy" was used by early moderns to describe "a range of passionate conditions, from temporary sadness to extreme irrational derangement" (99). At the same time, W. I. D. Scott (who writes from the perspective of a medical doctor) points out that Hamlet's melancholy "corresponds closely with the description given by learned writers of his day," but also by our own modern clinical understandings of "psychotic depression" (*Shakespeare's Melancholics* 82).

buried and have comparatively little to signify at all. However, its visible and
physically elevated presence and its silent interaction with the fraught Hoffman
renders it something more, something that is manifest within Hoffman's oscillation
between nomenclatures. In the space of four lines, he variously refers to it as a
"hearse" (or corpse), a "deare soule," and "the dead remembrance" of his father (Sig.
B[1r]). The last of these is particularly complex, for remembrance may signify,
amongst other things, "a memorial," "reminder," or "keepsake," a "memory or
recollection," a "record" or "memorandum," and – notably – in a rare definition for
which Shakespeare's *Henry V* is the *OED*'s only recorded example, "a memorial
inscription" (*OED* defs. 9,1, 11, 9.d). [65] Thus a remembrance may be artifact or
inheritance, physical monument or psychological recollection, relic of the past or
present reminder. In the context in which Hoffman uses the term, it invokes all of
these functions. It implies that the dead body functions as an artifact, a memorial to
the previously living man, and the decaying legacy of the living man, along with the
revenge it silently incites. Given the nature of its presence and Hoffman's attribution
to it of the ability to hate and to be appeased, it equally appears to constitute an
actual continuance, the persistent presence of the elder Hoffman in deathly
perpetuity. At the same time, it evokes the image of Hoffman's memory of the
"living father" transferred to, or reified within, the figure of the corpse.

   The past and the present seem to collapse in upon one another here in an
increasingly spectral fashion because of the impossibility of extricating a singular
sign, a means of fixing the type of "remembrance" that the dead Hoffman is. There
is no means of containing either the living father or the dead father within the past;
consequently, there is no means of distinguishing fully between the two, nor of
isolating them from the present, which, by rights, should be occupied only by the
presently living. This effect is amplified further by the dead man's "resoundings,"
which heighten the effect of a signification without origin, a repetition and resonance
between Hoffman and corpse that cannot be fixed, located, or contained. Hoffman
does not have the problem that Hamlet has in taking instructions quite literally from

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[65] The phrase to which the *OED* refers is King Henry's memorable declaration that if he fails in the
war against the French, his bones may be laid "in an unworthy Urne, / Tomblesse, with no
remembrance over them" (2.72).

a ghost, but his problem is almost precisely the same in respect to the inscription of the paternal trace. Derrida points out that we cannot carry the dead with us: "the one who looks at us in us – and *for whom* we are – is no longer; he is completely other, infinitely other, as he has always been," with death merely heightening the visibility of "this infinite alterity" (*The Work of Mourning* 161). While Hoffman introjects his father, the corpse reminds us that his father has in fact ceased to be, and that he has ceased to be externally to Hoffman's carrying of his remembrance. Hoffman can no longer "be" through the appropriation of his father's gaze, through the seemingly unbreakable link of blood between them, because the father has announced his alterity through his departure. Paradoxically, as the father yet remains, his trace within Hoffman's memory preserved and reflected in the material object of the skeleton, his separation from the dead other can neither be nullified nor completed.

Thus Hoffman's preservation of his father's trace draws him into the same problem of temporal disruption as that which Hamlet faces in his vow to remember. Their respective failures to mourn and determination to remember corrupt time in a way that not only draws the past space of the dead uncomfortably into the present of the living but problematizes the very divisions that enable such distinctions to be made. In so doing, they also disturb the distinctions between the individual "beings" of father and son. As the failure of mourning leaves the dead circulating – both buried inside the melancholic offspring and retaining a visible, physicalized presence of their own – the possibility of an autonomous or independent state of being for the sons never emerges. Instead, with the time utterly "out of joint," both Hamlet and Hoffman embark on a mission to seek justice for the premature deaths of the fathers who, in failing to depart, have already cursed the ordering of space, of time, and of being, that they seek to restore.

Dis/Inheritance in time

In the disorder that engulfs Hamlet and Hoffman subsequent to their internalization of the paternal trace, it becomes evident that an issue of inheritance is at stake. It is no coincidence that the filial relationship is the source of temporal disruption. A focus upon familial relationships is, of course, a common element in Renaissance plays involving ghosts, not least because their classical predecessors

often produce ghosts as a result of intra-family murders. From classical translations such as *Agamemnon* and *Octavia* to tragedies and history plays such as *Hamlet*, *Richard III* and *The Revenger's Tragedy*, the murders of family members produce a disjuncture within the relation between inheritance and time that is focalized through the figure of the ghost. This is not to suggest that the manifestation of disrupted inheritance is driven by biological imperatives or has an integral association with the social or cultural bonds of the family. Rather, I would suggest that gaps and disjunctures within the structures of inheritance are at once more apparent and more assimilable when exposed within the structurally familiar relations of the family. Hence, they play out with particular vigour in revenge tragedies such as *Hamlet* and *The Tragedy of Hoffman*, where the legacy at stake expands from the usual structures of biological, material, and social inheritance to include the unassimilable psychological inheritance of untimely death and the imperative to revenge.

In order to trace out the (dis)connections between inheritance and time in these plays, it is necessary to consider what precisely it might mean to inherit and to inherit in time. We are accustomed to thinking of inheritance as a linear event, something that exists – whole and intact – at an anterior point in time and at a subsequent moment passes on to new ownership, possession, or stewardship. However, Derrida argues that inheritance is characterized by "radical and necessary *heterogeneity*". Marked by "difference without opposition," an inheritance is neither solitary nor aggregate: "its presumed unity, if there is one, can consist only in the *injunction* to *reaffirm by choosing*. 'One must' means *one must* filter, sift, criticize, one must sort out several different possibles that inhabit the same injunction. And inhabit it in a contradictory fashion around a secret" (*Specters of Marx* 18). Inheritance is therefore marked out by limits in what may be carried forward in time and is also disruptive of time in its refusal to function wholly – to be definable, consistent, and fully present – through a linear passage in time:

> One always inherits from a secret – which says 'read me, will you ever be able to do so?' The critical choice called for by any reaffirmation of the inheritance is also, like memory itself, the condition of finitude. The infinite does not inherit, it does not inherit (from) itself. The injunction itself (it always says 'choose and decide from among what you inherit') can only be one by dividing itself, tearing itself apart, differing/deferring itself, by speaking at the same

time several times – and in several voices. (*Specters* 18)

Geoffrey Bennington describes this formulation as characteristic of the Derridean structure in which "the *necessary possibility* of infidelity to the tradition is a positive condition of the chance of being faithful to it – implying that fidelity is always marked by, or tormented by, infidelity." This means that "what might look like a negative contingency" that might trouble "the ideal purity of an event" becomes incorporated into that event's delineation "as a condition of possibility which is simultaneously the condition of the *a priori* impossibility of the event's ever achieving that ideal purity" (*Interrupting Derrida* 139). Inherent to the conceptualization of inheritance as a process of transmission between predecessor and heir is the possibility of its failure or corruption, whether in the transmission (the process of handing on) or the article of inheritance. Pure inheritance – the notion of an incorruptible conveyance of an uncontaminable object or matter – is at most an illusion: its existence is conditional upon the destruction of pure origin. As Bennington puts it, "an inheritance that was always completely faithful would not inherit from the earlier moment" at all, but function instead as its "causal outcome" (139).

Thus, the structure of inheritance in Derridean thought bears a paradigmatic correlation to the supplement, in that it traces a process in which the anterior term or event cannot function in isolation from its heir and therefore corrupts the integrity of both as well as the seeming linearity of succession. It is worth pausing to consider the issues that this raises in relation to the spectre of the dead father. If the father's skeleton occupies the role of a spectre without being a ghost at all, this is in part related to its function as the dead father's supplement. The corpse takes the place of the living man whilst modifying it, adding to it the qualifiers of execution, death, and (in Hoffman's eyes) victimization. As in *Hamlet*, the living father is given a presence in the play and made discernible as an influential force only through his presence in death; and his living self is only perceptible through the lens of his death. The body is also the supplement of Hoffman, for at the end of the play, Hoffman is executed in the same fashion and by the same people as his father. Thus the skeleton constitutes the reification of the death that already lies within him and that will

manifest itself in the mirrored execution at the end of the play. Hoffman is marked, characterized, and rendered deficient by that which succeeds him in advance, the dead man who is made so by a burning crown at the behest of the Luningberg family.

If Hoffman's inheritance of his father's death manifests itself prior to its own occurrence, dogging his steps throughout the play, it subverts the seeming linearity of events from the point of the father's death to that of the son. The supplement of the corpse refuses the sequential unfolding of events within time in a logical, causal fashion because the future haunts in advance of its own arrival. I will return to this problem a little later, but it is sufficient to note for now that this problem of the supplement's disruption of time must inevitably function as a problem of inheritance also. Hoffman's future cannot be isolated from the past or present because his future death manifests itself in advance through the presence (the figure of the corpse) of an identical, past event (the execution of the father). To put it another way, the past that continues to manifest itself through the corpse simultaneously manifests a future event that is not yet here. In this collapsing series of oppositions between past and future, father and son, life and death, inheritance (and the inheritance of death in particular) functions as something other than a simple transmission from father to son and from past to present. Instead, it becomes subject to the ruptures, incompletion, and contamination that characterizes the temporal schema within which it operates. The destruction of the oppositional force between the supplementary terms proclaims the impossibility of inheriting in full and in time. It is possible to locate strands of inheritance, but never to weave them fully into a line with a fixed content, a beginning, and an end.

As in the case of Hamlet, this problem of inheritance and the associated spectral relation between father and son is what generates the imperative to revenge but also prohibits its success. Derrida suggests that mourning requires "getting over *our* mourning, by getting over, by ourselves, the mourning of ourselves" and "our autonomy, of everything that would make us the measure of ourselves" (*The Work of Mourning* 161). Hoffman's remembrance cannot really carry either the dead or the living father, but in preserving the trace of both, it ensures that he can neither eliminate nor solidify the boundary between his father and his self. In order to move forward, to execute revenge thoroughly and in linear fashion, Hoffman must function

autonomously in the absence of the father. He cannot achieve this because the imperative to revenge is that which exposes the absence of autonomy: the dependence of his being upon the relation to the father and, in particular, upon the unsuccessful mourning of his father. He cannot therefore separate his own functioning in the present and the future from the past that he carries with him as he seeks a point of departure in casting off his melancholy. Thus, whilst Hoffman insists upon becoming "subject" to his father's "remembrance," he commits himself to the irreducible set of possibilities – the spectral illogic – with which it comes. Trapped by the static but repetitive trace of his father, he is doomed to failure and disintegration.

In its comparatively simple form, *The Tragedy of Hoffman* thus mirrors the problems of inheritance that plague Hamlet after his meeting with his dead father. Hamlet cannot seize upon the ghost's command to remember and simply depart with it because the inheritance of the spectre's cause is in itself spectral. As Richard Halpern observes in "An Impure History of Ghosts," the ghost "serves Derrida well as symbol of what it means to inherit" because it highlights the problems rather than the idealization of inheritance: "Hamlet's father does not return as a comforting spirit; he *haunts* his son, unnerves him, returns at unexpected and ominous intervals" (41). In order to inherit, Hamlet must choose, interpreting what it is that the ghost is and what it offers or demands from him; but in doing so, he must make that selection from that which is neither whole nor wholly transparent. The ghost is itself a secret, the manifestation of the secrets that it carries and is "forbid / To tell" (Sig. [D2v]). Old Hamlet cannot simply pass a hereditary baton to his son and have him depart with it, although certainly this appears to be his motive when he reveals his brother's crime and instructs him to "Revenge his foule, and most unnaturall murther" and subsequently to "remember me" (Sig. [D2v], [D3v]). Halpern comments that the ghost passes on "what is at once entreaty and malediction, a plea for assistance and a murderous law," so that it is "no wonder his apparition disorients Hamlet" (41). We might add to this that the very concept of passing is put asunder by the disruption of time, whether it is passing on through death, passing over a legacy, passing the past (and leaving it behind) through the process of mourning, or even passing away out of

sight, as when the ghost's onlookers have difficulty in determining whether the ghost is present or departed:

> BARNARDO. Tis heere.
> HORATIO. Tis heere.
> MARCELLUS. Tis gone. (Sig. [B3r])

It is small wonder that it is never really clear whether the ubiquitous ghost is here or gone; there is such a proliferation of possibilities generated through the spectral figure that it can only produce entrapment, a sense that the multiplicity of discordant options and passings must bring Hamlet to the point of utter stasis. What Hamlet faces is a question of what inheritance might mean in the absence of linearity and singularity. How to inherit from the dead father who is not departed? How to inherit his recollections, his history, his agenda – to assimilate them, to mourn, to inscribe them in memory and move on – when they do not function as a unified collective or even as a series of isolable elements but rather as opaque "possibilities" that cluster around the spectral form that marks the dead King's absence?

Although the list of wrongs that Hamlet's inherited act of revenge is supposed to put right is extensive – purifying the "royall bed of Denmarke," punishing Claudius, and putting the suffering ghost to rest, to name a few – the accompanying request for remembrance exposes the irreducible gaps that mark out this legacy (Sig. [D3v]). When Old Hamlet incites his son to "remember me," a second cluster of inheritances appears from which Hamlet is to draw in conjunction with the first. To remember is to remember, not merely the father but the supplement; the Old Hamlet who is the wronged father, the wronged husband, the betrayed brother, and the events that the ghost carries with it – the fleeting glimpse into the afterlife, with its "sulphrus and tormenting flames" (Sig. D2[r]). When Hamlet declares he is "bound to hear" his dead father's story, the ghost replies "So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt heare" (Sig. [D2v])." In hearing the call to revenge, Hamlet is to inherit revenge. But a simple transmission of the call to revenge is not possible. Hamlet is to choose blindly from a host of accompanying but disunified possibilities that undo the very fabric of his world: but to choose something else – to dismiss the ghost as a vision, for example – is unimaginable. And no matter which of these legacies Hamlet

selects, their inhabitation of the injunction to "remember me" does not render it unequivocal because the "me" remains unfathomable. The living father, the dead father, and the ghost all lay behind that "me" but cannot be distilled to a single entity, nor even an amalgamation. Hamlet is to remember, and to be bound to revenge by, a secret – the secret of the gap between the inscription of the injunction ("thy commandement all alone") and that which it names – but in pursuing revenge, he is bound, like Hoffman, to enter further into the burgeoning incoherence within structures of time, life, death, self, and kingdom from which he inherits. He binds himself also to mirroring the fate of his father: to be poisoned at the instigation of the man who first put time asunder.

For Derrida, the inheritance of the phrase "the time is out of joint" in French translations of *Hamlet* manifests much the same problematization of the relationship between inheritance and time. These translations hint at the multitude of implications inherent within the intractable originary phrase in a way that simultaneously enacts the disjointedness of which Hamlet complains. The first two – "time is off its hinges" ("le temps est hors de ses gonds") and "time is broken down, unhinged, out of sorts" ("le temps est détraqué") – suggest between them that time has been rendered dysfunctional, misadjusted, defective. Time has given up the ghost, in both senses of the phrase. The third translation, "the world is upside down" ("le monde est à l'envers"), elides the derangement of time and renders it spatial instead (*Specters* 22). In replacing "time" with "the world," this translation draws Hamlet's complaint into a more explicit statement of one of its consequences. With time disrupted, Hamlet's world is incomprehensible, immune to logical structure. Derrida observes that "de travers" ("askew") may be a more accurate choice than "à l'envers" but the inversion implied by the latter is peculiarly appropriate, for inversion is a pervasive force throughout the play. It is manifest within the figure of the ghost that lurks above the king buried in the earth beneath; in Claudius's rise to power at the expense of the fall and death of his brother; in Hamlet's transformation from the role of humble son to his mother's moral steward.

The fourth, and least direct of the translations, "this age is dishonored" ("cette époque est déshonorée") removes any direct sense of disordered time to identify its consequences in more specific fashion. With time unhinged, the "age" is rendered

dysfunctional. Derrida observes a tradition at work here which ascribes an "*ethical or political* meaning" to the disjointedness that might denote the "corruption of the city, the dissolution or perversion of customs" because "it is easy to go from disadjusted to unjust" (22). It implies that propriety cannot be maintained in the absence of order, and particularly temporal order; hence, there is an inherent legitimacy or equity bestowed upon events which unfold properly within linear time and, accordingly, an illegitimacy or impropriety within the vacancy created by time's structural dissolution. Further, "the perversion of that which, out of joint, does not work well, does not walk straight, or goes askew . . . can easily be seen to oppose itself as does the oblique, twisted, wrong, and crooked to the good direction of that which goes right, straight, to the spirit of that which orients or founds the law [*le droit*]" (23). Again, inversion appears, a disjointing that turns that which is right and rightly structured upside down so that it remains present and simultaneously manifests its opposite.

As Bennington points out, the problem of translation outlined by Derrida is exacerbated when his work (and these passages specifically) are retranslated into English: but this is, if anything, helpful in that it exposes "the out-of-jointness of English itself with respect to itself". The double translations "stand for and provoke different possibilities of reading the English" as "the expression 'out of joint' *itself*" becomes "out of joint with itself" (135). Considered together, these extracts usefully point to the spectrality at the centre of Hamlet's declaration that "the time is out of joint," enacting a sample of the claims it puts forth whilst demonstrating its irreducibility to a core demand.   Hence, while the translations are not arbitrary, their internal organization does not prohibit a simultaneous disorganization "through the very effect of the specter, because of the Cause that is called the original and that, like all ghosts, addresses same-ly disparate demands, which are more than contradictory" (*Specters* 21). To put it another way, the 'original' Hamlet's declaration that "the time is out of joint" is in itself riven, neither one with itself nor at odds with itself but illimitable and therefore indefinable in its call(s) to the spectral something that has put things asunder. In *Untimely Matter in the Time of Shakespeare*, Jonathan Gil Harris suggests that Derrida focuses too strongly on the French translations and on "time" or "temps," arguing that the line would "have had

a more insistently corporeal connotation for the play's early modern audiences." His evidence for this is that the *OED* identifies the phrase "out of joint" as having a predominantly physical connotation at this time (in the sense of the dislocation of a joint within the body), rather remarkably citing as evidence an instance in which Philip Sidney uses the term to denote the physiological consequences of a physical accident. In fact, the *OED* also includes the definition "disordered, perverted, out of order, disorganized" as being in use from the fifteenth century and this is clearly more strongly suggested by the association with time (Harris 12; *OED* "joint" def. 2.b). Nevertheless, his claim that the line resonates with the idea of "a bony matter out of time with itself" is useful in that it highlights that the seemingly concrete structures of time are put into internal disarray through the effects of an external, a-temporal event – the coming of the spectre (12).

What Derrida seeks to do, of course, is to expose the impurity of time as a self-contained or fixed structure – to demonstrate that its radical spectrality in *Hamlet* is possible because its traditionally linear logic is illusory. If what arrives in time (in timely fashion, we might say) is only conceivable because of the possibility of untimeliness, then the structural integrity of linear time is predicated upon its own inadequacy. Broadly speaking, the problem with the ghost is that it is anachronistic, which is, a "defining feature of ghosts . . . because haunting, by its very structure, implies a deformation of linear temporality" (Buse and Stott 1). As Belsey puts it, "ghosts suspend the rules of logic just as they break the laws of nature. They belong to the past, to a history that should have closed with their death, and yet they reappear to trouble the present and change the future." Hence "a ghost is always radically out of time, as well as out of place" (5).[66] This is what Hamlet encapsulates in his complaint that "the time is out of joint": the ghost's appearance is a kind of impropriety, a temporal breach that thereby disrupts the order that is natural or proper. More specifically, it is a quality of this specific ghost because the conditions of the environment in which he appears cannot assimilate his presence: despite the clear hint at a purgatorial origin, the text refuses any satisfactory explanation for the ghost's existence. He clearly belongs to an earlier time in terms of his physical form, his identity, and his relation to the living: none of these manifestations has a home in

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[66] For an overview of philosophical approaches to the untimely, see Harris, pp. 11-12.

the present once he is dead and buried, since his life and death have both taken place before his appearance in the play. More problematically, he is also *not* proper to a former age and this is true in more than one sense. As I suggested earlier, not only is he not the living Old Hamlet, but neither is he the same as the living Old Hamlet: as both supplement and trace, he is never quite synonymous with his (former) self. Hence he does not belong to the past at all, although this does little to make him at home within the present.

Moreover, in *Hamlet*, the functioning and role of time is very clearly the product of perception. Lyons observes that there is a pervasive line of criticism that indicates that Hamlet is isolated from others by the fact that "he cannot and does not want to adjust to their time scheme" (102). I would argue though that Hamlet has little choice in this. The catastrophic (dis)order generated by the ghost sufficiently damages the structural integrity of time that its functioning appears contingent upon whatever logic can be retrieved, a logic that is independent of the understanding of those who are unaffected by, or oblivious to, the ghost. In terms of narrative structure, the tension between the understanding of a linear schema of time (in which past, present, and future function in catenation and thereby order events similarly) and the disordered presentation of events are what propels Hamlet forward, however unproductively, amidst chaos. It is also at the very root of his problem. When the ghost first appears (for the third time, having already been "twice seene of us"), we are given to understand that this is strange because Old Hamlet is excluded from this time: that is to say, his death marks his mortal being as a relic of the past and thereby disqualifies him from an appearance within the present (Sig. [B1v]). This is the logic that prompts Horatio to ask the ghost "What art thou that usurpst this time of night, / Together with that faire and warlike forme, / In which the Majestie of buried Denmarke / Did sometimes march" (Sig. [B1v]). In so doing, he divides the form of the ghost in two: the form in which Old Hamlet sometimes marched in the past and that which, in appearing now, disrupts the night because it is prohibited by the marker of death from doing so.

Horatio's immediate problem, of course, is that he (along with Hamlet, Marcellus, and Barnardo) can neither conflate nor separate the two figures: the (re)presentations of the dead King's form are the same and yet not synonymous. At the same time,

this problematization of the relation between presence and time demonstrates that perception (including the perception of time) is specific to the cultural conditions of the environment in which it takes place. The temporal rupture within the narrative functions as the product of a discordance between culturally driven perceptions (philosophical and theological norms in particular) and the ordering of actual events. Garber observes that, in its engagement with the uncanny, *Hamlet* becomes "the play that demonstrates that you can't go home again. Why? Because you *are* home – and home is not what you have always and belatedly (from *un*home) fantasized it to be" (159). The category of home, which is defined by the alignment of events with the understanding of ordered structures such as time and space, emerges as an ideal or illusion produced through the conditions of its absence. What is conceptualized as natural, or at least familiar, emerges only through the presence of what it is not: and its disruption does not simply constitute an instance of aberration but calls into question the very terms by which the familiar is understood.

This is the problem that Old Hamlet's ghost presents when it appears on the battlements, stalking into territory to which it does not belong. The ghost does not merely disturb but instead "usurpst this time of night" because its appearance stages a coup over all understanding or reason. In response to the ghost's appearances "jump at this dead houre," and in "the dead wast[e]" of night, Royle observes that the ghost is not only "identified with the night" but "is *at the same time* that which 'usurp'st this time of night' . . . . The 'jump' of the 'dead hour' of night is a jump, a usurping of time itself, absolute interruption and disordering of night" (Shakespeare Sig. [B1v], [C2r]; Royle, *The Uncanny* 125-26). Put simply, because the form of Old Hamlet, which inevitably appears in the depths of the night because it is a ghost, has no place to do so because a ghost has no place at all. Time, as that which underpins our understanding of what occurs in the middle of the night, cannot accommodate the appearance of that which is dead and therefore has no place in the present; hence, it is overthrown by the ghost's appearance.

Worse still, the ghost cannot be accommodated in any other sense either, not even through a model of the ghosts of the past. Not only does it function in markedly different form to its Elizabethan predecessors, which are almost always understood to be at least "vaguely classical visitors of indifferent theology and indefinite

origins," but it evokes (without resolving) a range of other understandings of ghosts that plunge reason itself into peril (Pearlman 81). Its ontological and theological status have been such contentious issues for critics over a prolonged period because it can neither be excluded from, nor confined to, any one branch of Elizabethan belief. Greenblatt usefully summarizes the issue in regard to Shakespeare's ghosts more generally when he points out that "Shakespeare's contradictory, slippery, and complex deployment of spirits" does not align with any identifiable branch of mythology or theology: none of his apparitions is a "demon" or "a purgatorial spirit, begging for suffrages from the living," nor do they particularly invoke the ghosts of "popular superstitions" or the classical world (*Hamlet in Purgatory* 195). This does not prevent critics from trying to categorize *Hamlet*'s ghost, nevertheless, and Greenblatt himself, despite having claimed, firstly that he does not intend to seek a theological explanation for the ghost, and secondly, that "none of Shakespeare's ghosts" are spirits from purgatory, subsequently asserts that Old Hamlet is "a distinctly Catholic ghost" (4, 195, 240).[67]

The wider debate amongst critics is fuelled by a parallel debate within the text, as the ghost's onlookers endeavour to locate the ghost within almost every conceivable category. At various points, it is described as "this thing," a "figure," "a fantasie" "this dreaded sight," an "apparition" (the latter of which might signify any kind of visible phenomena in the Elizabethan period), "a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd" (angel or demon), "an honest Ghost," a "dead cor[p]se," and "*Hamlet*, / King, father, royall Dane" (Sig. [B1v]; [D1v]; [D4r]). The problem, as Jerrold Hogle observes, is that the ghost may equally be "the projection of an internal state of mind, like the 'dagger' that Macbeth seems to see" or a product of the devil taking advantage of

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[67] Beckwith provides an excellent critique of Greenblatt's wider treatment of purgatory and its relation to performance and the theatre. The debate that more specifically focuses on the issue of the origin of Old Hamlet's ghost includes Clinton Atchley's "Reconsidering the ghost in *Hamlet*: Cohesion or Coercion?", Roy Battenhouse's "The Ghost in *Hamlet*: A Catholic Linchpin?," Dover Wilson's *What Happens in Hamlet*, Christopher Devlin's *Hamlet's Divinity*, and Miriam Joseph's "Discerning the Ghost in *Hamlet*," amongst many others. Joseph's essay provides an interesting engagement with the idea that Shakespeare employs the doctrine of the "discernment of spirits" in order to have the ghosts' audience systematically test out whether it is a Catholic ghost (494). Watson suggests that the play replaces the hauntings of the start of the play with the "common graveyard," reading the ghost accordingly as "an 'illusion' within a drama within a cultural mythology of denial" so that Hamlet, the ghost, and the play itself all "creep from death to dusty death" (76). However, he elides the crucial fact that the fictions are real, insofar as their spectrality is generated through cultural constructions that enable death to be thought at all.

Hamlet's spiritual turmoil to attach "a 'shape' to 'melancholy'" ("Afterword" 208). There is simply no means by which we might firmly identify the nature of its presence or its relation to Hamlet. In fact, it is never even accorded a definite gender. Garber observes this to be a potential product of the lack of distinction between it/its and he/his in Elizabethan usage; yet it is sufficiently overt to compound the oscillation between "objectification" and personification of the spectre (145). The problem of the ghost's existence is met further with an obsessive interest in contextualising its appearance within time. It appears at "this dead houre" and must disappear before the dawn; its lack of belonging within the present is illuminated by its occupation of the armour and "forme" that the dead King took in the past; it appears three times on the battlements; and "thrice" walks past Marcellus and Barnardo (Sig. [B1v]-B2[r]; [C2r]). Much of this is formulaic – there is scarcely anything original in the appearance of a ghost at midnight or in the grouping of repetition into threes – but the intense attention paid to such matters demonstrates the importance of fixing (or rather, failing to fix) the ghost's rightful place within time.

Although Hamlet does eventually accept the ghost as the return of his father's spirit in embodied form, we are left none the wiser as to the secret of its origins. Despite arguments from critics such as Devlin and Wilson who read the ghost as essentially Catholic irrespective of its appearance in a seemingly Protestant Denmark, the impossibility of assimilating the ghost into a cogent, logical framework undermines any attempt to transmute it from a spectre into the merely dead (Devlin 49-50; Wilson 70). The ghost is refusing to talk (at least with any detail or sense of consistency) and the conditions of its existence – the conditions by which it fails to be understood within the parameters of Shakespeare's Denmark – repeatedly disrupt any fixed reading of its ontological state. Within the confines of the play, every indicator of the ghost having come from a Catholic purgatory is counteracted by a Protestant perspective, such as Horatio's suspicion that the ghost is an evil spirit luring Hamlet toward the "somnet of the cleefe" (summit of a cliff) or enticing him "into madnes" (Sig. D2[r]).[68] Atchley claims that "Shakespeare expects his audience

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[68] It should be noted that such perspectives are not restricted to Protestantism: Marshall points out that Catholic beliefs did not designate all ghosts as genuine and left open the possibility that they might be evil spirits (*Beliefs and the Dead* 245). In terms of dramatic effect, however, the clear association between the latter beliefs and the reformers' strongest rebuttals of Catholic ghostlore informs these lines in a way that accords them a distinctly Protestant ring.

to perceive the Ghost for what it is, a diabolical manifestation on a mission to trick Hamlet into forfeiting his soul," which he achieves by the play's end (12).[69] But the ghost's "insider" knowledge, its traditional demands for justice, its intense troubling of the distinction between the dead and living king, all suggest equally that something else is at work here. Even its desire to speak to Hamlet alone works against this simplified reading: why endanger one soul, when it could aim to ensnare all of its witnesses?

The ghost's indeterminacy is heightened further by its simultaneous resonance with, and departure from, the stock figure of the vengeful Senecan-style ghost emerged from Hades. Unable to assimilate it into the present, Horatio wonders if it may not function like the figures of the classical past. He compares it to the events prior to Julius Caesar's murder in Rome, when "the graves stood tenna[n]tlesse, and the sheeted dead / Did squeake and gibber in the Roman streets," with this and other supernatural events acting "As harbindgers preceading still the fates / And prologue to the *Omen* comming on" (Sig. [B2v]). This last speculation draws upon popular superstitions as well as the play's classical predecessors and contemporary drama.[70] Similar supernatural omens signalling catastrophe or evil occur most obviously in Shakespeare's slightly earlier play *Julius Caesar,* as well as in the Senecan translations (particularly *Oedipus*), *Macbeth*, *Antonio's Revenge* and an assortment of other drama. Yet, as Pearlman points out, the ghost does not behave at all in the fashion that is traditional for the classical ghost. Where his predecessors adopt "an otherworldly look," Old Hamlet's ghost appears in his mortal armour; where they invariably produce a "myth-encrusted narrative" of the afterlife, Old Hamlet's ghost

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[69] For an extensive argument in favour of this reading, see also Eleanor Prosser's *Hamlet and Revenge*.

[70] Marjean Purinton and Marliss Desens point out in "Shakespearean Shadows' Parodic Haunting of Thomas Love Peacock's *Nightmare Abbey* and Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*" that Horatio elides "the most obvious reason" of all for a ghost's appearance: that "the person was murdered." Thus he avoids raising the most problematic interpretation of all, which would suggest "political assassination" and therefore "treason" (103). As they suggest, this does link to the nature of ghosts as "Gothicized signifiers" for covert threats to a society, but it is equally, perhaps, a matter primarily of dramatic impact: if Horatio were to make this suggestion, it would weaken the impact of the ghost's own revelation to this effect. See Belsey for a detailed exploration of the resonances between Old Hamlet's ghost and folklore. Lavater provides a useful (if rather subjective) account of popular beliefs in supernatural phenomena functioning as omens - see esp. pp. 77-85. Marshall supplies a historical overview of the broader way in which the ghost signals serious disruption, suggesting that even in the late Middle Ages, "the appearance of a ghost, numinous, portentous, terrifying, was a sign that something, somewhere had gone wrong" (*Beliefs and the Dead* 17).

refuses to reveal any details at all; where they are "not only voluble but florid" in their speech and inclined towards shrieking, wailing, or speaking in a "high treble," this ghost communicates reluctantly, naturalistically, and apparently "in a standard baritone" (79, 75, 77, 80). Thus the ghost is no more at home in the classical context than in any of the other frameworks that fail to accommodate its presence.

What renders the ghost's ontological indeterminacy so uncannily disturbing is that, while failing to function within any one isolable context, it does not quite function outside of any of them. Does the ghost function as a portent of catastrophe? Well, yes, we cannot claim otherwise, nor can we deny that Horatio's fear that Hamlet may be lured to his death or to "madness" resonates remarkably with his actual fate. And it does seem that if the ghost is not actually "a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd," its agenda ultimately produces the effects of both – restorative justice coming in this play in the form of a double edged sword that destroys villain and victim alike. The problem of the ghost is not only that it does not belong, but that, in failing to belong fully, it haunts the categories of knowledge that cannot accommodate and thereby confine it. If completely other, alien and unknowable, the ghost might be more easily dismissed: but by entering partially into the frameworks by which its spectators endeavour to explain it, the ghost disrupts the delineations and oppositions through which those frameworks are produced to render them strange and strangely contaminate. Old Hamlet's ghost seemingly belongs everywhere – at every time – and in so doing, belongs nowhere at all. In manifesting elements of the Protestant, the Catholic, the classical, and popular beliefs so that they not only coexist but also coincide, it renders them all untimely, ill at home. It renders its onlookers out of joint in their inability to make sense of their vision.

Thus, the ghost's anachronism begins to seem multifarious, spreading beyond the issue of its own form. This effect is responsible for much of its corrosion of the structures of time. Every reading of the ghost that functions as a predictor of the future – the suggestion that the ghost will endanger Hamlet or render him mad, that it functions as a portent of disaster, that it functions as a spirit from heaven or from hell – anticipates and reifies its role within future events. In effect, the return of the past (King) to the present in which it does not belong both predetermines and warns against a future that has already returned in advance of itself. The ghost's presence

draws the mortal Old Hamlet's past life into his present death, and in doing so calls Hamlet's future death into the present and indeed the past.

This, then, is the environment within which Hamlet must choose his inheritance: an environment in which oppositional logic and linear progression – the passages from life to death, past to present, present to future, father to son, wrongdoing to justice – have no purchase. In this context, the choice of logical progression, of a rational and ordered response to the ghost's incitation, is no choice at all, for the "secret" around which Hamlet's possible inheritances cluster, the "me" that Hamlet is to remember and to revenge, is that which undoes the structures of time (*Specters of Marx* 18). What we see at this point is a loop, or rather a series of loops, cycles between opposing terms that destroy the possibility of origin or end. Hamlet cannot inherit and depart with that inheritance because there is no possibility of proceeding from one fixed point to another: having subscribed to the ghost's instruction to "remember me," he is subject to the spectrality that folds such oppositions back in upon one another, rendering such movements futile.

This manifests itself particularly clearly in the graveyard scene, as Hamlet and Horatio observe the gravedigger preparing Ophelia's grave. Pesta points out that "Hamlet misreads the *memento mori* tradition" by focusing so intently on the "horrors of bodily decay" and "the impermanence of human life" that he loses sight of the fact that the "icons of death and decay are meant to signify a transcendence" beyond the inevitable corruption of the human body (31-32). This may be so, but such transcendence implies a linear passage of the spirit after the moment of death that is difficult to fathom in the light of the problems generated through Old Hamlet's return. Contemplating the notion that even the highest-ranking of individuals must return to the dust after death and might therefore be reformed into the stopper for a "Beare-barrell," Hamlet devises a ditty to this effect:

> Imperious *Caesar* dead and turn'd to Clay,
> Might stoppe a hole, to keepe the wind away.
> O that that earth which kept the world in awe,
> Should patch a wall t'expell the waters flaw. (Sig. [M4r])

At its most immediate level, this is one of a series of "allegories of mortification" in which Hamlet highlights the levelling effects of death as the force that inevitably annihilates all forms of individual identity (Neill 232). But in its circularity, Hamlet's poem erases the structure of time that underpins the phenomenon it describes. The dead Caesar is "earth" all along, so that the distinction between imperial ruler and beer-barrel stopper is oddly eroded. The dust that comprises the dead body simultaneously denotes the death of the body and enduring life, through the "untimely agent within a larger network that includes not only the physical substance of the wine cask but also the 'imagination' that 'trace[s]' it" (Harris 12). The figure of Caesar, who is already "dead and turn'd to Clay" from the beginning is at any point in time marked equally by the functions of keeping "the world in awe" and functioning to staunch the flow of liquid. His passage through time is therefore not simply linear (from ruler to clay to stopper) but fragmented, with each of the states that seemingly occur at a particular point in time inhabiting the others because they are all comprised of "earth."

The choice of the word "Caesar" in the poem – which is actually a substitute for Alexander the Great, who is the focus of the preceding discussion – not only generalizes the figure to implicate any head of state, but recalls Horatio's linking of the ghost's appearance to the events surrounding Julius Caesar's murder. Consequently, the image of Caesar invokes that of Old Hamlet, not only because of the parallels between the two as fallen rulers but also through the recollection of Old Hamlet's first appearance in the play. Thus the ghost is drawn in to the earth along with Caesar and the stopper, creating another narrative thread that sees Old Hamlet's past (as Denmark's ruler) converge with his present as the dead who is consigned to the earth. But again, this logical progression destroys its own point of departure and end, for Old Hamlet, while his body must surely be lying in its grave, is also roaming the night, freed from the constraints of the earth and the strictures of time. At the same time, Hamlet, as he watches the gravedigger, watches one of the effects of his inheritance unfolding before his eyes, for Ophelia's untimely death is a manifestation of the chaos into which he has now plunged and into which he draws those around him. His observations on the nature of death call Ophelia's future burial into the present: but in remaining as yet unaware of her death, that death, which belongs to

the past, is yet to come, in the moment that he finally discovers that the corpse is that of Ophelia. Thus Hamlet's vision of the dissolution of mortal humanity into clay is a vision of what the ghost has already shown him: the disintegration of the network of related oppositions that separate humanity from earth, life from death, past from future, and that thereby subvert in advance the restoration of order that he seeks to obtain through revenge.

Hamlet's problem of inheritance is by no means a paradigm confined to familial or dynastical structures, nor even to a conscious acceptance of the injunction to remember and to choose. Rather, it invokes a broader troubling of the ways in which the living inherit when time fails to function logically as an ordering principle. In other plays, the linear pathways of inheritance are at times disrupted through quite different forms and imperatives. For instance, in *Macbeth*, a similar problem emerges, not through an obligation to remember – for Macbeth would like to do anything *but* remember the dead – but through his need to isolate his inheritance of the crown from its origins and thereby prohibit its origins from a claim upon the future. In "Macbeth's War on Time," Donald W. Foster suggests that Macbeth obsesses throughout the play over his inability to control the march of time, and in particular to alter the future through his own actions. Foster links this to Macbeth's frantic responses to the witches, whose prophecies indicate that "all growth is foreordained" and to his attempts to control the present and future by modifying his responses to the past: for example, when he acknowledges himself to be preoccupied "with things forgotten" (that is, with Duncan's assassination) as "an attempt to murder the thought of killing Duncan" (Foster 327-28; Shakespeare 3.133). In other words, Macbeth knows that in order to manipulate the future, he must equally control the present and the past. For Foster, this is why Macbeth murders Duncan: although the Weïrd Sisters' prophecies suggest that all he need do to obtain the crown is to wait, he will only gain from inheriting if he is "crowned not passively by the hands of time and chance, but actively, by his own mortal hands" (328).

At the same time, though, the witches' predictions of his inheritance of the crown are accompanied also by those of Banquo's rise, thereby threatening his solitary power in advance of its arrival. Macbeth's attempt to seize power for himself therefore attacks not only the structures of time but also those of inheritance. Fearing

that Banquo may act as rival and producer of rival heirs, for "those that gave the *Thane* of Cawdor to me, / Promis'd no lesse" to Banquo's children, Macbeth murders him in anticipation of wresting the line of monarchic inheritance into a single stream (3.133). When the dead Banquo returns, Macbeth finds that, in failing to banish his rival to the past, the inheritance of the crown is subject to division and erosion within the present:

> The times has bene,
> That when the Braines were out, the man would dye,
> And there an end: But now they rise againe
> With twenty mortall murthers on their crownes,
> And push us from our stooles. This is more strange
> Then such a murther is. (3.142)

The use of "crownes" here is evocative, not only of the heads of the dead but also of the claim to the throne as Macbeth finds himself strangely thrust back from the stool that he has inherited. As Banquo's murderer, Macbeth cannot properly mourn him through literal or metaphorical burial. Instead, he challenges the ghost to adopt a shape that would restore time and order:

> Approach thou like the rugged Russian Beare,
> The arm'd Rhinoceros, or th' Hircan Tiger,
> Take any shape but that, and my firme Nerves
> Shall never tremble. Or be alive againe,
> And dare me to the Desart with thy Sword:
> If trembling I inhabit then, protest mee
> The Baby of a Girle. Hence horrible shadow,
> Unreall mock'ry hence. Why so, being gone
> I am a man againe: pray you sit still. (3.142)

Macbeth is able to comprehend and therefore welcome the possibility of violence were Banquo to spring back to life: it is the corrosive effects of the dead man's intrusion upon his inheritance and, indeed, his sanity that is the problem. He therefore commands the figure to become mortal, to metamorphose into an animal or to "be alive againe" – even if it is in order to offer Macbeth violence – because any of these options would pose less threat than the ghost.

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With the ghost's subsequent disappearance, Macbeth imagines that he can then return to being a "man againe," or rather, a king: but in remaining unable to banish the dead to the past, his wrongfully "inherited" crown remains divided and deferred, his place uncertain. Watson argues that "the specter forces Macbeth, and us, to attribute to a dead body the full emptiness of its experience; we confront a demonic inversion of the promised afterlife: form without content, animation without anima." When Macbeth tells the ghost "Thou hast no speculation in those eyes / Which thou dost glare with," we can see that "to be stared at by those blind eyes forces Macbeth to confront" his "mortality" as well as his "guilt" (Watson 142; Shakespeare 3.142). However, in the wider context of the passage, Macbeth's assertion that the ghost has "no speculation" – no ability to see or to comprehend – seems more in keeping with his earlier insistence that "There's no such thing" in response to the apparition of the dagger (3.136). In order to contain the effects of the ghost's failure to remain buried, he demands, rather than fears, that it has no speculation, that it has no ability to see or somehow admit itself to the present and his present inner state. Macbeth's problem is that where he would endeavour to banish the secret of his accession to the past and thereby to secure control over the future, he discovers instead that he cannot delimit either.[71] The inheritance he chooses demands a conscious banishment of the crimes he has committed in order that he may proceed forward with the spoils untainted and his position secured. He cannot erase his knowledge of past events though, or comprehend the secret of what sort of stake the dead continue to hold within the mortal realm. When he visits the Weïrd Sisters with the claim that "I am bent to know / By the worst meanes, the worst, for mine owne good," his conviction that "I am in blood / Stept in so farre, that should I wade no more, / Returning were as tedious as go ore" erases his ability to register his lack of control over the future (3.142).

With the arrested comprehension of a megalomaniac, he receives ample warning as to what the future will hold but cannot read the information he receives (3.142). Even though the dead Banquo appears again surrounded by the eight Stuart kings of

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[71] Foster suggests that this inability "to stem the flow of time, or to clip the chains of causality" generates the "resentment" that Macbeth expresses through "bloody execution" (325). This sequential logic is itself subject to disruption though, since Macbeth's inability to control time is at least partly related to the temporal disruptions he generates through the unnatural acts of murder, so that there is no originary or end event in this chain.

Scotland – a sight that surely proclaims the pervasion of the past within both present and future – Macbeth seeks only to banish the knowledge. Cursing "this pernitious houre" and declaring (prophetically) that "all those that trust" the witches should be "damb'd," he proceeds to do precisely that, seizing upon their most heartening prophecies – that "none of woman borne / Shall harme *Macbeth*" and that he "shall never vanquish'd be, untill / Great Byrnam Wood, to high Dunsmane Hill / Shall come against him" – as evidence of his security (3.144-45). Watson interprets Macbeth's "mistaken" belief in the validity of the prophecies as a problem that arises from his acceptance that if they partly prove to be accurate then they must be wholly true (138). But the problem is not that they are inaccurate, for a number of them do indeed come to fruition. Rather, Macbeth's difficulty is that, in attempting to use them as a further means to control the future that is already spiralling out of his power, he fails to grasp the range of implications that they hold. Like Hamlet, Macbeth curses his own mission, securing his demise through his failed endeavour to control time or even to understand its intractability in the chaos he has engendered.

By the time Macbeth receives the news of Lady Macbeth's death, he is beginning to register the disintegration of distinctions between past, present, and future, but is no more able to control its effects:

> She should have dy'de heereafter;
> There would have beene a time for such a word:
> To morrow, and to morrow, and to morrow,
> Creepes in this petty pace from day to day,
> To the last Syllable of Recorded time:
> And all our yesterdayes, have lighted Fooles
> The way to dusty death. Out, out, breefe Candle,
> Life's but a walking Shadow, a poore Player,
> That struts and frets his houre upon the Stage,
> And then is heard no more. It is a Tale
> Told by an Ideot, full of sound and fury
> Signifying nothing. (3.150)

The construction of time here is ambiguous and complex. Mallin argues that the first line of this passage resonates with an earlier line when the third witch addresses Macbeth as he "that shalt be King hereafter," both of which indicate Macbeth's belief (prior to this moment) that he and Lady Macbeth can somehow evade death

altogether (Shakespeare 3.132). According to Mallin, this is why he so readily misinterprets the witches' prophecies – because he is increasingly convinced as to "his own invulnerability." His response to Lady Macbeth's death, then, does not suggest "she should or would have died 'later' or 'eventually'" but should not have died at *any* time. In their endless rule, "then, to be sure, 'There would never have been time for such a word'" (99).

Mallin's reading is enticing, although perhaps more precise than the text supports. The time to which Macbeth refers is in fact somewhat more complex and unsettled than this might suggest. Macbeth's assertion that Lady Macbeth should have died tomorrow, when there was time for it, evokes the sense of a tomorrow that expands endlessly into a deferred future – "To morrow, and to morrow, and to morrow" – but at the same time, that tomorrow "creepes" also into the present. While he seems in part to be referring to the looping of tomorrow as it continually rolls over to the next day, his phrasing implies also that it enters "to day," through the "pace" – which signifies a "narrow passage" or "pass" as well as the act of movement (Brooke 204 n.20). As time rolls forward, it seems, and tomorrow endlessly belongs in the future, it also rolls toward us, contaminating the present with the future event of death. Where Watson comments that the play's "obsession with time . . . reflects a central concern with mortality, with the way time inexorably propels us into timelessness," we might equally perceive that it draws timelessness towards us – the infinitude of death called into the presence of life (136). There is a further problem in the passage also. If "all our yesterdayes, have lighted Fooles / The way to dusty death," those fools appear to be created through their reliance upon "yesterday," their dependence upon using the candle of what has already been in order to light the way forward. The candle that Macbeth announces to be extinguished is not only that of Lady Macbeth's life but also the past that delivers us into the present clutches of death. Macbeth begins to show defeat as he recognizes that "three, or four, or a billion tomorrows cannot finally be distinguished from the plural yesterday which led like-minded gentlemen to their inevitable, and redundant, conclusion" (Foster 333-34).

And then finally, there is a further twist: Macbeth insists "It is a Tale / Told by an Ideot, full of sound and fury / Signifying nothing." The subject represented by the "it" in this sentence is essential to its meaning but utterly ambiguous. If the "It"

refers to the player on the stage, the life of the player (or of the character played) signifies nothing, being so much entertainment that is rendered meaningless through its inevitable extinction. Life itself then becomes emptied of meaning through the trace of death, rather like Hamlet's emptying of his mind in favour of the inscription to remember. The destruction of linear temporality through death's contamination of life removes all order and therefore all signification. Equally though, Macbeth may be referring reflexively to the image he has just put forward. If "It" is not life but rather the narrative of the player who "struts and frets" until death, then all that he has just said is negated: his clutching at time in an attempt to understand its relation to life gives way again to one more try at taking control over his present and future. After all, he has not yet consigned his own life to nothingness, nor accepted that his future is beyond his grasp. In killing Young Seward two scenes later, he is still clutching at the witch's prophecies in the hope that they indicate the security of his life, declaring "Swords I smile at, Weapons laugh to scorne, / Brandish'd by man that's of a Woman borne" (3.150). Here again, Macbeth endeavours to manipulate the past – in this case the past predictions of the future – into securing his control over the future so that the prophecies in this case serve to shore up, rather than counteract, the execution of his will upon the present.

In this, however, he is mistaken: Macbeth, like Hamlet and Hoffman, is marked by his future death in advance. Even with no foreknowledge of how the Weïrd Sisters' prophecies will come to pass, the audience can be in no doubt that Macbeth is proceeding towards the end that he assumes cannot arrive, for it is already here in advance. In endeavouring to isolate the present from the past events through which he seized power and the future events of which the witches have warned, the past and future become the conditions through which Macbeth's every moment is defined. Macbeth's inheritance of ruling power is subject to the corruption – of time and of order as well as of morality – through which he perceives and obtains it. In regard to the spectre's relation to time, Derrida observes:

> There are several times of the specter. It is a proper characteristic of the specter, if there is any, that no one can be sure if by returning it testifies to a living past or to a living future, for the *revenant* may already mark the promised return of the specter of living being. . . . a ghost never dies, it remains always to come and to come-back. (*Specters* 123)

In the presence of the spectral, there is no present that functions independently of the past or future against which it is defined. After the banquet at which Banquo's ghost appears, Macbeth speculates: "It will have blood they say: / Blood will have Blood: / Stones have beene knowne to move, and Trees to speake". His fear is that the ghost's appearance signifies the discovery of the murder, that his own blood is called for by that of the murder he has instigated and that supernatural events may facilitate that discovery. The fear draws upon popular ghost lore but it also functions as prophecy, for the moving stones and speaking trees call directly to the later actualization of the Weird Sister's prophecy that the "*Macbeth* shall never vanquish'd be, until Great Byrnam Wood, to high Dunsinane Hill / Shall come against him" (3.144).

Macbeth interprets their predictions to mean that he will "live the Lease of Nature" and pay his breath / To Time, and mortall Custome" (3.144). But his reaffirmation of the normal functioning of time elides the acknowledgement of what is apparent to his audience: that his breaches of the temporal order of "mortall Custome" through his murders have ensured that the linear ordering of events to which he clings is already in disarray. As Harris suggests, "the coherence of linear time is repeatedly fractured in the play, as suggested by Macbeth's insistence that his future . . . is not ahead of, but 'behind' him" (123-24). The past murder and appearance of the ghost collude with Macbeth's own responses and the witches' prophecies to call Macbeth's destruction into the present and expose the disordering of the inheritance he seeks to secure. Macbeth himself, however, is too intent upon forcing his own order upon his environment to comprehend this until his final battle when, faced with the discovery that Birnam Wood has indeed risen up, he realises "There is nor flying hence, nor tarrying here" (3.150). There is no escape as past prophecy and future event come crashing forcibly in upon the present.

This temporal disarray manifests the erasure of origin or end, so that the emergence of the ghost renders spectral the oppositional categories to which Macbeth endeavours to cling. While the ghost magnifies and exacerbates an existing disruption, it does not function as a point of instigation or departure: rather, it figures the effects of a disorder that prohibits such distinctions. Although it is only Macbeth

who sees the ghost, the wider supernatural disruption within the kingdom is by no means delimited to his perception alone. Nevertheless, Macbeth becomes a kind of vehicle through whom the disorder of external events bleeds into those of the inner psychical world so that there is no clear distinction between the two: and so that the ordering of seeming external events becomes indistinguishable from his inner being. This is clearly apparent in the scene in which he sees a bloody dagger and cannot determine whether it is inner projection or an apparition with some kind of basis in the external world (a point to which I will return in Chapter Four). Macbeth's inner state is paradoxically both contingent upon, and a catalyst for, external events, so that those events are inseparable from his state of being.

It is a problem that is still clearer in *Hamlet*. Before any mention of the ghost reaches his ears, Hamlet has already been admonished for failing to put his father's death behind him and is finding the world in disarray, pondering "'tis an unweeded garden / That growes to seede, things rancke and grose in nature / Possesse it meerely" (Sig. [C1r]). In his melancholic state, he already perceives, as Marcellus so memorably puts it, that "Something is rotten in the State of Denmarke," (Sig. D2[r]). Thus, the effects of his subsequent vow to his father's ghost – the descent into chaos, the fraught sense of stasis, the movement towards a death that already precedes him – precedes also the vow from which it originates. Before he inherits the injunction to remember from his father's ghost, his inability to mourn successfully has already raised another problematic inheritance, that of whether (or how) "To be, or not to be" (Sig. [G2r]). What Hamlet faces prohibits mourning and therefore being: the question that underpins the question of "to be, or not to be" is, in part, a matter of whether "to be" is underwritten with its own impossibility.

In Derridean thought, inheriting and being are interdependent. If the space for the self to come into being is made possible only through the act of mourning, then the mourner's being and inheritance are inseparable:

> *To be*, this word in which we earlier saw the word of the spirit, means, for the same reason, to inherit. All the questions on the subject of being or of what is to be (or not to be) are questions of inheritance. There is no backward-looking fervor in this reminder . . . . Reaction, reactionary, or reactive are but interpretations of the structure of inheritance. That we *are* heirs does not mean that we *have* or that we *receive* this or that . . . but that the *being* of what we

are *is* first of all inheritance, whether we like it or know it or not. And that, as Hölderlin said so well, we can only *bear witness* to it. To bear witness would be to bear witness to what we *are* insofar as we *inherit*, and that – here is the circle, here is the chance, or the finitude – we inherit the very thing that allows us to bear witness to it. (*Specters* 67-68)[72]

The "word of the spirit" to which Derrida refers here expresses an invitation to the spirit within the infinitive "to be". For him, the phrase "the time is out of joint" speaks of time "in the past perfect" but is "valid for all times"; it "says *the* time, but it refers singularly to *this* time, to an 'in these times,' the time of these times . . . this age and no other." In doing so, however, it is able to return always as the new, for "the grammatical present of the verb to be, in the third person indicative" need only be expressed in plural to offer itself as a habitation for spectres. Hence "*to be*, and especially when one infers from the infinitive 'to be *present*,' is not a *mot d'esprit* but *le mot de l'esprit*, the word of the spirit, it is its first verbal body" (61-62). It is from this basis that Derrida moves on to claim that "to be" is also "to inherit": for in this state of being that is irreducible to a locus within the past or present lies always the issue of *what* is being, what spirits and/or spectres (the distinction is unclear at this point) inhabit that which *is*, in and through time. Engagement with the past through processes or forms of reactivity may seem to hark back to what has been, but in fact constitutes only the lens through which we view the composition of inheritance. In being, we bear witness to the fact of being *through* inheritance, whilst at the same time, that inheritance facilitates its own visibility within this cycle.

In formulating this loop, Derrida is addressing the inheritance of Marx, particularly the requirement that his heirs must inevitably "assume" rather than passively inherit it: for "inheritance is never a *given*, it is always a task" (*Specters* 67). But that is not to say that it is always a task executed perfectly. If "all inheritors . . . are in mourning," as Derrida claims, the refusal of mourning must disrupt the structures (such as they are) of both inheritance and being (67). Therefore, whilst the time is out of joint for Hamlet, so too is his being. Critics have made much of

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[72] The passage of Friedrich Hölderlin that Derrida draws upon here is quoted in Heidegger's "Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry." Hölderlin writes that man "has been given arbitrariness, and to him, godlike, has been given higher power to command and to accomplish, and therefore has language, most dangerous of possessions, been given to man, so that creating, destroying, and perishing and returning to the ever-living, to the mistress and mother, he may affirm what he is – that he has inherited, learned from thee, thy most divine possession, all-preserving love" (Heidegger 296).

Hamlet's baffling behaviour after he witnesses the ghost, as he becomes increasingly distracted, inept, and illogical in his actions. Welsh responds to the issue with the remarkable assertion that the issue of "the hero's beating about the bush" is "almost too obvious for comment," as "the 'delay' of the hero results from the necessity of mourning over an appropriate period of time" (489). For a time, the contemplation of revenge is sufficient, since immediate gratification of this imperative "would afford the mourner little relief" (489). Welsh's argument is scarcely endorsed by the evidence of Hamlet's subsequent behaviour, which is anything but a leisurely immersion in the mourning process. In contrast, Greenblatt interprets Hamlet's behaviour to relate to the problem of "remembrance," observing that the ghost's gradual disappearance from the play and from Hamlet's mind denotes the difficulty of remembering the dead (*Hamlet in Purgatory* 224-25). By the point of the graveyard scene, Greenblatt suggests that the previous king is little more than a "marker of time," as one of the gravediggers marks the length of his employment in regard to King Hamlet's triumph over Fortinbras. For Greenblatt, "this is what it means to be well and truly buried" (226).

Perhaps he is right if by buried we substitute "incorporated," buried inside the son he now haunts, but the king's visible absence from the play's later events by no means denotes that he has simply been put to rest. Greenblatt pinpoints a crucial lapsing of memory in the earlier scene in Gertrude's bedchamber, in which Hamlet fears that the ghost comes "your tardy sonne to chide, / That lap'st in time and passion lets goe by / Th'important acting of your dread command" (Sig. [I3v]). Greenblatt points out that "Polonius's bleeding body would seem ample evidence that Hamlet's purpose was hardly blunted, but perhaps remembrance and revenge are not as perfectly coincident as either the prince or the Ghost had thought" (224). Greenblatt construes this as evidence that Hamlet's memory is fading, and indeed the ghost does disappear from view and largely from conversation after this scene. However, Hamlet's response to the spectre suggests something quite different if we consider that the ghost's rebuke – "Doe not forget, this visitation / Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose" – speaks to Hamlet's disordered state of being and not

merely to his deeds or even his memory alone (Sig. [I3v]).[73] Greenblatt states that Hamlet has "killed the man he thought was his uncle," but in fact Hamlet has no idea when he stabs the "Rat" behind the arras as to who it is and is drawing upon pure optimism when he responds to his mother's question as to what he has done with the confused response "I knowe not, is it the King?" (Greenblatt 223; Shakespeare Sig. I2[r]). Sullivan strenuously argues, "it is the hoariest of critical commonplaces to assert that Hamlet does not take action" because "in truth, he *never stops* taking action": the problem is much more specifically that his response to the injunction to remember has not resulted in the achievement of the singular act of revenge (14). Hamlet's campaign, at this point, is erratic, neither the logical enactment of revenge that he endeavours to pursue, nor a diversion or loss of intent.

When the ghost appears, then, Hamlet has every cause to perceive that it may think he has "lap'st in time and passion". This is a complex phrase that suggests not only the possibility that he is guilty (of having lost sight of his goal) and has therefore exchanged action for immersion in "delay and suffering," but equally (and more probably) that he has failed to carry out his task because he has become overcome by the delay and his own distress (MacDonald 173 n.12).[74] Devlin offers another interpretation, suggesting that "lapsed" should be read as "snared," "time" as "politics" (based on a similar interpretation of "The time is out of joint"), and "passion" as "concupiscence" (39). This reading is slightly strained in regard to its interpretation of "time" but does help to illuminate the link between Hamlet's lack of success and the political and moral disorder in which he has become immersed. For Hamlet, no matter whom he has killed or what steps he has taken, the promise to revenge remains unfulfilled. Lyons argues that the ghost's admonishments to Hamlet, and in particular his commandments "Remember me," and "Do not forget," resonate precisely with the "sloth" associated with melancholy and are reiterated by Hamlet when he accuses himself of being cowardly, "tardy", "dull," and "muddy

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[73] Greenblatt is joined in this argument by a number of critics, including Stallybrass, Chartier, Mowery, and Wolfe, who argue that Hamlet's usage of a symbolic table book marks his vow to remember with its inevitable erasure (414-19).

[74] In his study of the play, *The Tragedie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke*, George MacDonald identifies six possible implications for this phrase: "1. 'Who, lapsed (*fallen, guilty*) lets action slip in delay and suffering.' 2. 'Who, lapsed in (*fallen in, overwhelmed by*) delay and suffering, omits' &c. 3. 'lapsed in respect of time, and because of passion' . . . . 4. 'faulty both in delaying, and in yielding to suffering, when action is required.' 5. 'lapsed through having too much time and great suffering.' 6. 'allowing himself to be swept along by time and grief'" (173 n.12).

metteld" (Lyons 88-89; Shakespeare Sig. [I3v], [F4v]). He falls back on the
terminology of melancholy, not because he views himself (in the same way that
others do) as having an "illness" or being a "social danger" but because he views his
melancholy "in relation to the task that he must perform" and has so far failed to do
(90-91). He does not fail in remembering the ghost: he fails in achieving the re-
ordering of time that is to be accomplished through the execution of justice.

The point, then, is not that Hamlet fails to remember or that he is mad or even
incompetent: it is that, in his melancholic state, his disastrous enactment of his
inheritance reflects the disorder within and the failure of mourning. The trace of
remembrance that he seizes upon in the act of inheriting ensures that "to be" involves
the incorporation of the dead father. Therefore, to be is not to be fully present or in
some way intact or self-contained, but to inherit the temporal, spiritual, and spatial
disruption of a spectre that now pervades the conditions *of* his being. "Not to be" is
not, in this paradigm, one of his options: for quite aside from its connotations of the
forbidden act of suicide, it can only be thought through Hamlet's present state of
being, which, in remembering and inheriting, cannot nullify its own existence. Thus,
as Hamlet continues to be and to pursue (however ineffectually) revenge, the
remembrance of the spectre no longer needs to be visibly or verbally affirmed. As
the incorporated figure of the father pervades Hamlet from the inside out, it is
inherent within the very structures of Hamlet's continuing existence.

For Hoffman too, the process of inheriting and therefore being is oddly disjointed,
for reasons that are secret, interior, but externalised through the unnatural lingering
of his father's form. In fetishizing his father's remains, Hoffman prohibits the
departure that is integral to the process of inheritance. If to inherit requires a choice
– if it requires the filtration, interpretation, and selection of the multiple
heteromorphic possibilities within the injunction to inherit – then that choice enables
and indeed requires forward momentum. This is not to suggest that it entails a
division between past, present, and future – for the process of inheritance is never
complete, never a final judgement that severs past from present and future – but it
requires selection and action, however endless they may be. The choice made,
Hoffman might take up the inherited thread(s); he might mourn, he might defend his
father's honour, he might exact revenge, thereby carrying his inheritance forward. In

bringing his father with him, though, a peculiar corruption of the process occurs. Hoffman acts, not in memory of his father, but with his "remembrance," with its flurry of confusion between the collapsing distinctions of absence, presence, memory, memorial, living and death. He inherits, but he cannot depart or progress with his inheritance because, in his failure to mourn, he carries his father with him. Like Hamlet, Hoffman's pursuit of revenge falls to the wayside, as he is unable to proceed methodically in the presence of the spectral. Having "sworne unto my fathers soule" to kill five of his father's enemies, he dispatches only three "to the fiends" before becoming diverted and ultimately entrapped by his lust for Otho's mother, Martha (Sig. L2[r]).

It is remarkable that the source of Hoffman's distraction is the mother of one of his victims and a key member of the family that Hoffman holds responsible for his father's execution. In a few lines, Hoffman goes from intending to strangle her to suggesting that to do so would "wrong nature that did ne're compose / One of her sexe so perfect" (Sig. H2[r-v]). By the end of the scene, he declares himself in a state of "lust and hot desire" (Sig. [H4v]). Even more bizarrely, Martha has, upon the discovery of her son's death (the true nature of which she remains ignorant), declared the deceptively helpful Hoffman to take his place, telling him "I here adopt thee myne, christen thee *Otho*, / Mine eyes are now the font, the water, teares / That doe baptize thee in thy borrowed name" (Sig. [H4r]). Not only has Hoffman's vengeance transmuted into lust for a woman he perceives to be implicated in killing his father, but that woman now considers him as a son, her tears momentarily erasing the identity he currently hides to replace it with one of his victims. Hoffman's own identity, so thoroughly inextricable now from the dead father, disintegrates to the point that he momentarily enters into the family he seeks to destroy. It is as though, amidst the rupturing of time that occurs as a result of the ubiquitous skeleton dangling from the tree, Hoffman can no longer maintain a sense of the origin or end of his revenge campaign so that his identity dissolves along with his purpose. Hence he declares, when the truth is finally out, "'tis well, 'tis fit," that he is to be executed for his failures: like Hamlet, he too perceives himself to have failed to live up to the requirements of the paternal spectre.

Earlier on, Hoffman does seemingly endeavour to take permanent leave of his father's corpse with the declaration: "Rest, goe rest, and you most lovely Couplets / Leggs and armes reside, for ever heere / This is my last farewell" (Sig. [B3v-B4r]). It is a tenuous farewell at best though, given that no burial follows. Moreover, the event precedes his murder of Otho in revenge for his father, an act that serves only to perpetuate his preservation of the dead man and results in another corpse left unburied. The reunion between dead father and living son is thereafter inevitable and a striking reification of the dissolution of time that marks both Hoffman's inheritance and his incorporation of the father. Pesta comments that "Hoffman fails to see" that the skeletons of his father and Otho "speak not to each other but to him": his "obsession to obtain his desired revenge blinds him to the image of his own death grinning back at him – twice" (29). These exteriorized figures of death are inseparable from his inner (living) self though. His preservation of the death is also a selection of death as inheritance: but if to inherit is to be, then death is a problematic inheritance indeed. In effect, Hoffman's decision to preserve his father's corpse as well as his cause is inseparable from the being (identified by the descriptor Hoffman) that we subsequently witness throughout the play. This proposition exceeds the functioning of the dead within that, along with the dead other (s/he who is mourned), generates the space necessary for the existence of the self. It invites and preserves death, not as an element of the structure of being, but rather as being itself. Thereafter, Hoffman's identity becomes inseparable from that of his deed. He is at the start of the play "Hannce *Hoffmans* sonne that stole downe his fathers Anotamy from the gallowes" and at the end: ""*Hoffman,* who upon yon tree / Preserv'd his fathers bare anatomy" (Sig. I3[r]). Hoffman's son is now indistinguishable from the dead father who, despite having no living role within the play, is present even as his son steps into precisely the same death as the father he preserves externally and carries within him.

Hoffman, like Hamlet and other heirs such as Macbeth, thereby enacts the problem of inheritance as something that is not taken up, but rather constitutive of the state of being, and therefore subject to disruption in the event of the failure of mourning. More specifically, these characters demonstrate that where a spectre erodes temporal structures, this effect extends beyond the parameters of its own

anachronism and bleeds into the functioning of its heirs. The spectre is not only a singular presence but also an event: but it is an event with no beginning and no end and therefore, crucially, no containment. It cannot merely be witnessed and disregarded because it alters the conditions of the environment into which it enters and the subject to whom it appeals. Hoffman and Hamlet's failures and disordered quests for revenge manifest the problem of being (and therefore doing) where the conditions of being – the process of mourning and the task of inheriting – prohibit the delineation of either the inheritance or the conditions in which that inheritance is to function. That is to say, as they remember obsessively, inscribing the trace of a spectre within, that "within" is conditioned by, and indeed produced through, the secret that is obtained (but not read) of the spectral other: and that inheritance is rendered still more impenetrable by the incorporation of he who is mourned. The spectre that visibly appears externally and disrupts the functioning of seemingly independent structures such as time and categories such as life and death, is equally inside, haunting the interior that it calls into being. In the end, the problem of Hoffman and Hamlet's botched revenge campaigns does not concern whether they remember, but why they are unable to forget sufficiently to evacuate the spectre and restore their respective environments to rights.

Chapter Four

Re/flections

Is this a Dagger, which I see before me,
The Handle toward my Hand? Come, let me clutch thee:
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
Art thou not fatall Vision, sensible
To feeling, as to sight? or art thou but
A Dagger of the Minde

(Shakespeare, *Macbeth* 3.136)

Flection and Apparition

When Macbeth reaches towards the invisible dagger hovering before him, he clutches not only at a vision of his murder weapon, but at one of the problems underpinning the spectre's entry into the visual realm. How is one to understand sensory information that is riven with contradiction? Forced to reconcile the visible appearance of the floating knife with his understanding of plausible daggerly behaviour, Macbeth rapidly persuades himself that "There's no such thing: / It is the bloody Businesse, which informes / Thus to mine Eyes" (3.136). In this he is correct, insofar as the dagger does not appear to exist in the material plane outside of his perception. This does not resolve the problem, however, of what it is he sees. Lady Macbeth protests that it is an "Ayre-drawne-Dagger" that "would well become / A womans story, at a Winters fire" – a popular reading of the matter, although perhaps a prejudiced one given her fear that Macbeth's visions may sabotage her own ambitions (3.142). Typically, the play's critics have concurred with her, presuming that the dagger is a hallucination and that Macbeth recognizes it as such. For instance, Brooke comments that "the dagger is entirely specific in form though not literally seen by anyone – even Macbeth knows it is not there" (4). Similarly, in *Shakespeare and Cognition*, Arthur Kinney describes the dagger as "Macbeth's sudden – and self-acknowledged – hallucination," observing that Macbeth's subsequent drawing of his own knife to "realize . . . what is in his mind's eye"

resolves the situation by exchanging his visual image for a reassuringly corporeal substitute (78). Macbeth's response is considerably more clouded than such readings suggest though: he wonders if it is a "false Creation / Proceeding from the heat-oppressed Braine," but this is in fact one of a series of questions in which he endeavours to reconcile the evidence of his eyes with the conflicting evidence of his sense of touch (3.136). Despite his best efforts, the vision persists – he subsequently complains that despite his interrogations, "I see thee still; / And on thy Blade, and Dudgeon, Gouts of Blood, / Which was not so before." It is only at this point, with his own dragger drawn for reassurance, that he asserts, somewhat unconvincingly, "There's no such thing" (3.136). It would perhaps be more accurate, therefore, to suggest that Macbeth knows the only means to restore his courage is to believe that there is no such thing, rather than to assume that he is wholeheartedly convinced as to the truth of the matter.

Critical responses to this scene often elide consideration of the complexities of early modern belief in the supernatural in relation specifically to the field of sensory perception. Broadly speaking, the fact that an object is not haptically or epistemologically present in the material world – that its existence cannot be verified by touch or by existing categories of knowledge – does not automatically prohibit it from another, equally legitimate form of existence. For instance, within classical, folk, and Christian narratives, there are numerous accounts in which supernatural phenomena appeal to the senses before a violent event. Lavater recounts stories of "great stirrings or noises" and "stra[n]ge things" that occur before great upheavals within a nation. More significantly still, he reports that "swords, speares, and suche like" may be sighted "in the aire" and that various "Gunnes, launces and halberdes, with other kindes of weapons and artillerie, do often times move of their owne accord as they lye in the armories" (77, 81). Considered in this context, Macbeth's dagger may not seem any more physically real, but it certainly occupies a place that extends, at least potentially, beyond the sphere of pure hallucination. Moreover, it is not only he who sees and hears supernatural phenomena. Other characters also witness "lamentings heard I'th'Ayre; / Strange Schreemes of Death, / And Prophecying, with Accents terrible, / Of dyre Combustion," along with earthquakes, cannibalistic horses, and the turning of daytime to "Darknesse . . . When living Light

should kisse it (3.137-38).[75] It is as though the disruption of Macbeth's inner state and the unnaturalness of his actions are integrally linked to the contamination of the entire realm. Problematically, perception becomes impossible to isolate from interior as well as exterior states of existence. Macbeth's dagger might equally be a supernatural omen of what is to come, a defect in his visual perception, a psychic product of guilty anticipation, or a response to his fatigue and the pressures placed upon him by his pushy wife. Whether we accept any of these or a different explanation entirely, though, the result is the same: what Macbeth sees cannot be trusted or verified, but nor can it be explained or dismissed. As Karin Coddon observes in regard to spectacle more generally in *Macbeth*, the vision in this scene constitutes "the locus of doubt rather than revelation, confusion rather than containment" ("Unreal Mockery" 491). This disjuncture between sight and comprehension perhaps reaches its peak in the dagger scene, in which gazing alone is insufficient to enable Macbeth to ascertain the dagger's ontological status because he has no means of verification (or nullification) for what he sees. Seeing is not believing, but when faced with a spectre, neither is it meaningless nor even necessarily misleading.

Macbeth's apparition is therefore better understood when located within the context of the wider Renaissance debate concerning the nature of visual perception. What he faces is scarcely an isolated problem: although the bloody dagger is very specific to the immediate events of the play, its challenge to the role of vision in determining the implications of an apparition exemplifies a much wider issue than that of his eyesight or his sanity. The problem of the apparition vexes early modern theologians and demonologists alike, not least because of the challenges it poses in charting the nature and extent of experiential spiritual phenomena within mortal territory. Stuart Clark points out that the heightened instability of the figure of the ghost during the Reformation meant that the "visual status" of apparitions became increasingly problematic: "as the nature and content of apparitions became more and more important, so their very identification as visual phenomena became less and

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[75] Mallin argues convincingly that a number of these events are comedic: for instance, when Macbeth responds to Lennox's account of terrifying supernatural events with the line, "'Twas a rough Night" (3.137). At the same time though, Mallin acknowledges that such "comic possibilities or opportunities" arise alongside the generation of "terrors" because they "signify a system out of balance, and out of human control" (91).

less secure" ("The Reformation of the Eyes" 147, 149). Both Protestant and Catholic theologians who engaged extensively with the debate regarding ghosts therefore had to address this problem through "a common epistemology of the visual sense and its deceptions" (147).

In this, they entered into a longstanding philosophical debate that stems back to Plato and Aristotle, both of whom prioritized vision as a sense that is crucial in facilitating knowledge. Kinney usefully summarizes Plato's approach as positioning "vision and hearing" as "the higher senses, those which exalted man on his intellectual journey toward understanding the natural and supernatural worlds" (2). Aristotle develops this line of inquiry with a focus on perception of the material world, observing, however, that vision goes beyond the immediate visual registering of material objects. He not only differentiates between different types of physical vision (perception of light and dark being distinct from perception of colours, for instance) but also observes that "the sense-organ is capable of receiving the sensible object without its matter. That is why even when the sensible objects are gone the sensings and imaginings continue to exist in the sense-organs" ("On the Soul" 677). This work is then carried further by later philosophers such as Saint Thomas Aquinas, who distinguishes between two types of "sense-perception": that in which "the senses are actually stimulated by what they sense" (immutation) and that which is generated through the imagination "even in the absence of what has been sensed" (formation) ("The Ladder of Being" 142). Kinney observes that Aquinas thereby allows for "verbal as well as intellectual reference to the initiating object" so that "this referential way of establishing meaning" can extend to objects that are not visible or present (5).[76] Thus, well before the Renaissance, the senses are established as functioning in a complex relation between the physical or external stimulation of the senses and the intellectual and imaginative faculties.

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[76] Although it is not immediately significant here, it is worth noting that many of the original threads of this debate have considerable resonance with modern, scientific research into the nature of vision. Kinney provides a useful summary of how scientific research into anatomy and physiology has exposed the individual nature of cognition and perception, demonstrating that what the individual sees is considerably more complex than merely registering what is physically present and is significantly influenced by "memory and experience" (21). In "Visualizing Hamlet's Ghost: The Spirit of Modern Subjectivity," Alan Ackerman Jr. provides an interesting glimpse into eighteenth- and nineteenth-century understandings of visual perception in regard to the issue of cognition in *Hamlet*. See esp. pp. 128-29.

When Renaissance theologians such as Lavater and Le Loyer take up the issue of using vision to determine the validity and nature of apparitions, then, they call forth a series of pre-established problems in the relationship between vision and perception or comprehension. In keeping with Plato's work, they too subscribe to the classical prioritization of sight as a crucial sense in shaping knowledge, but face the problems that emerge through the variable means by which a specific vision may be generated. If, as Aquinas suggests, visual perception occurs not only when the senses are acted upon by an "external sensible object" but also when the imagination is stimulated through some other means of reference, there remains always the possibility of slippage: a blurring between the registering of outer images and the imaginative production of images with no external origin ("Consciousness" 227). In the 1599 English translation of *A Discourse of the Preservation of the Sight*, the French physician André du Laurens claims that sight is "the most noble, perfect and admirable" of the senses, being "the most infallible . . . and that which least deceiveth" (13, 17).[77] However, "the eye doth not onely see that which is without, but it seeth also that which is within, howsoever it may judge that same thing to be without" (91). Here, vision is marked by the possibility of the brain's fallibility in processing the information recorded through sight; and as he goes on to record extensively, man is "now and then so farre abased, and corrupted in his nature, with an infinit number of diseases" that the way in which he comprehends and interprets the information of his eyes is radically altered (81). Visual perception takes place as much in the mind as it does through the organs of the eyes: so the sense that constitutes our most important means of acquiring information about the external world and facilitates also the imaginative faculties is subject to corruption through the very mechanisms by which it achieves this.

Lavater makes considerable capital of the unreliability of the sight when it comes to witnessing apparitions. As he seeks to dissuade the reader from any form of belief in ghosts, he accounts for numerous means by which people might mistakenly see apparitions (several of which resonate with the circumstances of Macbeth's vision of the dagger). Drawing upon notions stemming back to Aristotle and even earlier,

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[77] Du Laurens (or M. Andreas Laurentius, as his name appears on the title page) originally published this work in French in 1597 under the title of *Discours de la conservation de la vene: des maladies mélancoliques des catarrhes, & de la vieillesse.*

Lavater suggests that the susceptible include those who "are timorous," "drinke wine immoderately," are "Madde," "have utterly loste the use of reason," are "melancholic," or "are weake of sight," particularly when "feare and weaknesse of the syghte and of other sens[e] s méete togyther". In every instance, we are always to remember that "the outward eyes . . . can easily darken and dazell the inwarde sight of the mynde" (17, 13, 9, 16, 19, 141). Such ideas have a firm place within the popular imagination as well as in theological debates concerning apparitions, and Shakespeare draws upon precisely such ideas when he has Hamlet worry that the devil may have taken on the shape of the ghost "Out of my weakenes, and my melancholy, / As he is very potent with such spirits" (Sig. G[1r]).[78] It is not only the inner state that renders vision deceptive, however. For Lavater, there is also the ever-present possibility that fraudulent characters (typically priests and monks) may dress up and create false apparitions to fool the onlooker, one of a number of nefarious ploys used by Catholics to indoctrinate or defraud the gullible. At the other end of the spectrum, an apparition may be a divine vision, for God creates "many wonders in the aire, and in the earth, to the ende he may stir men up from idlenesse and bring them to true repentaunce" (17). Alternatively, personified apparitions may in fact be "good Angels" or spirits sent from God to help, or, more probably, a demonic spirit attempting to endanger the soul (159, 163).[79]

The difficulty that runs through all of these explanations is the central concern that vision is hazardous in its ability to impart certainty.[80] It is still more so where it concurs with the "other sens[e]s," for "then men fall into straunge and marvellous

[78] Du Laurens provides another example of this stating that the "imagination" of melancholics "is troubled by their physical constitution and "the minde", but also "by the intercourse or medling of evill angells, which cause them oftentimes to foretell and forge very strange things in their imaginations" (100). Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* supports the basic principle involved here, although he remains non-committal as to the cause of the connection between melancholy and the devil: "whether by obsession, or possession, or otherwise, I will not determine, t'is a difficult question" (Sig. E3[r]). Gowland describes the association between melancholy and the sighting of apparitions as one means for physicians and theorists to "interpret the symptoms of melancholy and other mental illnesses without recourse to supernatural or occult factors," although they often took the "middle ground" in respect to "debates between natural and occult interpretations of melancholy" (92). Gowland cites Lavater's arguments here as an example of contemporary perspectives on apparitions commonly stemming from a psychological cause, but makes a very substantial error in claiming that Lavater's "overarching purpose" is "to prove the real existence of ghosts" (93).
[79] For more on the range of contemporary theologians' perspectives as to the nature of such sightings, see Marshall's *Beliefs and the Dead*, esp. p. 241.
[80] For more on the absence of a clear division between natural, supernatural, and illusory causes of ghost-sightings, see Marshall's *Beliefs and the Dead*, pp. 250-52. Clark also explores these problems in *Thinking with Demons*, although primarily with reference to witchcraft rather than ghosts (192-94).

imaginations," and will not "bee brought from theyr owne opinions by any meanes or reason" (19). In this opinion, Lavater is endorsed by French Catholic demonologist Le Loyer. However, Le Loyer, who works to rebut Lavater's arguments against ghosts, addresses much more extensively the problems of vision as a means of measuring the nature and veracity of visible phenomena. He endeavours to taxonomize the nature of visual perceptions, producing a series of categorizations designed to guide spiritual understanding of such matters. It is a fraught endeavour, riven with inconsistencies and ambiguities. To begin with, Le Loyer outlines five forms of vision. He first identifies three types of vision within Saint Augustine's teachings: physical vision, "*which is done by the eyes of the body*"; "*Imagination*," through which "wee see nothing by the exteriour senses: but we imagine onely by some divine and heavenly inspiration"; and "Intellectuall" vision, which "is done onely in the understanding". In addition, he adds two categories of his own: dream visions that occur either "in full sleepe" or in a state "betweene sleeping and waking" (Sig. [B2v]). Unsatisfied with the comprehensiveness of this list, he then observes that the scriptures "plainly expresse, That the vision of face to face" (that is, direct contact with God), "is farre divers and different from the other visions," citing a scriptural example in which God indicates Moses might see him "face to face . . . without any impediment; but that other Prophets should see him onely by vision" (Sig. [B2v]). [81] Here, Le Loyer appears to refer to the first and second modes of vision respectively (physical vision and "Imagination"), but in order to differentiate the divine encounter, insists upon an unofficial sixth category that exceeds both. Like earlier philosophers, he recognizes that vision consists of more than the mere reception of physical images by the eye, extending the input of the mind or imagination to include also the unconscious (in sleep or the hypnotic state of partial waking) and an ambiguous form of spiritual sight.

By outlining the means by which such an image is obtained, Le Loyer attempts to provide a framework through which an apparition may be accurately classified and judged. The difficulty, of course, is that the actual identification of which category a specific apparition falls into may not be anything like so clear in practice. Moreover, Le Loyer immediately complicates the picture further by introducing "the Fantasie,

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[81] The Biblical passage to which Le Loyer refers is Numbers 12.6-8.

which is . . . *an Imagination and impression of the Soule, of such formes and shapes as are knowne*" or that can "bee imagined" or that are constructed based on information from others (Sig. [B2v]). The first of these refers to the production of visual images that are familiar due to having been physically viewed at another time – effectively, visualized memories. The second and third roughly duplicate but slightly blur the earlier categories of the Imagination and the Intellectual, as sights that are "not known nor seene, but imagined in the minde". The imagined sights "are for the most part spirituall, and without corporall substance," whilst the constructed sights are generated and comprehended through a rational process in which the individual draws upon the "corporall" world to comprehend that which is "incorporall, and universall," such as God's existence (Sig. B3[r-v]).[82]

It is important to note here that although Le Loyer acknowledges the registering of physical sight as one source of vision – whether due to the perception of an object immediately before one's eyes or the recollection of a previous instance of physical sight – he spends substantially more time considering the ways in which vision may be partly or wholly a product of mental construction. Moreover, whether the latter is generated through the memory of a previous sighting, the present imagination (with or without divine help), or through a process of reception of information and subsequent intellectual construction, has no immediate bearing on the vision's validity: it is more a methodological distinction than a register of veracity. Le Loyer does move on to consider the possibility of sheer falsity of vision, but even then, it assists us very little. In a substantial complication of his earlier taxonomy, he asserts that there are in fact "two sortes of Imagination, namely, one Intellectuall, and without corporall substance: The other sensible and corporall" (B3[r]). Amidst this, we are plunged into the possibility of illusion. The second of these categories, that which relies upon sensory information rather than reason, is either "false" and arises from "the imaginative power corrupted" or "the senses hurt and altred: or else it is true; and then it is that which we call a Specter" (Sig. B4[r]).[83]

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[82] For more on Le Loyer's approach to vision, see Clark's "The Reformation of the Eyes," which contextualizes Le Loyer's arguments in this area within the broader historical and contemporary contexts of related work from other European philosophers and theologians – see esp. pp. 152-53.
[83] To be clear, Le Loyer's definition of the spectre here is "a substance without a body, presenting it self sensibly unto men" – in other words, a spiritual entity that lacks corporeality because "Spirits" have only the option of "clothing themselves with an ayrie bodie" and are therefore asomatous (B4[r-

There remains always the possibility too, of simple duplicity. Le Loyer shares with Lavater a common concern in this matter and indeed borrows directly from the latter in order to repeat a cautionary tale in which disguised youths dance in a churchyard throughout the night, whilst "one of them . . . taking up the bone of a dead man, did play therewithall upon a beere of wood that was neere, by," producing a noise "as if he had beene playing on a Tabor." As a result of the hoax, certain witnesses "reported, that they had seene a daunce of dead men: and that it was greatly to be doubted, that some plague and mortalitie would follow after it" (Sig. X2[r]). In such an instance, corruption of the senses is not really the problem. The central issue continues to be the problem of visual information being potentially inaccurate. How one is to tell the difference, however, remains entirely problematic. As Clark observes, Le Loyer identifies "so many problems with what is supposed to be 'the most excellent, lively, and active' sense" that he ultimately renders it the least reliant of them all ("The Reformation of the Eyes" 153).

Le Loyer's attempts to establish different categories of visual perception function as a means of navigating through the problems of aligning sensory information with received understandings. The distinctions appear crucial in understanding and distinguishing between phenomenal experiences, thereby offering a kind of pseudo-scientific basis for Le Loyer's wider rebuttal of Lavater's dismissal of ghosts in *Of Ghostes and Spirites*. But Le Loyer's taxonomy collapses even in the process of its construction, as he struggles to shore up the boundaries between the various categories of vision. Even before we are told that spectral images may be a sign of sensual or mental corruption or of a genuine supernatural encounter, it is evident that the complexity of the relationship between physical, intellectual, psychic, and spiritual comprehension counteracts clear distinctions between the perceptions that they produce. In Le Loyer's framework, Macbeth's vision of the dagger that imposes itself into his physical sight might equally belong to the categories of the Imagination or the Intellectual, and perhaps even to that of the dream state, given the strains under which Macbeth is labouring and the lateness of the hour. If it is the Imagination, we are faced with the additional possibilities that the dagger is either

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v]). Unsurprisingly, he therefore refers broadly to ghosts and spirits as supernatural entities in his use of the term "spectre" rather than to the more diffuse definition commonly used in deconstructive and psychoanalytic critical theory to denote technical processes of haunting and spectrality.

intellectually constructed and incorporeal, a corporeal vision arising from corrupted senses, or a corporeal vision which is a genuine manifestation of the supernatural.

Le Loyer's treatment of this complex issue thus provides a useful snapshot of the complexities and problems of early modern approaches to vision and the import of the issue in a climate in which the nature of apparitions is integrally linked to theological imperatives. In Le Loyer's shifting schema of vision, Macbeth's "Dagger of the Minde" has the potential to be as real (in one way or another) as the dagger he holds in his hand, an outright hallucination, or something somewhere in between, but this range of possibilities provides no means of assessing which it is. The dagger therefore demonstrates the principle of "flection" at work within the visual process, in a way that markedly disturbs the relation between the gazing subject and the object of vision. The term flection evolved across the seventeenth century to indicate, amongst other things, "a turning of the eye in any direction" an "alteration, change, modification," and "bending" or "curvature," (*OED* "flection," def. 1.d, 2, 1.a). The first two of these definitions are now obsolete, but if re-assimilated into the action of gazing, suggest that the bending of the eye towards the object of vision might also imply the potential for some kind of transformation therein. It disturbs the assumption that the act of looking provides the gazer with a true and accurate image of an exterior object and opens up the possibility that the flexures involved in directing the gaze and receiving an image in return may also generate warp. Worse still, they may not generate warp, but rather expose discontinuities and maladjustment already present within the relation between gazing subject and the object, thereby threatening, by extension, the relation between the subject and the wider exterior world.

This is why Macbeth's vision of the dagger is often interpreted as a symptom of a greater disorder, whether it is by Lady Macbeth, who considers both the dagger and the subsequent sighting of Banquo's ghost to be "the very painting of your feare," or critics such as Kenneth Muir, who describes the vision as "clearly an hallucination" (Shakespeare 3.142; Muir, "Folklore and Shakespeare" 233). Such readings invoke a psychological cause for what Macbeth sees, but in doing so, they expose that vision is not merely a vessel for garnering information but a medium through which subject and world emerge in a reciprocal, interactive relation. Clark indicates that mirroring

was strongly associated with the spectre in Renaissance Europe, to the point that one French scholar had "suggested that *all* apparitions and spectres could be attributed to the natural effects of mirrors" ("The Reformation of the Eyes" 148).[84] This claim is curiously inscribed with the reverse reflection to that which it endeavours to propound: if mirroring calls the spectre into view, it is perhaps not always through deception within the light or the physical environment, but through another kind of "natural" reflection, that of the gazing subject himself. Here, we may recall again Derrida's "visor effect": this "spectral *someone other looks at us*, we feel ourselves being looked at by it, outside of any synchrony, even before and beyond any look on our part, according to an absolute anteriority . . . and asymmetry, according to an absolutely unmasterable disproportion" (*Specters* 6-7). To the extent that Macbeth looks at and perceives the spectral dagger, the dagger anticipates him, exposing something (we are not sure what) about his inner state and his functioning within the world he is attempting to comprehend.

This may seem an unusual observation to make about an inanimate object, but that is precisely because this is the one thing the dagger is not. Invisible to the watching audience, the dagger cannot be fixed as illusion or object but instead becomes the product and locus of a radical problematization of the nature of perception. Zimmerman suggests that the dagger evokes "an eerie agency that is not included in the signified of its corporeal referent" (the other dagger that he physically draws): "Macbeth reaches a breach between his two modes of seeing," (the evidence of his eyes as well as that of his other senses), but in endeavouring to argue that "There's no such thing" he "locates the crux of his dilemma. There is no such *thing* as the imagined dagger, but it exists none the less in some frame of vision" (177). While the dagger has no logical or verifiable existence, its entry into his visual field is real and problematizes sensory perception and cognition. This is an instance of what Coddon describes as the integral relationship between the "problematics of Macbeth's identity" and "the problematics of spectacular identification: beings as well as objects are interrogated, named, and renamed, but they resist fixity" (491). In the dagger scene, the indeterminacy of the object that Macbeth sees shows that visual perception functions as a register of the perceiver as much as of the external world,

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[84] The scholar to which Clark refers is Jean Pena, a Mathematics professor who made this claim in the "preface to the first Latin edition of Euclid" in 1557 (Clark 148).

but refuses a clear correlation between the two so that neither functions simply as a reflection of the other's state.

In this respect, the dagger scene is a duplicate of the banquet scene in which Macbeth is the only one able to see Banquo's ghost. Instead of the affirmation of the political and "social hierarchy" that the banquet is designed to provide, the scene produces a sharp descent into disorder as Macbeth is confronted with the spectre of his victim, alone, in a crowded room (Coddon 494). Worse still, Macbeth appears to have summoned him, although it is certainly not his intent. John Jump highlights the fact that, prior to the murder, Macbeth had pressed Banquo to "Faile not our Feast" and his sighting of the ghost during the banquet directly follows Macbeth's disingenuous lament that the company is deprived of "the grac'd person of our *Banquo*" ("Shakespeare's Ghosts" 340; Shakespeare 3.139, 3.141). This is scarcely wish fulfilment: Macbeth does not want to see the ghost, but it is as though it somehow emerges through a direct connection to the power of Macbeth's language. At the same time, we certainly cannot separate it from his psychological state, its appearance functioning at once as the cause, reification, and reflection of his worsening psychological state. That Macbeth sees the ghost is indisputable: what it *means* that he sees the ghost is impossible to determine. Greenblatt observes that the latter provides "two starkly conflicting possibilities: either the apparition is something real in the universe of the play – the spirit of the murdered Banquo . . . or it is the hallucinatory production of Macbeth's inward terror" (*Hamlet in Purgatory* 190-91). It would perhaps be more accurate to suggest that the play does not allow any polarisation of possibilities but instead problematizes the nature of perception to the extent that almost any configuration of the relation between the watcher and the spectre is possible and therefore none is endorsed.

One of the problems that Macbeth faces, of course, is that in both incidents he is alone in his perception of the spectre. This is a problem that faces Hamlet also. It has attracted much critical comment that Old Hamlet's ghost, initially witnessed by Barnardo, Marcellus, Horatio, and Hamlet (and thereby taking up a firm position within the visual plane) is visible to Hamlet alone when it enters Gertrude's closet. In response to Hamlet's question as to whether she sees nothing, Gertrude replies: "Nothing at all, yet all that is I see" (Sig. [I3v]). Muir implies that it is a figment of

Hamlet's imagination, pointing out that "the Ghost's words about Gertrude are a reflection of Hamlet's attempt to persuade her to repent" (233). In a more specific line of argumentation, Greenblatt, persisting with the idea that the ghost functions as one of Hamlet's "memory traces," comments that "Gertrude sees and hears nothing or, rather, more devastatingly, she sees and hears what exists" (225). Yet her failure to see the ghost cannot firmly signal anything of the sort, given the popular Elizabethan belief that ghosts are not always visible to everyone in their presence.[85]

Scott Huelin argues more persuasively that the ghost may be the product of "Hamlet's brain and yet . .. *not* a hallucination, a manifest psychotic break." He points out that "one of the key experiences within meditative piety is what is known as the memorial phantasm, the image that appears before the mind's eye unbidden yet prompted by sensory or intellectual stimuli" ("Reading, Writing, and Memory in Hamlet" 39). Huelin's point is helpful here in further establishing the complexity of the relation between viewer and (spectral) image. It suggests the construction of the image to be more than a matter of merely capturing external information or projecting outwardly an internal state and instead gestures towards a reciprocity between the image and the gazing subject that allows for vision to extend the purely material realm. This effect is further compounded by the stage direction that requires the ghost to appear onstage so that, whilst Gertrude cannot see the ghost, the audience can. With the ghost visibly present before our own eyes and audibly issuing Hamlet with instructions, we might as well question Gertrude's powers of perception as those of Hamlet. As in the banquet scene of *Macbeth*, the only thing of which we may be certain is that looking is no guarantee of ascertaining objective information about one's external environment, for the nature of the returned image is

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[85] Bradley supports this point also, commenting that critics who interpret the ghost purely as an "hallucination" are failing to take into account that a ghost in this period is "able for any sufficient reason to confine its manifestation to a single person in a company" (136). In "Visualizing Hamlet's Ghost: The Spirit of Modern Subjectivity," Ackerman argues that Bradley's explanation is unconvincing, although he gives no reason for this and it is well supported by evidence of Elizabethan ghostlore. For instance, in *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, Scot complains about the longstanding belief that ghosts "never appeare to the whole multitude, seldome to a few, and most commonlie to one alone" (535). Ackerman's own argument is rather more strained, suggesting in very specific terms that "the walls of Elsinore serve as a metaphor for the parameters of the self" and Gertrude's closet as a movement "deeper into the problem of subjectivity," which then sees Hamlet barring her from further intrusion into his own inner world (130). Like Greenblatt, he assumes Gertrude's perspective to be "the more empirical," although his evidence to support this point is somewhat tenuous (131).

as dependent upon the position and inner state of the gazer as it is upon the object of perception.

Shakespeare exploits a similar device in *Julius Caesar*, when he has Caesar's ghost appear to Brutus while his attendants sleep. This leaves Brutus unable to gain corroboration of the ghost's existence from his companions. Although he is sitting in a chair holding a book at the time, it is possible that the exhausted Brutus has dreamt the whole thing in the state "betweene sleeping and waking" that Le Loyer describes (Sig. [B2v]). In "The Nature of an Insurrection: Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*," Colbert Kearney claims the apparition to be a "hideous hallucination" generated by Brutus's meditation upon "his own death" (149). He also describes it as "an objectification" of Brutus's guilty "conscience" (150). We can scarcely be thoroughly convinced of this though when the ghost simultaneously enters into other recognisable constructions for such visitations. Classical ghosts often make their appearances to those who are sleeping, leaving the distinction unclear between a dream and a communication between the dead and the living. Given that the ghost is appearing in a play purporting to convey a crucial historical moment within classical Rome, it is at least partially assimilated within a classical framework from the outset. We are reminded, for instance, of Plutarch's historical report that Caesar's death is preceded by numerous supernatural portents. As in Macbeth, Shakespeare exploits Plutarch's imagery to the full, telling us that "The noise of Battell hurtled in the Ayre: / Horsses do neigh, and dying men did grone, / And Ghosts did shrieke and squeale about the streets" (3.117).[86] This is a device that Shakespeare repeats in *Hamlet* by having Horatio recollect precisely the same historical accounts of supernatural portents prior to Ceasar's death in an attempt to contextualize the appearance of Old Hamlet's ghost: "starres with traines of fier, and dewes of blood / Disasters in the sunne; and the moist starre . . . Was sicke almost to doomesday with eclipse" (Sig. [B2v]). Caesar's ghost has a well-established basis in classical history and mythology.

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[86] The relevant passage in Plutarch includes accounts of "fires in the element, and spirites running up and downe in the night," "divers men . . . seene going up and donwe in fire," "a slave . . . that did cast a marvelous burning flame out of his hande," and Caesar going to bed with his wife, only to have "all the windowes and dores of his chamber flying open" to reveal strange lights (792-93).

At the same time, this is not a particularly classicized ghost. Pearlman points out that the ghost is innovative for this reason: he "possesses an appealing, matter-of-fact, almost ghost-next-door quality. He is not bloody, he does not shriek, he does not deal in hyperbole or injunction . . . and he speaks in relaxed tones and in quotidian language" (74-75). Moreover, despite its classical setting, the play functions largely within an Elizabethan context and Brutus's reaction alone is sufficient to indicate that this is an environment in which the presence of ghosts is neither familiar nor comprehensible. Thus, the whole difficulty is that neither we, nor Brutus, have an adequate frame of reference for the ghost's appearance to account with any certainty for the nature of the vision. Whilst Brutus initially protests that it is "the weaknesse of mine eyes / That shapes this monstrous Apparition," we have no means of ascertaining whether his vision is genuinely flawed or accurate (3.126). The apparition might signify a genuine ghost, a projection of his conscience, a prophetic visitation, a deception produced by an evil spirit, a psychological disorder. The event wholly disrupts any possibility of determining the truth through vision; and the uncertainty of Brutus's connection to what he is seeing renders us unable to determine the state of his present existence and inner functioning in relation to the external world.

By drawing the figure of the ghost into this epistemological problem, such episodes render strange not only the ghost, but also the human. Shakespeare repeatedly exploits the instability of existing understandings of perception as a means of acquiring knowledge in an area that is critical to the functioning of the inner being within the external world they inhabit. Le Loyer's schematization of vision seeks to establish a means by which to understand the variations within visual perception in order to comprehend the material and spiritual worlds; Lavater seeks to undermine all certainty so that the only option is to read all sensory information through a particular, theologically-informed understanding of what is and is not possible. Shakespeare, in search of good drama and perhaps a broader understanding of the world that his characters inhabit, instead relinquishes all hold upon certainty and enables the proliferation of existing understandings to escalate to the point that certainty is no longer possible.

Shakespeare is by no means the only playwright to produce this effect, although it might well be true that he is the most successful. While the results may be less startling than in plays such as *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, John Marston's *Antonio's Revenge* similarly exploits disparities in the visual plane to render the ghost's presence more disruptive in both its ontological functioning and its relation to the living. As Rick Bowers observes in "John Marston at the 'Mart of Woe': the 'Antonio' Plays", the play is disruptive from start to finish in its excesses. While this means that it often "overleaps boundaries of convention" and "expectation," its incorporation of a glut of traditional representations of supernatural apparitions produces a ghost that is more than the sum of its spectral parts (15).[87] Andrugio's ghost is in many respects a stock Senecan-style figure with an overtly corporeal presence, but its shifting place within other characters' visual perception differs from that of other pseudo-classical revenants. Antonio first sees his father's ghost when it appears, along with Feliche's ghost, in the form of a dream. Antonio describes the dream thus:

> to my slumbring powers,
> Two meager ghosts made apparition.
> The on[e]'s breast seem'd fresh pauncht with bleeding wounds:
> Whose bubling gore sprang in frighted eyes.
> The other ghost assum'd my fathers shape:
> Both cride *Revenge* (Sig. [B2v]).

The audience can be in little doubt that these apparitions are in some way the products of these characters' deaths, for, unlike Antonio, we know that his father has been poisoned and Feliche stabbed. Moreover, Antonio wakes to witness the affirmation of his dream by a raft of ominous phenomena, including "The verge of heaven . . . ringd with flames" and a "blazing Comet," indicating, as in the previous plays, a catastrophic breach of the natural and accompanying supernatural disruption (Sig. B3[r]). What Antonio has seen may be the returned spirit of the dead, returned in classical fashion to demand revenge, or a kind of imaginative vision that registers

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[87] Bowers suggests that the play's crudity and extravagance are responsible for its lack of critical attention. He provides a useful overview of existing critical approaches to the play – see esp. pp. 16-19. Barbara Baines' "Antonio's Revenge: Marston's Play on Revenge Plays" sketches out a brief assessment of the ghost's role and its place within historical dramatic conventions for ghosts – see pp. 290-93.

an external state of affairs. In the absence of any physical act of perception, or indeed any external object, we can only be sure that Antonio's unconscious vision has somehow exposed to him some kind of material and spiritual truth about his father's murder.

In its subsequent appearances, Andrugio's ghost takes up an independent presence onstage, but adopts a curiously shifting presence within the space of the living. In Act Three, Scene One, Antonio calls out to his father's spirit and the ghost promptly arrives to supply him with crucial information as to his mother's guilt and his fiance's chastity, and to incite revenge:

> Thy pangs of anguish rip my cerecloth up:
> And loe the ghoast of ould *Andrugio*
> Forsakes his coffin, *Antonio*, revenge –
> I was impoyson'd by *Piero's* hand:
> Revenge my bloode; take spirit gentle boy:
> Revenge my bloode. Thy *Mellida*, is chaste:
> Onely to frustrate thy pursuite in love,
> Is blaz'd unchaste. Thy mother yeelds consent
> To be his wife, and give his bloode a sonne,
> That made her husbandlesse, and doth complot
> To make her sonlesse (Sig. [E3v] – E4[r]).

Here too, we are faced with uncertainty, for Antonio is given no response to the ghost's speech and it remains up to interpretation as to whether he sights the figure before it departs from the stage and the scene ends. Evidently, he does register its words in some way, for in the following scene, he shifts from his former melancholic gloom to a homicidal rage, declaring "May I be cursed by my fathers ghost, / And blasted with incensed breath of heaven, / If my heart beat on ought but vengeance" ([E4v]-F1[r]). He subsequently hears Andrugio as a disembodied voice, crying "murder" along with the voice of Feliche, and in the third scene witnesses his presence directly. In both of these scenes, his perception of the ghost is now clear as he responds in each instance with an assurance of his commitment to revenge.

At this point, it remains plausible that the apparition is a product of Antonio's imagination, or at least the imagined emodiment of his earlier dream: but in the fourth scene, the ghost appears visibly not only to Antonio, but also to Andrugio's widow, Maria. As in *Hamlet*, Andrugio invades his wife's bedchamber and then

chastises her (quite unjustly) for her supposed inconstancy after his death.[88] After

yet another outline of the need for revenge, he then physically draws the curtains to

her bedchamber. He thus endeavours to achieve symbolically what Old Hamlet

cannot – blocking access to his wife's bed. Pearlman claims that *Hamlet* and *Locrine*

are the only Elizabethan plays in which the ghost who calls for revenge also

participates in the action; however, Andrugio's interference with the living directly

parallels Old Hamlet's intrusion and considerably exceeds the traditional Senecan-

style revenge tragedy in which the ghost remains removed from onstage events and

interacts only with the audience (77). Indeed the ghost is, in Jump's words, "the

busiest of all busy apparitions" (344). Andrugio's ghost is able to make its presence

felt both visibly and invisibly and to interact with material objects. Subsequently, the

ghost makes a further, solitary appearance to the audience in order to deliver a

classically Senecan soliloquy and a final appearance in which he cannot be seen by

anyone onstage, appearing amidst a whole selection of players who remain oblivious

to his presence (Sig. [K1v] – K3[r]).[89] (Marston is apparently anxious to capitalise

on the figure's dramatic appeal, perhaps in an effort to outdo the ghost of the *Ur-*

Hamlet or Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.)

    In its shifting relation to the realm of visual perception, the ubiquitous ghost is not

particularly radical, in that individual aspects of its behaviour and appearance

function in accordance with a range of classical and folk beliefs (not to mention

Elizabethan staging practices) concerning ghostly norms. It is not unusual that the

ghost should not be visible to some or all of the living. Its initial appearance in the

dream is a standard means for a classical ghost to contact the living, and its desire to

secure justice in order that it may be laid to rest is in keeping with the social

functions of ghosts within popular and Catholic beliefs since the medieval period

(not to mention any number of earlier Elizabethan revenge tragedies). What is

unusual is the sheer range of means by which Andrugio's ghost asserts its presence

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[88] Existing evidence indicates that Shakespeare wrote *Julius Caesar* in 1599, although it was not
printed until the first folio in 1623 (Humphreys 1). *Antonio's Revenge* was entered into the
Stationer's Register in 1601 and was highly unlikely to have been written before 1599 (Gair 1, 12).
The exact date of the latter is controversial, in part because of its strong similarities to *Hamlet*, which
has prompted a debate as to which one may have come first (thereby influencing the other) or whether
they may have been written contemporaneously, both borrowing heavily from the *Ur-Hamlet*. For an
overview, see Gair 12-13 and James Taylor's "*Hamlet*'s Debt to Sixteenth-Century Satire."
[89] See Scenes One and Five of the Fifth Act.

and its oscillation between physically intervening in the affairs of the living and being totally invisible. While it does not explicitly problematize the functioning of the living within the world they inhabit in the same way that we see in *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, we cannot quite assimilate its presence satisfactorily into any existing framework for understanding the supernatural. It creates an environment in which the act of looking is out of joint with both the registering of another being's presence and the acquisition of knowledge. The task of living is informed by, and interfered with by the dead, even where the dead remain outside of their awareness.

In *Antonio's Revenge*, this creates no great disruption or unease for the characters, as they go about their business either unaware of the meddling ghost or, as in the bedchamber scene, oddly unperturbed by it. The exception to this is in the ghost's influence upon Antonio, but even then, Antonio shows no great difficulty in comprehending or accepting the ghost's presence. The degree to which the ghost might evoke a sense of the uncanny is therefore unclear, although it could certainly be heightened in performance. In *Macbeth*, the uncanny arises quite explicitly through the epistemological issues that disturb Macbeth's understanding of what he perceives. Macbeth's question "Is this a Dagger, which I see before me" tests out much the same problem as Lavater's rotation between accounts of the supernatural that are false and those that are genuine, witnessed by "men of good corage, and such as have bin perfectly in their wits" (88). Because Shakespeare's dagger episode ends with Macbeth hearing a bell – the sound of which he interprets as the signal for him to proceed on to his murder of Duncan – Kinney argues that "Macbeth has surrendered vision, as at times unreliable, to sound, which may not be. In a transformation of cognition from hallucination to acknowledged sound," the ringing of the bell, which is to be taken as real because a stage direction calls for it to be heard, "is overcome by a further hallucinated meaning giving it full and final agency" as Macbeth perceives that "'the Bell invites me'". Hence, although the sound of the bell is present (unlike the physical bell itself), it "is compounded with a sound that calls even further attention to its absence" (Kinney 78; Shakespeare 3.136). Kinney's reading elides a portion of Macbeth's speech, however. Macbeth does not really trade vision for sound because he has already talked himself out of believing in the dagger twelve lines before the bell rings.

Moreover, it is by no means clear that the sound of the bell has more validity than the vision of the dagger. It is true that other appeals to the senses are often accorded some epistemological priority over vision, despite the greater attention that the latter commands. Le Loyer, for instance, claims that "*Feeling, Smelling, Tasting* and *Hearing*" are generally unaltered "by maladies or sickenesse" and are difficult to deceive, "especially the *Touching*: the which being dispersed and (as it were) spread abroad throughout all the members, is esteemed to be more certaine than the sight" (Sig. [R1v]). This view would seem to endorse Macbeth's attempt to dismiss the dagger after he discovers that its "form" is "as palpable" as that of his own knife, but he is unable to grasp it. Finding a disparity between what he sees and what he feels, Macbeth complains that "Mine Eyes are made the fooles o'th'other Sences, / Or else worth all the rest" (3.136). On the other hand, the other senses do remain fallible. We cannot rule out that Macbeth's eyes *are* worth all the rest of his senses, that they are registering something that is in some way a visible form of truth. Even Le Loyer acknowledges that the other senses are still corruptible. He discusses hearing with concern for the prospect that we may be "deceived in taking things naturall for other than they be" and complains that the devil "adhereth unto soundes . . . and insinuateth himselfe into smelles and odours" (Sig. [Ii3v]). Furthermore, there remains always the possibility that other senses, like the sight, may "bee both violated and wounded," and that, worse still, the "phantasie" – which offers the means to use rational perception to overcome sensory flaws – may be similarly affected (Sig. [Aa1v]).

The point here is not merely that it is impossible to produce a firm means of "reality-testing" (as Freud calls it) for any of the supernatural phenomena in *Macbeth*, but rather that the example of Macbeth's dagger demonstrates that the relation of the spectre to the senses, and more specifically to the visual plane, is a crucial element in its spectrality ("The Uncanny" 249). This is not to suggest that a spectre is only a spectre if it is visible, but rather that the visible spectre's function is not extraneous to its visibility: that is to say, its visibility is not coincidental to, or isolable from, that which renders it spectral. Of course, this is true generally because spectrality is not something that claims an independent or material existence in the first instance but instead takes up a position within and between the structures of

human knowledge and therefore perception. But it is also to do with a more specific relation between the gazing subject and the apparition. The process of flection suggests that the gaze is often transformative – that the image returned in response to the gaze is not a register of the material "reality" of the object but rather of the object in relation to the subject's perception. It follows that the emergence of spectrality within the image is indicative of a specific kind of relation between what governs and generates perception (the inner "being") and the apparition or object. In particular, it suggests that where the apparition enters the uncanny, where it becomes truly spectral, is in the process of *re*flection.

Re/flections

It is clear that what the spectre renders visible is that which cannot or should not ordinarily be seen. This is not just the case in terms of the way in which it breaches our understanding of the material world of objects but, more specifically, in its capacity to expose visibly that which has no place within the visual realm and in so doing to render it uncanny. Freud expresses surprise (although not disagreement) at Schelling's notion that "everything is *unheimlich* that ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light" ("The Uncanny" 225). In terms of the spectre, though, this conception is particularly apposite: the word itself is contingent upon the notion of drawing forth and illuminating that which is not ordinarily subject to visibility. The *OED*'s definitions for the spectre include "an unreal object of thought; a phantasm of the brain," "an object or source of dread or terror, imagined as an apparition," and "an image or phantom produced by reflection or other natural cause," (*OED* "spectre," def. 1, 3). All three constructions are closely related. In having no identifiable locus within the physical realm – no objective, material presence – the spectre must be in some way a product of thought or imagination. Yet, if it is seen, it is real, insofar as it is a genuine object of perception. In its incorporeality, it testifies to the existence of something that is disturbingly both perceptible and incomprehensible. In doing so, it exposes that, as the product of

perception, the spectre functions as a mirror for the gazing subject. It returns the gaze of its audience in an act of re-flection.[90]

Derrida's outline of the spectre's visibility is particularly helpful here:

> the spectre, as its name indicates, is the *frequency* of a certain visibility. But the visibility of the invisible. And visibility, by its essence, is not seen, which is why it remains *epekeina tes ousias*, beyond the phenomenon or beyond being. The specter is also, among other things, what one imagines, what one thinks one sees and which one projects – on an imaginary screen where there is nothing to see. Not even the screen sometimes, and a screen always has, at bottom, in the bottom or background that it is, a structure of disappearing apparition. But now one can no longer get any shut-eye, being so intent to watch out for the return. Whence the theatricalization of speech itself and the spectacularizing speculation on time. The perspective has to be reversed, once again: ghost or *revenant*, sensuous-non-sensuous, visible-invisible, the specter first of all sees *us*. (*Specters of Marx* 125)

Derrida's deployment of the term "frequency" draws the usually auditory conception of the nature or pitch of a sensory experience into the visual arena, so that it invokes not only recurrence – although the sense of a repetition remains significant – but also the idea that the visibility of the spectre occurs at a particular "wavelength". It suggests that the point at which the spectre becomes visible is the point at which specular conditions propel it into the requisite frequency, rather than the marker of some kind of ontological movement of the spectre entering into "being." At the same time, the spectre is that which occurs where vision exceeds being, arising in the absence of any known phenomena. Thus the spectre destroys any fixed correlation between phenomenal existence and visual perception. This is not a critique of the unreliability of vision. Rather, it is an exposure of the fact that what is seen (the object) and what *is* (the gazing subject) are neither unrelated nor systematically linked, but function within an interdependent and shifting relation with one another that troubles the very basis of comprehension. The act of looking, rather than retrieving information about the outer world, returns an ungraspable reflection of the inner subject who gazes. The sense of the "disappearing apparition," the spectre that

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[90] Philip Armstrong's "Watching *Hamlet* Watching: Lacan, Shakespeare and the Mirror/Stage" explores this relation between audience and mirror in a related context, focusing upon the interconnections between the onstage reflections within *Hamlet* and the way in which early modern theatre functions as a mirror for the watching audience.

must always return and for which one must always watch, is that which paradoxically eludes the gaze and yet also returns it.

Thus, the relation between the subject and the spectre invokes and simultaneously disrupts the principles of reflection. Of the definitions listed in the *OED*, the following are particularly significant here:

> 2.a. Chiefly *Anat.* and *Med.* The action of bending, turning, or folding back, recurvation; a state of being bent or folded back. . . .
> c. The action of turning back from a point; return, retrogression. . . .
> 3.a. The action of a mirror or other smooth or polished surface in reflecting an image; the fact or phenomenon of an image being produced in this way. . . .
> b. An image produced by or seen in a reflective surface, *esp.* a person's image in a mirror. . . .
> c. *fig.* and in extended use. A depiction or reproduction . . . . an embodiment. (*OED* "reflection")

In all of these conceptualizations, reflection is predicated upon the opposition of two terms, assuming an originary source and a secondary reflection. In the first two definitions, there is a non-specific return of an object that, in order to be "folded back" or turned, relies upon the assumption of an originary movement that was in some sense straight or linear. In the following two, an independent object is duplicated as an image via the reflective surface of the mirror in a process that is specific to the act of perception: the eye of the subject gazing into the mirror is turned back towards itself, producing the simultaneous reversal of the gaze as well as a visual duplication of the original. This process is implicit also in the last definition, which, in referring to a secondary "reproduction" or re-presentation, assumes the prior existence of an original. Taking these various manifestations together, reflection implies a recurrence or reversal, or a potential restoration of the seemingly originary state of flection.[91] This process offers an enticing and duplicitous promise of truth, providing entry into a seemingly contained system of signification that

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[91] Rather oddly, "reflection" appears to precede "flection" in practice, if not in etymological logic. The earliest usage of "flection" listed by the *OED* is 1603, although it has certainly entered the language before this – John Banister utilizes it in an anatomical context in *The Historie of Man Sucked From the Sappe of the Most Approved Anathomistes*, which was published in 1578 (52v). The earliest recorded instances of its usage appear to surface well after the emergence of the term "reflection" in the fourteenth century. For my purposes, however, this has no significant impact on the logical relation between the two terms.

promises to yield a one-to-one correlation between what *is* and what is reflected. In functioning thus, the mirror appears to be a perfectly positioned, flat surface in which the source is reflected without distortion. However, this ideal is itself illusory, for the reflection is dependent upon the gaze, the positioning of the gazing subject in relation to the mirror, the variable process of perception, and the integrity of the mirror itself. The image returned is infinitely variable in accordance with these factors. Hence, the reflection may be duplicitous in two senses, in its production of a double and in its potential to dupe.

This problem is made evident in *Julius Caesar*, when Cassius asks Brutus whether he can see his own face and Brutus responds in the negative: "No *Cassius*: / For the eye sees not it selfe but by reflection, / By some other things." Brutus appears to differentiate between self and reflection, suggesting that they are not synonymous. However, with a hidden agenda to pursue, Cassius insists upon a direct correlation if only he chooses the proper mirror:

> since you know, you cannot see your selfe
> So well as by Reflection; I your Glasse,
> Will modestly discover to your selfe
> That of your selfe, which you yet know not of. (3.110)

Kearney suggests that, in positioning himself as Brutus's mirror, Cassius – who is "envious of Caesar" – reflects a potentially matching envy in Brutus ("The Nature of an Insurrection" 145). We might add to this that Cassius has already inadvertently exposed the hidden danger of the mirror, in lamenting that Brutus has hitherto had "no such Mirrors, as will turne / Your hidden worthinesse into your eye, / That you might see your shadow" (3.110). Arthur Humphreys glosses the word "shadow" as a "reflected image" in the 2008 Oxford edition of the play; similarly, David Daniell signals in the 1998 Arden edition that it connotes a "reflection" and compares it directly to the Narcissus myth, suggesting that it appears "in a context of questioned self-knowledge" (Humphreys 105; Daniell 167). Daniell also acknowledges that the shadow "carries a sense of out of the light, as Brutus' look has been *veiled*" (167). However, by the time the play was written in the late sixteenth century, the term had a whole host of significations, including "the dark figure" produced on a surface

when a body intercepts the light; something that is "fleeting or ephemeral"; something that has "an unreal appearance; a delusive semblance or image"; "a spectral form" or "phantom," and "one that constantly accompanies or follows another like a shadow" (*OED* "shadow," def. 4.a, 4.c, 6.a, 7, 8).

    It is worth noting that the first of these definitions includes the additional qualifier that the shadowy image of the "intercepting body" may be "approximately exact or more or less distorted": this quality is precisely what manifests itself within the instability of Cassius's choice of word. Whilst Cassius insists that his accurate mirroring will expose Brutus's "hidden worthinesse" to himself, his choice of language suggests a host of other qualities it may simultaneously reveal, foreshadowing the darkness and treachery that sees Brutus betray and murder Caesar. Even this last signification of shadowing or following a person has resonance here, for in allowing Cassius to manipulate him, Brutus can no more escape his role as an inferior follower of Caesar after the murder than he could before. After the death, he is still forced to present himself to Antony as "I, that did love Caesar"; he must still grant Caesar "all true Rites, and lawfull Ceremonies" because "It shall advantage more, then do us wrong"; he finds it necessary to follow Caesar's ghost to Philippi (3.120). His political position, his understanding of his own behaviour, and his course of action remain dependent upon his treatment of Caesar even in death. The mirror, in this instance, exposes more than what the gazing subject wishes to see: but crucially, what it exposes is dependent upon the positioning of the gazing subject, for if Brutus's "mirror" exposes such darkness, its reflection fails to be received thus by Brutus himself. When Caesar's ghost subsequently appears to Brutus after the murder, Brutus might initially blame the vision upon "the weakenesse of mine eyes", but the spectre clearly identifies itself as a more accurate reflection than that produced by Cassius (3.126):

> BRUTUS. Art thou any thing?
> Art thou some God, some Angell, or some Divell,
> That mak'st my blood cold, and my haire to stare?
> Speake to me, what thou art.

GHOST. Thy evill Spirit *Brutus*? (3.126)[92]

Greenblatt suggests that this last line generates "the odd sense not only that this
haunting is for Brutus alone but also that it was somehow a part of him, his evil
spirit" (*Hamlet in Purgatory* 183). More specifically, it holds up a mirror to this part
of him. Kearney, who distinguishes between the ghost of Caesar (as visible
apparition) and the "spirit . . . of Caesar" (whose lingering power influences the
wider events of the play), identifies the last line of this passage as the ghost
"identifying itself as Brutus' evil spirit". That is to say, it is "Brutus . . . recognizing
the Caesar in himself" ("The Nature of an Insurrection" 150). For Kearney, this
complicates the "hallucination" to provide an "insight into Brutus's own character"
as he "confront[s] the Caesar, the autocrat, in his own psyche." Brutus now becomes
"doomed by such self-destructive knowledge" and proceeds rapidly towards securing
his own death (150). Thus, the spectre functions as both product and reflection of
Brutus's tarnished soul. I would argue, however, that this psychological effect is not
separable or distinct from the implication that the ghost is also "Thy evill Spirit"
because it is the spirit that has been rendered a ghost at Brutus's hands. It is not only
an outward, embodied projection of an inner state, but equally an outer phenomenon
– visible, after all, to the audience as well as to Brutus – that troubles the distinction
between the two. By turning the process of re/flection into one of mediation, it
refuses the originary structures that would see Brutus's inner being functioning as the
source of both the flexion and reflection. Instead, it inscribes the image of each
within the other, so that the ghostly image is as much generative of Brutus's inner
self as it is reflective of it. If "the specter first of all sees *us*," it does not do so in the
sense that it somehow captures an originary or pre-existing interior state of existence,
but rather turns the act of perception into a fleeting glimpse of the shifting relation
between inner and outer constructions (Derrida, *Specters* 125).

It is worth noting here that, although Shakespeare follows his historical source
closely, his adaptation of his predecessor plays an essential part in heightening the
uncanniness of the interaction between the two figures in these lines. Belsey notes

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[92] The question mark here is generally altered to a period in modern editions of the play. This makes
more sense in terms of conversational dynamics, but it is worth noting that the question mark does
seem to gesture towards the uncertainty concerning what "thy evill Spirit" might mean.

that "the eeriness" of Caesar's ghost cannot simply be traced back to North's English translation of Plutarch, from which Shakespeare draws. She points out that "in North's version, as the lamp burns dim, a horrible figure is seen" that terrifies Brutus, but once he realises it will not harm him, he moves to interrogate the ghost. As a result, "the fear and the question are divided". However, Shakespeare instead draws the two "together, so that the fear is brought into being *by* the unknown" – by Caesar's inability to identify the apparition so that it "challenges the limits of mortal knowledge" (7). We might add to this that Shakespeare specifically draws the ghost into a context that is specific to Elizabethan epistemology (and its limits). In North's translation of "The Life of Brutus," Brutus asks the ghost whether he is "a god, or a man, and what cause brought him thither." The ghost then replies: "I am thy evil spirit, *Brutus:* and thou shalt see me by the citie of PHILIPPES" (*The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romanes* 1072). In "The Life of Caesar," an earlier section in the same large volume, we are given no specific version of Brutus's question and the ghost describes himself instead as "thy ill angell, *Brutus*" (796). In both accounts, the ghost appears when Brutus is awake, and it disappears after he responds to its promise to appear in Philippi with the comment that he will see it there.

The differences between Shakespeare's and Plutarch's versions are small, but significant. Shakespeare's adaptation utilizes the language of Elizabethan demonology and theology so that Brutus expresses the typically Protestant polarization of spirits, modified according to its classical context: if it is "any thing," the ghost is either entirely good ("some God, some Angell") or entirely evil ("some Divell") – and yet we cannot be sure that it is "any thing" at all. Despite his physicalized fear of what he is seeing, Brutus is anxious to get more out of the ghost. After its announcement that he will see it at Philippi, he presses it further in an effort to affirm that this is correct, asking "Well: then I shall see there againe?" Receiving an affirmative reply – "I, at *Phillipi* – he then repeats the response described by Plutarch, "Why I will see thee at *Phillipi* then" (3.127). By drawing the issue of the ghost's ontological state into a contemporary Elizabethan context, Shakespeare's version renders it more corrosive to the frameworks upon which Brutus draws as he attempts to comprehend the ghost's presence. By intensifying the interaction between the two figures, he makes the relation between the two the crux of the

encounter rather than the mere narrative issue of setting the scene for their future meeting at Philippi.

This slight reimagining of the ghost's appearance enables the perfusion of the boundaries between ghost and man and gives Brutus's "evill Spirit" a markedly unsettling effect. Caesar's ghost renders visible that which Cassius's mirror does not. It reflects something within that he cannot and does not wish to see. And if he cannot grasp that which is before him, nor can he willingly dismiss it: "Now I have taken heart, thou vanishest," he complains, "Ill Spirit, I would hold more talke with thee" (3.127). Like Horatio in the opening scene of *Hamlet*, Brutus seeks to render the ghost static and conjure it away – to remove its spectrality and its spectral threat – by affixing its position and extracting information from it. Unsuccessful, he cannot leave the matter alone. Functioning precisely within Derrida's outline of the relation between spectator and apparition, Brutus is literally unable to "get any shut-eye" because he is "intent to watch out for the return" (*Specters* 125). Late though it is, he rushes out to wake Lucius, Varro, and Claudius to check as to whether they saw anything, as though obtaining a secondary account of the ghost might enable him to obtain the ghost's return by proxy. Failing to achieve this, he adopts an alternative tactic, calling for Cassius to agree to set out at once for Philippi. But even his final moments remain haunted by the ghost's reflection. Faced with imminent capture by his enemies, Brutus contemplates suicide with the soldierly rationale that "Our Enemies have beat us to the Pit: / It is more worthy, to leape in our selves, / Then tarry till they push us" (3.129). But the speech is preceded by the revelation that:

> The Ghost of *Caesar* hath appear'd to me
> Two severall times by Night: at Sardis, once;
> And this last Night, here in Philippi fields:
> I know my houre is come. (3.129)

The desire for a noble death is therefore permeated by the preceding justification in which the ghost's presence functions as the principal determinant of death. Similarly, his subsequent claim that "My heart doth joy, that yet in all my life, / I found no man, but he was true to me" registers that the ghost's existence is attributable to his own failure to provide precisely that loyalty to Caesar (3.130).

With this in mind, his final words – "*Caesar,* now be still, / I kill'd not thee with halfe so good a will" – speaks not only of his apparent embrace of his own death but also of the perpetuation of Caesar's presence within his final act (3.130). Brutus may consciously believe that he is obtaining "glory by this loosing day" but that which Caesar's ghost reflects – Brutus's moral weakness, his disregard for human life, his inner darkness – is literalized through his physical self-destruction (3.130).

Here, reflection enters into psychoanalytic paradigms of the double's place within the uncanny. The uncanny double replicates a familiar originary form in a way that denies the containment and unity of that form and thereby destabilizes its seeming independence. This destabilization begins within the revelation that what lies on one side of the imagined divide must be somehow be present within the other. In its most extreme forms, the double not only duplicates but even usurps the source, thereby dismantling the former hierarchy between the two (an event particularly popular within later forms of Gothic literature). For Freud, the double relation "is marked by the fact that the subject identifies himself with someone else, so that he is in doubt as to which his self is, or substitutes the extraneous self for his own. In other words, there is a doubling, dividing and interchanging of the self" ("The Uncanny" 234). The persistent reflection of Caesar's presence within Brutus's inner life nudges towards this relation, aided in part by the absence of clarity as to the ontological status of Caesar's ghost. Put simply, we cannot quite tell where or even if a boundary exists between the inner world of Brutus and the exterior apparition of Caesar, although nor can we conclude that they are identical or continuous. Something that should remain hidden has become visible within Caesar's ghost and Brutus alike, but it is something that we cannot grasp, for at every turn it disappears as readily as the ghost itself.

This problem emerges in a different context in *Hamlet*. Upon seeing Old Hamlet's ghost for the third time, Barnardo concedes that it is "In the same figure *like* the King that's dead" and Horatio shortly afterwards tells Marcellus that it is as similar to the King "as thou art to thy selfe" (Sig. [B1v]-B2[r], italics my emphasis). Marcellus's analogy is then extended by Horatio who, in the second scene, compares the relationship between the dead man and his ghost to his two hands – "I knewe your father, / These hands are not more like" (Sig. [C2r-v]). As Greenblatt observes,

Horatio's comment to Marcellus strangely erodes the division between "likeness and identity: Marcellus is not 'like' himself; he *is* himself." Thus, the line suggests "the possibility of a difference between oneself and oneself" (*Hamlet in Purgatory* 211). Although observing that this sense of self-division is played out in other respects elsewhere, Greenblatt forecloses his own argument here by emphasizing that while "Marcellus *should* look like himself," there is no longer anything that should look like the king who is buried and presumably decaying (212). For Greenblatt, the point is that what the spectators are witnessing cannot be "physical reality" as, without any need to investigate the King's physical grave, they know that his corpse must be lying in a state of decay. They must therefore be viewing a kind of "embodied memory" (212). In making this point, Greenblatt draws upon Le Loyer's *A Treatise of Specters*, which argues that if souls do return, they do not utilise their original bodies but return in an "ayrie" or immaterial form (Sig. B4[r]). He does not quite explain the union, but if phantasm and memory can function synonymously in this context, it is presumably at the intersection of the image: the King is not real but his spirit somehow connects with the onlookers' memories in order to manifest an image of when he was. Subsequently, Greenblatt turns to Aristotle to address the issue of how likeness is perceived, "an issue inseparable from the ghost as memory and memory as ghost". Aristotle posits that when perceiving an image, the mind distinguishes between a genuine presence and a memory of the past through a kind of "ratio between what is imagined and what actually once existed". A memory is measured as being only a likeness of "something else" (Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory* 215).[93] Consequently, the problem that the ghost raises for Hamlet, in its extreme likeness to his father, is the erosion of "the ratio of likeness and difference" that facilitates distinction between the two (216).

Such a reading tacitly seeks to close the gaps, to de-spectralize the spectre by explaining its spectrality as a product of the limitations of perception. Presumably, Hamlet's problem would be solved if only he could maintain the capacity to distinguish between identifying the ghost as what it is *like* (the remembered dead father) and what it *is* (a phantasm born of memory). The difficulty with this proposition is that the ghost, as trace, is manifestly both of these and neither. It

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[93] See Aristotle's "On Memory," esp. pp. 714-16.

inhabits the gaps in between, generating and simultaneously eroding the categories of past/present and memory/perception. Neither the living King nor his mere simulacrum, neither his spirit alone nor his memory, the spectre draws forth all of these (and more) but cannot be limited to, nor reify, any of them in full. And its capacity to exceed these categories is a product of much more than his audience's states of mind or perception. If Marcellus is as similar to himself and Horatio's hands are as similar to each other as the ghost is to the formerly living King, then we are viewing a haunting of the living in more than one respect. Not only is the ghost inhabiting the external environment of its audience, but in generating an uncanny indistinction between itself and the living King, it haunts also the selves of the onlookers. That is to say, if the ghost's appearance erodes the terms by which its audience understands the identity and ontological state of the dead King Hamlet, it has the same effect upon the means by which they understand their own. We cannot trace the problem of the ghost back to an originary failure of differentiation between memory and perception because these acts are themselves contingent upon the categories that crumble away in its presence. How are we to define memory in the absence of a clear distinction between past and present? By what means can perception function as an accurate register of the external world where the conscious mind cannot fully process and understand sensory information? Without the security of such means to determine the nature of the ghost as an object of perception, the inner being that watches it becomes subject to the same type of corrosion that the ghost has upon the figure of the dead King.

It may seem from this that the ghost's ability to disturb the seeming order of re/flection is a function of its spectrality. However, in some texts it becomes equally apparent that the disturbance of the mirror is what generates the presence of the spectral. In his 1596 edition of *Piers Gaveston*, Michael Drayton uses a single stanza to draw the vanity of the dead narrator – the "ghost of wofull Gaveston" – into a complex structure of self and reflection through a metaleptic engagement with the Narcissus myth (Sig. [K4r]).[94] Returning from the underworld in corporeal form – lent "breath" once more from "the blessed Heavens" and with "soul and body"

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[94] This edition of the poem is appended to the 1596 publication of *The Tragicall Legend of Robert, Duke of Normandy*. It is a modified version of the 1594 version of *Piers Gaveston*, in which the Narcissus stanza does not appear.

reunited – the ghost recounts his autobiography in the form of a tragedy, highlighting his tragic flaw through retrospective advice to his living self:

> Foolish *Narcissus*, with thy selfe in love,
> Yet but to be thy selfe thou canst not see,
> Remove thy sight, which shall that sight remove,
> Which doth but seeme, and yet not seeming thee:
> A shaddow, shaddowed underneath a wave,
> Which each thing can destroy, and nothing save. ("Piers Gaveston" Sig. [K4v], [M5v])

Gaveston's ghost accuses his formerly living self of having a misplaced investment in the mirror: in order to view himself accurately, he must turn away from the reflection of his beauty. The reflection offered by the pool is strikingly similar to that offered by Cassius to Brutus, projecting his higher qualities (in this case, his physical beauty), whilst simultaneously offering a "shadow." The shadow as reflection is underpinned by an accompanying signification of the shadow as darkness and unreliability – the "shaddow, shaddowed underneath a wave". The wave refers to the water of the pond, but water carries the threat that, if disturbed, it will instantly destroy the reflection that it bears. Gaveston/Narcissus's reflection should not be relied upon. The word "seemes" offers a similarly layered signification. The reflection "doth but seeme" but is "yet not seeming thee". The phrasing invokes "seem" both in the more common sense – for something to "have a semblance or appearance" – but also in the sense of to "befit" or "beseem" (*OED* "seem," def. I.1.a, II). Thus the image is that of Narcissus and yet is deceptive in what it reflects: it befits his physical beauty but it does not become him to see this as a reflection of himself in totality. The reflection thereby manifests an excess, a capacity to exceed the image perceived by the gazing subject and reveal a shadow that is perceptible only retrospectively, simultaneously exposing the threat of the subject's destruction.

   To complicate matters further, the reflection is not only a prediction or warning but is itself responsible for the gazing subject's demise. In choosing the Narcissus legend specifically, the ghost highlights not only his living self's vanity, but also the danger of entrapment within self-reflection. As Drayton's readers would know, in

some versions of the myth, Narcissus is so enamoured with his reflection that he falls into the water and drowns: as Marlowe puts it in his comparison of Leander to Narcissus, he "leapt into the water for a kis / Of his owne shadow, and despising many, / Died ere he could enjoy the love of any" (*Hero and Leander* Sig. [Biv]). To put this another way, he falls into his reflection and drowns. The living Gaveston's difficulty lies not in the act of gazing nor even in the integrity of the reflection. Given Drayton's prefatory argument that identifies Gaveston as a "child of singuler beautie" and Gaveston's political rise as King Edward's favourite (in both historical and literary accounts), we have no cause to doubt his immodest declaration "That all perfection seem'd in mee to dwell, / And that the heavens me all their graces lent" (Sig. K3[r], [K6v]). Rather, Gaveston's downfall lies in his entrapment within the immediately visual aspect of the reflection. The more he gazes at the reflection of his physical beauty, the less he is able to perceive the other facets of the reflection that are more visible from the vantage point of the ghost's teleological narrative: the fleeting, shadowy reflection of his inner deficiencies. He thereby fails to grasp the elusive reflections that emerge within the mirror, despite their inhabitance of the very form at which he gazes.

   Here, we may observe a certain correspondence between literal and philosophical reflection. In *The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection*, Rodolphe Gasché describes the latter as a movement in the process of determining a pure origin, whereby "reflection tries to return as to an ultimate ground from which everything else can be deduced" (180). He argues that, in observing the reflective process, we may perceive the origin to function intact and anterior to the reflection, thereby constituting a foundational and apparently pure term from which all else follows and to which it must return. The reflection, in other words, functions as a secondary signifier for the original term that occupies a superior position in the hierarchical opposition between the two. This is the case even if the two terms are reversed, for although this may alter which is designated origin and which is reflection, it maintains the structural relation between the two terms and ensures that they remain within a closed system. Any given instance of reversal in the paradigmatic arrangement of original and reflection may be subject to further

overturns of a similar nature but does nothing to disrupt the concepts contained therein.

Drawing upon Derrida's deconstruction of western metaphysics, Gasché points out that this totality appears to characterize the formulation of philosophical concepts in general. Even where philosophers such as Husserl and Heidegger work to identify plural origins of a heterogeneous nature, thereby complicating the relationship between a singular origin and its reflection, the overall system of reflection inevitably functions within a structure of unity and containment (180-82). For Gasché, the point is to critique (via deconstruction) "the classical concept of origin" as a foundational "point of presence and simplicity" (180). For my purposes, his argument is useful at a figurative level for the way in which it exposes and delimits the mechanisms of the mirror. At the same time though, the mirror into which Drayton's Gaveston stares refuses the closures of the formulation. Drayton's Narcissus stanza initially appears a simple, literalized version of the closed structure of reflection, consisting as it does of a series of hierarchical origins and reflections in which each pairing gives way to another, whilst maintaining an oppositional relationship. Functioning in the position of origin and reflection, we may observe Gaveston and Narcissus; Narcissus and the image in the pond; and, by a reflective substitution, Gaveston and the image in the pond (in that the gazing Narcissus is also representative of the gazing Gaveston). The ghostly narrator slightly problematizes but does not disrupt this system. As the figure that has claim to both chronological and ontological priority, the living Gaveston constitutes an origin for which the ghost is reflection, but as the ghost is the narrator and the living Gaveston is the image he constructs, this particular hierarchy is also easily reversed.

None of this seems particularly disruptive of the paradigmatic reflection that Gasché describes. However, a closer look at this series of configurations and at their specific contexts rapidly disallows such a straightforward correlation between original and reflection. Although Gaveston's ghost refers to Narcissus alone, the spectre of Echo tacitly appears alongside as the voice that returns in response to Narcissus's gaze in the Ovidian myth. Goldberg writes on this myth: "mere iterability, Echo is profoundly an image of the origin of iterability." If Narcissus is "the solicitude of the mirror," then Echo is "the disturbance of the mirror of

reflection: the disturbance . . . marks the *origin* of the image" because "its after-effect is an original effect" (*Voice Terminal Echo* 11-12). Drawing upon Derrida's work in this area, Goldberg develops this paradigm further to suggest that as "Narcissus speaks to his reflection," he is answered not through the "shattered" image of the mirror but through "the resonance of Echo. 'The sonorous source attempts to rejoin itself only by differentiating itself, dividing differing, deferring without end'" (13).[95] What is returned in response to the gaze of Narcissus is not an image of himself as origin but an echo that is simultaneously the return of his gaze, a new and newly originary reflection, but also the rupturing of the mirror as a figure of reflective containment. To put it another way, Narcissus's mirror, as it fractures, reflects back not a single image or even a multitude of fragments but splinters the process of mirroring itself to produce an endlessly reflective signification that rewrites anew through its erasure of either origin or end.

In utilizing multiple layers of reflection, then, Drayton's extraordinary hall of mirrors actually produces a disconcertingly spectral "structure of disappearing apparition" (Derrida, *Specters* 125). To begin with, the narrative structure of the poem, and of this stanza in particular, creates a shifting foundation that destabilizes the subject of the poem so that we are never quite watching a singular, fixed identity. A distinction arises between the narrator-ghost who recites the tale – he who returns "From gloomy shaddow of eternall night" to "To pen the processe of my tragedie" – and the narrator's past, living self, whose progress the narrator traces from childhood to his eventual arrival at the scaffold where "I lost my head" (Sig. [O7v]). Gaveston's ghost narrates the story as one of chronological progress from early life to death and then to the afterlife, from which the tale is told. But despite the ghost's lengthy account of his transition into the afterlife, the figure that stands before us is not quite identical with the living Gaveston. Like Old Hamlet's revenant, Gaveston's ghost functions as his supplement, replacing without displacing his previously mortal self.

The ghost's persona, unlike the living Gaveston, is formulated partly through the experience of death and his retrospective account of the mortal Gaveston's life is read through this lens. The living Gaveston is vain, blindly ambitious, and myopic,

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[95] The extract Goldberg employs here is from Derrida's "Qual Quelle: Valéry's Sources," p. 287.

as the Narcissus image suggests: the ghost, in contrast, is worldly, astute, and all too aware that if his living self must succumb to "ambition," he should "At least disguise her in humilitie" (Sig. [M5v]). The self that the ghost recounts, then, is simultaneously the arrogant fop who deservedly brings about his own downfall, and the lost living self whom the ghost now mourns. In *The Tears of Narcissus: Melancholia and Masculinity in Early Modern Writing*, Lynn Enterline draws attention to a connection between melancholic loss and the figure of Narcissus, pointing out that "encounters with a mirror frequently and abruptly give way to expressions of the self's utter diminishment" (1). She argues that this often emerges "as a *literary*, and not just a psychological, problem" in early modern literature because, in disrupting the inner, emotional state of the subject, the mirror also disturbs the linguistic structures that constitute the inner being. Thus, within a number of texts, she identifies melancholia with "the text's implicit or explicit commentary on its own poetic and rhetorical problems" (5). Enterline finds that "the melancholic subject's relentless search for its own origin – which is figured, in the mirror, as a place from which the self may see and know itself – constantly puts the possibility of knowing such origin into doubt" (16). For her, "many moments of self-reflection" in early modern texts "seem to displace the subject from the very point from which it seeks to see itself" (15).

This is true in the most radical sense for Drayton's spectral narrator. What the ghost recollects and what it describes in the mirror, then, is not the original living self (which is now supplemented by its own demise). While the ghost narrates his past life as though he is simply recalling the events that have shaped his present memory, he is separated sharply from his living self through the physical immediacy of the severing of head from body.

> Like as *Adonis* wounded with the Bore,
> From whose fresh hurt the life-warme blood doth spin,
> Now lieth wallowing in his purple gore,
> Stayning his faire and Allablaster skin,
> My headles body in the blood is left,
> Heere lying brethles, of all life bereft. (Sig. [O7v])

The two are alienated, not only in time and space, but through the visceral image of the beheaded corpse. Thus, Gaveston already seems like a dislocated reflection of the originary figure of the ghost who stands in the present before us, gazing back into the transformed image of its past. However, as the chronologically preceding figure, the living Gaveston equally functions as the source of a reflection formed by the ghost, so that the ghost is both the primary figure and reflection at the same time. It is, precisely as Enterline describes, an example of how "melancholic returns to Narcissus's predicament" expose "the death of origins" (16).

Added to this is a series of reflective slippages present within the Narcissus stanza itself. In addressing his self as "Foolish *Narcissus*," the ghost establishes a reflection (Narcissus) of his own reflection (Gaveston), in order to describe the literalized reflection of the subject and the mirror. In addressing his living self *as* Narcissus throughout the stanza rather than offering a mere simile, he erases any fixed distinction between Narcissus and Gaveston, or between their gazes. Moreover, in order to function as the reflection of Gaveston, Narcissus must simultaneously function as the origin of the reflection in the pool, so that the reflective function of Narcissus not only coincides with, but is in fact contingent upon, concomitantly functioning as its own origin. We are drawn into a kind of reflective maze in which each term – ghost, Gaveston, and Narcissus – functions in a series of reflective configurations in which there there is neither true origin nor end.

We might add to this that the hierarchical relation between Gaveston (as origin) and Narcissus (as reflection) is complicated from the beginning by the fact that Gaveston is not in fact an "original" term even as an individual figure. Rather, he is a reflection of the historical figure of Gaveston who appears in accounts of Edward II's reign as well as in literary interpretations such as Marlowe's *Edward II* (published in 1594, two years before Drayton's poem). Hence, our "original" is in fact a reflection of earlier originals that have been refracted through the glass of an Elizabethan mirror. The same is true of Narcissus, who can function as a reflection in Drayton's brief allusion only because his figure is already recognizable to the educated audience as the Narcissus of classical myth, already popular amongst other Elizabethan writers. The figure's capacity to reflect is predicated upon its own re-presentation of earlier originals. Furthermore, the literary precedence of the

reflection of Narcissus positions his figure as an original of Gaveston also, because Gaveston reflects the classical Narcissus to precisely the same extent that Narcissus reflects him. Thus, the figure of Narcissus arrives in advance of itself, not in a linear fashion but in a manner that renders it reflection and origin at once.

Viewed in this way, the figures may seem to continue functioning within a closed loop to produce a series of simple rearrangements of its terms. However, the shifting paradigms of the ghost's reflection so thoroughly pervade the reflective process that they disrupt the very premise of hierarchical order: the relation between Gaveston and Narcissus disrupts the structural integrity of reflection by exceeding the containment of the structure as a whole. The mirror that should reliably represent the visible image of the gazing subject remains bound to reflect, but in doing so, it captures more than a solid, stable visual image, or a clear relation between origin and reflection. Where no origin can function independently of its simultaneous enactment of reflection, its fracturing disrupts the closure of the homogeneous system. Instead, the entire structure becomes spectral as each term pervades, and is pervaded by, the oppositional terms against which it is differentiated and defined. Every term becomes displaced, uncertain, contaminated. Rather than forming a single unified totality, this reflection produces a radical fragmentation of its own system to reverse the very mechanisms by which the unity of reflection is achieved.

Drayton's invocation of Narcissus thereby demonstrates that the act of flection may return an image that exposes the instability, fragmentation, and impurity of the gazing subject even as it returns the perfect image of the material form. What the subject actually perceives is no measure of objective "reality" but rather an unreliable register of some aspect of his inner state, expressed through a physical image. The same mirror into which Gaveston originally gazes to perceive his beauty as a route to social and political power reflects equally his pathway to destruction when viewed from another angle. It also reflects his lack of anteriority to the reflected image; the image's own lack of unification, priority, or containment; the deficits of his living state in relation to his heightened awareness in death. Instead of simply exposing a correlation between the image and one or all of these states, though, it enacts its own fracturing. Like Macbeth's vision of the dagger or Brutus's vision of Caesar's ghost, this apparition undermines the closure of the categories that

enable a distinction between original and reflection, subject and object, inner and outer worlds. If knowledge remains plausible here, it is defined by its own lack of boundaries, the impossibility of stabilizing or containing the concepts that it seeks to comprehend. Flection produces simultaneously the conditions of reflection necessary to generate the awareness of an isolable inner self and the elements of its destruction.

In this poem, the reflection is itself more spectral than the ghost who narrates the story. It emerges as a spectre because, in reflecting the gazing subject, it returns the gaze in a manner that disturbs the sense of a self-contained interiority that functions independently of outer conditions. Spectrality in this sense extends far beyond the mere disturbance of the dead by the figure of the ghost: indeed, the spectre need not involve a "real" ghost at all. The doubling and reflection of Banquo's figure in Macbeth's dumb show further exemplifies this. Engel suggests in *Death and Drama in Renaissance England* that dumb shows carry an association with "magical knowledge" and the "occult arts," with the spectacle onstage holding "a mirror up to nature" that helps to provide clarification in order to combat the deficiencies of sight. Thus, dumb shows "are like miniature mirrors within the larger mirror of the play," that also extend past "the contours of the main spectacle" (42).

I would suggest that, in functioning thus, they have the potential also to mirror the gaze along with its defects, exposing the disjuncture between what the audience sees and what it comprehends by turning the spectacle into the spectral. In response to Macbeth's question "Shall *Banquo's* issue ever / Reigne in this Kingdome?", the Weïrd Sisters respond with a silent procession of eight Scottish Kings, tailed by the figure of the dead Banquo (3.144). Although Macbeth finds the entire spectacle unsettling because of the threat it signals to his ambitions, it is Banquo's form at the end of the procession that seems to expose to him something formerly hidden from view: "Horrible sight: now I see 'tis true, / For the Blood-bolter'd *Banquo* smiles upon me, / And points at them for his." Although this figure is not, apparently, Banquo's actual ghost – it is "like the Spirit of *Banquo*" but not the spirit itself – this only amplifies its displacement of Banquo's identity and the corresponding corruption of Macbeth's perception (3.144). Old Hamlet unsettles his viewers who, in observing the ghost's likeness to the King, observe the splitting of presence

through the rhetorical comparison of Marcellus's likeness to himself. The ghost of a ghost, this figure's inseparability from the living Banquo or even from the dead Banquo whose presence was independent of the Weïrd Sisters' powers, only further serves to heighten the disjunctures that render authoritative perception of the material world impossible. Like the ghost at the banquet table, it returns Macbeth's gaze, reflecting back not only the horror of his past actions, but the future as well, a future that has already come back to haunt him. Macbeth's subsequent response, "Let this pernitious houre, / Stand aye accursed in the Kalender," only serves as a stark reminder of just how little of his world now adheres to the "Kalender" as the uncanniness of events exposes the interdependency of external world and the disorder of his inner being (3.144).

This scene demonstrates that the inner disruption generated under the returned gaze of the spectre is as much a formative aspect of spectrality as the visual apparition itself. Indeed, it is a key reason as to why there is always a distinction between the spectre of an object and one of the human form in terms of the effects they generate. If we turn again to Macbeth's vision of the dagger, we might recall that it returns Macbeth's gaze in the sense that it holds up a mirror to his inability to impose order upon inner or outer states or the alignment between the two. The floating dagger illuminates Macbeth's impending murder of Duncan and metaphorizes the unnaturalness of his actions but also exposes the fact that time is failing to function linearly in accordance with a logical ordering of events – for if the murder is yet to occur, even the image of the blood-soaked dagger has no place in the present. Despite his terror, though, Macbeth is much quicker to gather his wits and attempt to dismiss his vision of the dagger – which cannot literally cast a gaze – than he is when faced with his later vision of Banquo's ghost. Where he is able to struggle through to the assertion that "There's no such thing" when faced with the dagger, he does not even begin to question the existence of Banquo's ghost until after he has successfully persuaded it to depart and even then makes no firm pronouncements as to the veracity (or otherwise) of its existence (3.136). Whilst the audience may find the ghost more persuasive because it visibly sits onstage, we should remember that Macbeth has no such advantage: in both scenes, he alone is faced with the vision.

This does not really appear to reflect a greater credibility in the ghost's appearance in terms of, for example, being able to position it within a recognizable theological or mythological framework. Macbeth shows not the slightest sign of advancing a Catholicized explanation for Banquo's return that might link his figure to the doctrine of purgatory or a classical one that might assign it a place within the underworld. Were it present, such a context might be expected to render the ghost less disturbing, since it would then ascribe it a logical, if not comfortable presence. Instead, his complaint that "The times has bene, / That when the Braines were out, the man would dye, / And there an end: But now they rise againe" suggests quite the reverse. "Blood hath bene shed . . . Murthers have bene perform'd" both before and since legal intervention by "humane Statute," yet it is only now that men are failing to stay buried (3.142). Historically, as well as in the immediate context of the banquet hall, Macbeth perceives himself to be all alone in his relation with the ambulatory dead. Banquo's ghost has a place within physical or spiritual "reality" that is neither more or less credible (or verifiable) than the vision of the dagger.

What renders the ghost more startling than the dagger, then, is that, as the returned dead, the ghost has a substantially more intrusive effect upon Macbeth's psyche. It is not necessarily disruptive that a ghost is in the room: Banquo's ghost troubles no-one at the banquet table other than Macbeth; Old Hamlet's ghost does not directly trouble Gertrude. By definition, one has to perceive a spectre for it to be rendered spectral, to perceive and thereby enter into the ruptures and unease that its presence generates and reflects. This is in part a result of the "visor effect" that Derrida takes as a presupposition throughout his subsequent consideration of the spectre:

> Nor does one see in flesh and blood this Thing that is not a thing, this thing that is invisible between its apparitions, when it reappears. This Thing meanwhile looks at us and sees us not see it even when it is there. A spectral asymmetry interrupts here all specularity. It de-synchronizes, it recalls us to anachrony. We will call this the *visor effect*: we do not see who looks at us. Even though in his ghost the King looks like himself . . . that does not prevent him from looking without being seen: his apparition makes him appear still invisible beneath his armour". (*Specters* 6)

This effect is not a matter of literal sight, for as Royle points out, the haunting in *Hamlet* to which Derrida refers is not marked by a concealment of the face at all: the ghost of Old Hamlet has his beaver up and Horatio is able to provide a detailed account of his facial appearance to Hamlet. Rather, it is a matter of "the *possibility* of the visor," for Derrida insists a little later on that "the helmet effect is not suspended" by the raising of the visor (Royle, *The Uncanny* 247-48; Derrida, *Specters* 8). Rather than corresponding to the literal field of vision, the visor effect refers to the power of the spectre "to see without being seen," a power that it retains through the very principle of spectrality (Derrida 8). Hence, like Old Hamlet's onlookers in *Hamlet*, Macbeth cannot see the ghost in the sense that he can see other people in the room; he cannot assimilate or grasp the information fed to him by his eyes, nor dismiss it either. It is visible and yet not quite there; beyond his comprehension and yet clearly comprehending him.

I suggested in Chapter Two that the threat to the living posed by the failure of burial occurs as the intrusion of death erodes the containment of the mortal sphere. In failing to remain buried, static, and contained so that the living may insulate themselves from death in order to move on with the business of living, the figure of the returned dead functions as a contaminant. Macbeth's responses to his visions further demonstrate that what enables death not only to make itself felt but to *resonate*, to invade the very interior of the watching subject, is the way in which the entry of the ghost into the visual field establishes an unwelcome reflection of its observers. This problem registers itself within Macbeth's curious phrasing: "*they* rise again" to "push *us* from our stooles" (3.142, italics my emphasis). The "us" here is not indicative of the majestic plural because the entire complaint is framed in the plural even though it is Banquo's solitary ghost that plagues him, murdered only once and occupying only one stool. Macbeth's phrasing not only reverses the roles of victim and murderer to redraw them as the dead usurper and the living victim but also positions them within a kind of universalized reciprocal relation that exceeds the bounds of their individual positions. Unable to cope with the ramifications of Banquo's return, Macbeth clutches at the one shred of reassurance that he can find, by extending the individual threat of the ghost to a universal one. Fear loves company, or at least so he hopes. It is, of course, to no avail, since his companions

are utterly oblivious to the spectre in the room. It is Macbeth alone who is unable to perceive Banquo to be at rest and it is Macbeth alone whose inner world begins to crumble beneath the force of the ghost's stare. When the apparition takes up a place within Macbeth's line of visual perception and then returns his gaze, it exposes to him his inability to isolate and preserve his interior self from the chaos of the exterior world because it attests to the instability of his self's positioning, in time, in space, even in the line of political inheritance.

Throughout the play, Macbeth works obsessively to shore up his position against this and other threats through an overwhelming preoccupation with controlling time. Banquo's appearance out of time – after his own death – reflects Macbeth's fundamental inability to impose order and control upon the events of the past or future while heightening his need to do so. Macbeth seems to assume that if only he can pin time down, to make it behave in a fashion that will smooth, not only his course of action, but his troubled perceptions, he will have mastery over both his present and future perceptions. Such a hope is, of course, pure illusion amidst the total dissolution of order within his chaotic world. Before he has even committed his first murder, Macbeth complains that in anticipating the event, "My Thought . . . Shakes so my single state of Man, / That Function is smother'd in surmise, / And nothing is, but what is not." His perception thus plagued by a future that has not yet arrived, he proceeds to reassure himself with the platitude that "Time, and the Houre, runs through the roughest Day" – his problem, he hopes, will pass along with the time (3.133). Just after his vision of the dagger, he calls upon the earth to "take the present horror from the time, / Which now sutes with it," again hoping to relocate and fix the moment of the murder so that it will not pervade his inner perception out of its own time – that is to say, outside of the moment of the actual murder (3.136). It is, of course, a failed pursuit, for despite the frequent meditations on time right up until his death, Macbeth's inability to follow his own advice to "Let every man be master of his time" is both what haunts and ultimately kills him (3.139). Unable to accept that such mastery is impossible, he fails to anticipate the possibility that the Weïrd Sisters cryptic advice about his death might suggest that "*Macduffe* was from his Mothers womb / Untimely ript" (3.151).

Thus, the profound degree to which Banquo's ghost unsettles Macbeth connects to the extent to which it exposes an existing state of disorder. Indeed, it appears that the visibility and indeed the very existence of a spectre is proportionate to the extent to which it anticipates, inhabits, and disrupts its audience's own understanding. A distinction (however unsettled) may be made between different levels of spectral visibility that are correlative to the degree to which the visor effect is at work. Marcellus, Barnardo, and Horatio all see Old Hamlet's ghost and are all fascinated and unsettled by its appearance; they cannot dismiss it even after its departure. When Horatio suggests that it is "fitting our duty" to advise Hamlet of the ghost's appearance, it is plain that his real motivation is to serve his own desire to extract information from the ghost, to affix its meaning, for the original reason he gives for telling Hamlet is actually that if the ghost will not speak to them, it will surely "speake to him" (Sig. [B3v]). Yet Marcellus, Barnardo, and Horatio do not go mad or become obsessed by the ghost because, although the ghost sees them – it sees them fail to grasp or conceptualize its appearance, their inability to align their perception with their understanding of time and specifically the past – it does not see them in the same way that it sees Hamlet. It does not reflect back to them an interior disjuncture in the same way that it reflects this to Hamlet because Hamlet is the one whose inner state, familial relationships, and inheritance are inextricable from Old Hamlet's death and who therefore enters a state of radical maladjustment in response to its return. So whilst the three original viewers are disturbed by the ghost sufficiently to anticipate its return and pursue an encounter through Hamlet that would ascribe it a meaning, it is for Hamlet that the ghost's spectrality escalates into a full-scale corrosion of his ability to comprehend the structures of the world that he inhabits.

For Hamlet, though, there is a reward to be found in the presence of the spectre that runs counter to its threat. In response to Horatio's report of the ghost, Hamlet proceeds to question him by running through a catalogue of the ghost's physical attributes:

    HAMLET.
    Arm'd, say you?

ALL.
Arm'd my Lord.
HAMLET.
From top to toe?
ALL.
My Lord from head to foote.
HAMLET.
Then sawe you not his face.
HORATIO.
O yes my Lord, he wore his beaver up.
HAMLET.
What look't he frowningly?
HORATIO.
A countenance more in sorrow then in anger.
HAMLET.
Pale, or red?
HORATIO.
Nay very pale.
HAMLET.
And fixt his eyes upon you?
HORATIO.
Most constantly.
HAMLET.
I would I had beene there. (Sig. [C2v])

Derrida comments that in the process of running through this list, it appears as though Hamlet "had been hoping that, beneath an armor that hides and protects from head to foot, the ghost would have shown neither his face, nor his look, nor therefore his identity" (*Specters* 8). However, I would argue that Hamlet's desire to have been there to see the ghost himself, followed shortly thereafter by his declaration that he must lie in wait and see it himself, suggests otherwise. What Hamlet really seeks is for the ghost to fix its eyes upon *him*, for it to see him even if "the helmet effect" or "visor effect" cannot be suspended. Hamlet rushes to see that which might expose to him the form of the father he has not yet finished mourning – however elusive it may be – and finds a clear but impenetrable connection between the independent existence of this spiritual entity and his melancholic inability to relinquish his dead father.

When he finally meets the ghost, instead of watching the familiar form from a distance and drawing comparisons between its visual appearance and that of the living King as the others have done, Hamlet immediately addresses the spectre to

demand the meaning of its "questionable shape" (Sig. [D1v]). In so doing, what he finds is not his father, but a reflection that far exceeds the constraints of origin and secondary term. In this vision that reifies hidden truths, Hamlet sees the affirmation of his own dis-order – an affirmation that liberates him by endorsing his inability to accept his father's death and simultaneously binds him to a quest that can only secure his demise. Immediately before hearing news of the ghost, he tells Horatio "me thinkes I see my father" and, when questioned as to where, responds "In my mindes eye" (Sig. [C2r]). In his *mind's eye* – he sees the figure in the imaginative field of vision that knits memory with visual perception, a form of vision that is most subject to distortion, deception or illusion, yet somehow, prior to any event of physical sight, accurately perceives the continued presence of the figure that is walking the night.

In this respect, the spectre haunts in advance of itself, emerging within the disrupted space of Hamlet's melancholic psyche to position truth or reality as categories that function in a complex relation with inner perception. When Hamlet's gaze is returned by the spectre, what he sees is the mirror of an inner state that accurately (and disastrously) functions outside of the strictures of acquiring information through the physical senses alone. In inhabiting the structures that should deny it entry – structures such as time, mortal space, and the division between the living and the dead – the spectre demonstrates that these crumbling interior edifices paradoxically constitute both the apparatus through which Hamlet comprehends and orders his world and through which that order is exposed as illusion. No longer inhabiting a world in which inner state and outer world are separable, Hamlet finds an oddly displaced home within the uncanny as the vision of the ghost invites him into an altered world that affirms the disunity and confusion in which he is already immersed. As in the cases of Macbeth, Julius Caesar, and Gaveston, however, that reflection does not bode well – for as this intractable ghost functions outside of limits, of comprehension, and control, it exposes to the gazing subject the seeds of his own destruction.

Conclusion

How to Talk to a Ghost

Enter into no communication with suche spirites, neither aske them what thou must give, or what thou must d[o], or what shal happen hereafter. Aske them not who they are, or why they have presented them selves to bée séene or hearde.

<div align="right">(Lavater 196)</div>

Thou com'st in such a questionable shape,
That I will speake to thee

<div align="right">(Hamlet Sig. [D1v])</div>

Lavater recounts a curious story in which a man needing to cross a river late one evening calls out for assistance and receives an echo in reply. The man mistakes the sound for the voice of another man and asks "if he might passe ouer héere," to which the echo returns "in the Italian tong, Here, here." He is duly persuaded to make the attempt, with the result that he throws "himself hedlong into the river" and nearly drowns. This tale arises in a chapter that addresses the problem "That many naturall things are taken to be ghosts," although the man who is thus victimized does not perceive a ghost at all, but afterwards tells his friends that the incident occurred "by the persuasion of the divell" (49-50). Lavater remains silent on this point, leaving us to infer through the wider context of the chapter that it is nature which is in fact to blame. As a result, the story conflates nature, the devil and the ghost – the natural and the supernatural, the known and the unknown – but oddly locates all of these within the originary point of the man himself. In externalizing the man's voice in an alien context, the echo transforms it into something sinister, something that threatens the interior and indeed the life itself of the man from whom it emanates. While reinforcing Lavater's broader prohibition of communicating with spectral voices, the tale exemplifies that in speaking with them, we may end up speaking with ourselves. Equally, it suggests that speaking with ourselves is in some sense analogous with

talking to a ghost: to an alien voice that somehow exceeds the boundaries that divide our inner being from the external world.

In this brief, historicized tale, we are thereby confronted with a miniature version of the spectrality that pervades the texts I have discussed throughout this thesis. Lavater reminds us once more that in order to establish our position in the world and to find our way, we may find ourselves speaking with that which is unknown, summoning spectres that threaten to expose the possibility that the strange, the unassimilable, and, most troublingly, the site of death, lies within. Lavater's wider attempts to enforce the burial of the dead work to prohibit this danger, this dissolution of the circumscribed spaces that divide the living from the dead. In a sense, he seeks to banish history, in that to circumscribe and immobilize the dead is to prevent them from (re)writing the present and future. But here, we might return to Punter's reading of Derrida's *Spectres of Marx*, in which he observes that "the narratives of history" are "written *by* ghosts" or "the dead," so that the "voices" that emerge when we engage with such histories "spectralize the possibility of knowledge" ("Spectral Criticism" 262). When the living speak of history, they speak also of the present. They call upon a discursive network that is haunted by that which appears to have passed but pervades the constructions of the present and presence. Historical narratives, then, do not recount a contained event or space from the past that may be accurately encapsulated through the knowledge of the present, but trouble the containment of the position from which such knowledge is claimed. When Lavater calls up the histories of the dead and their relationship with the living, he cannot avoid himself speaking with their language and with the voice of one who is also marked by death. While the dead may be physically absent, the address to them must inevitably expose that they are present still (and still to come) within the structures by which the living construct, narrate, and differentiate themselves from that which has been and which awaits them still.

As I have suggested elsewhere in this thesis, this effect is heightened by the movement within Reformation England to exclude the dead entirely from the space of the living. Greenblatt observes that when Hamlet hears the ghost's voice demanding the swearing of a pact, "he addresses it directly in words that would have been utterly familiar to a Catholic and deeply suspect to a Protestant: 'Rest, rest,

perturbèd spirit'" (*Hamlet in Purgatory* 233). This is accurate insofar as it represents the most stringent Protestant views on the prohibition of speaking to or crediting the figure of the returned dead. Yet Lavater does nothing but echo precisely this command throughout the course of his work: rest, perturbed spirit, for you have no place here. In a sense, in trying to secure the absence of the dead, he endeavours also to lay to rest the lingering spirit of Catholicism along with an assortment of other sources of ghost beliefs: but instead of conjuring them away, he instead calls their spectres forth. Despite his repeated protests that he works to propagate "the worde of God," his historical sources extend beyond biblical scriptures to include stories and doctrines from "Gentiles, Jewes, and Turkes," the "auncient Churche," "historio[gr]aphers, holy fathers," "Councels, Bishops, and common people," and an array of other sources ranging through to "Daily experience" (219, 98, 62, 159, 151, 71). These diverse sources speak to one another so that, where his Protestant line of reasoning is intended to dominate and expose the falsities of other beliefs in regard to the nature of apparitions, it instead becomes one more voice in the ever-expanding and perpetually shifting crowd. Lavater's account becomes riddled with the spectres of history, his text haunted from the inside out. In a sense, his project is specifically to do battle with history, to draw upon, categorize, and file away each spectral encounter as a means to bar its entry to the present. Instead, each story piles one upon the other in a manner that increasingly erodes the circumscription of its historical, social, and epistemological contexts and marks it with precisely the phenomena Lavater endeavours to exclude. What Lavater's work becomes, in effect, is a reification of that which he forbids: a speech act that, in commanding the dead to depart, conjures more and more of them forth until he is surrounded by a veritable crowd of them clamouring for attention.

The declaration that ghosts are not to be spoken to and that they are not what they seem is marked with its own contradiction: that they stand before us and wait for us to speak. Lavater's wider argument is therefore quite right, in that speaking with the ghost is not a matter of speaking with the dead at all in the sense of something that is buried, an inanimate relic of the past or of history. Rather, it is a matter of appealing to that which we do not recognise and cannot quite see, but that makes its presence felt nevertheless as it sees *us*. It is this to which Lavater responds in his attempt to

lay down a guide for the living as to how they must respond when they perceive a ghost. If the apparition is not the returned dead but rather a product of some kind of perceptual error, delusion, or spiritual entity that visits to influence the state of the onlooker's soul, it is in every instance a reflection of some element of its audience's inner being(s). Hence, to banish the spectre does not involve dismissing or disregarding an external, independent entity, but rather drawing it forth and therefore acknowledging its uncanny intrusion within the protected space of the present and the presently living. It tacitly acknowledges that the spectre emerges at some kind of intersection between the material world and the human psyche but thereby renders the distinctions that generate such intersections uncertain and unreliable.

This is why Macbeth fails to elicit a response when he instructs Banquo, "if thou canst nod, speake too"; why Brutus's objection to Caesar's vanished ghost that "I would hold more talke with thee" is fruitless; why Barnardo's assumption that Old Hamlet's ghost "would be spoke to" is wrong, at least in the absence of Hamlet (*Macbeth* 3.142; *Julius Caesar* 3.127; *Hamlet* Sig. [B1v]). It is irresistible and perhaps unavoidable to interrogate the figure that so threatens the position and functioning of the living, but because, by definition, the spectre cannot be controlled or yield up its secrets, doing so seems bound to failure. Persuading the spectre to depart may appear at least to restore the natural or familiar order of things, but that order is no longer so familiar where it has already been disrupted: where the present is now infused by the effects of a spectre that has already exposed that it be cannot be isolated to the past. To hail the spectre, even in the attempt to expel it, only generates further spectrality, an escalation of the erosion of boundaries that starts to spread and contaminate all it touches.

Because this problem has to do with the limits of knowledge, and, in particular, the ontological structures through which the living are conceived, it is embedded within issues of scholarship in Elizabethan literature and modern criticism alike. Lavater construes his endeavour to identify and expose the deceptive nature of the ghost as the site of proper (Protestant) scholarship. In his dedication to his patron, Lavater asserts that he is writing his work in part because ministers have a duty to carry out such projects in order to illuminate the path of God's people and thereby "bring them out of all wavering and dout." He then commends the "study and

diligence" of theologians "who for these fewe yeares ago, have set foorth certayne bookes drawen out of the scriptures written in the Germayne tong against sundry errours: and theirs likewise who in these our dayes by writing of bookes do teache, instructe, and confirme the rude and unlearned people." This benefit is a gift from God which ensures, not only the dissemination of the wider teachings of Protestantism, but also the correction of "divers and sundry errours, which by little and little have crept into the Church" (Sig. [biv]). Thus, the teaching of God's word is inseparable from the pursuit of truth, which can only be accessed and taught through the superior understanding of the properly educated. Lavater's ability to shed God's light on the divine separation of the living from the dead is integrally linked to, and authorized by, his position as a scholar.

Subsequently, he draws extensively on the issue of the limits of human knowledge as evidence for this argument. For instance, he argues that even in the hypothetical instance of encountering "the wandring spirites of deade bodies," we must ignore them because if the apparitions are "the soules of the faithful, they will be interested in advising only that we must "*Heare him*" (Christ) alone and if they are "the soules of Infidels and of wicked men," there is no cause "to heare them, or beléeue any thing they say" (194). Moreover, any spirit's words "eyther agrée with the holy Scriptures, or else are contrary unto them"; the former are to be approved only on the basis that they are "comprysed in the woorde of God" and the latter to be automatically rejected because they are not (194). Hence, we must disregard the word of such spirits on the epistemological grounds that they cannot add further to our existing sources of truth. In effect, what Lavater requires, or would have his reader believe that God requires, is a retreat back behind the veil of established modes of enquiry. Lavater's task as a scholar is not to engage with spectrality but to shore up the boundaries that help to keep spectres at bay. His role is specifically to banish the "middle place" in a way that does not only eliminate any possibility of purgatory but that reinforces the oppositions of illusion and spiritual reality, good and evil, life and death, heaven and hell. The middle ground, for Lavater, is the ground of contamination: polarization is where safety lies in the form of sanctioned knowledge.

In this, he bears a marked resemblance to Horatio, the scholar whose knowledge appears to prohibit communication with a ghost in a quite different way. Faced with the unexpectedly real presence of the ghost on the ramparts of Elsinore, Horatio is urged to address it by Marcellus, who suggests: "Thou art a scholler, speake to it *Horatio*" *(*Sig. [B1v]*).* Horatio duly steps up with a formal address, asking the ghost "What art thou that usurpst this time of night" and finishing with the instruction: "by heaven I charge thee speake" (Sig. [B1v]). The ghost is unmoved by the imperative, and promptly "sta[l]kes away," with Horatio vainly repeating "Stay, speake, speake, I charge thee speake" and Marcellus helplessly observing "Tis gone, and will not answere" (Sig. [B1v]-B2[r]). So much for the scholar's ability to speak with ghosts. Shortly thereafter, the ghost returns, with similar results:

> HORATIO.
> If thou hast any sound or use of voyce,
> Speake to me, if there be any good thing to be done
> That may to thee doe ease, and grace to mee,
> Speake to me.
> If thou art privie to thy countries fate
> Which happily foreknowing may avoyd
> O speake:
> Or if thou hast uphoorded in thy life
> Extorted treasure in the wombe of earth
> For which they say your spirits oft walke in death.
> Speake of it, stay, and speake, stop it *Marcellus*.
> MARCELLUS.
> Shall I strike it with my partizan?
> HORATIO.
> Doe if it will not stand. (Sig. [B3r])

Of course, as a scholar from Wittenberg, Horatio is not supposed to subscribe to anything other than Protestant readings of the apparition, but they collapse here under the weight of the evidence before his eyes. In "Let Me Not Burst In Ignorance: Skepticism and Anxiety in *Hamlet*," Aaron Landau outlines Horatio's approach to the ghost as a "debacle of human knowledge," in which the "self-confident agent of sober rationalism" is so stricken by the ghost's appearance that his educated ideas collapse into a farcical series of guesses as to the explanation for the apparition (219). Landau claims that as Horatio "draws on an embarrassment of

disparate pneumatological sources" in order to explain the ghost's appearance, he exposes the "uselessness" of the "learned stance" that had initially refuted the ghost's existence but also qualified him to speak to the ghost in the first place (219-220). However, given the inconsistency of the clergy during the Reformation on the issue of ghost beliefs, and the ghost's ability to exceed all frameworks of understanding, it is perhaps not surprising that the spectre corrodes the position of knowledge that Horatio ostensibly occupies. Horatio does not so much open up alternative means of seeking information from the ghost as he endeavours to confine it to existing frameworks of knowledge and thereby delimit the threat it poses to knowledge itself: an agenda that is manifestly clear at the point that he allows Marcellus to strike out in a bizarre effort to immobilize it. As Derrida puts it, "by charging or conjuring him to speak, Horatio wants to inspect, stabilize, *arrest* the spectre in its speech": to constrain it along with the information it holds, to place it in one of the categories by which he understands ghosts to function and thereby restore some kind of order (*Specters* 13). Such an endeavour is scarcely likely to generate a response, to invite the spectre to offer up secrets that function beyond what Horatio can (or wants) to comprehend.

Horatio's attempt to speak to the ghost has drawn a strong response amongst critics, in part because of the justification Marcellus uses in asking him to talk to it. The impact of Marcellus's exhortation to Horatio, "Thou art a Scholler; speake to it," is such that it often appears within debates about the nature and functions of scholarship and criticism. As Christopher Warley comments in "Specters of Horatio," the phrase has become "a sort of mantra, a shorthand for criticism itself" (1024). It raises an issue that is common to Elizabethan and contemporary scholars and critics alike, the matter of the extent to which critical practices and vantage points enable (or limit) our ability to communicate with that which lies outside of existing frameworks of knowledge. In terms of relevant ghost lore, Horatio is ostensibly more qualified to undertake the conversation because, as a scholar, he is "armed with the necessary weapons of defence, in the shape of Latin formulae for exorcism should the spirit prove to be an evil one" (Wilson 76). Indeed, Wilson points out that this is undoubtedly the reason for Horatio to have been invited to the scene in the middle of the night, "both as a precaution and as an aid to further

enquiry" of the ghost that the sentinels have seen on the two preceding nights (75-76). Nevertheless, it appears that Horatio's position as a scholar also accords him "a privileged interpretive position," as someone who is in a position to produce a rational, "impartial and apparently unbiased" interpretation of the play's events: as Derrida puts it, he is "the learned intellectual . . . the man of culture as a spectator who better understands how to establish the necessary distance or how to find the appropriate words for observing, better yet, for apostrophizing the ghost" (Warley, 1023, 1027; Derrida, *Specters* 12). The problem is that Horatio is nothing of the sort. As Warley points out, from Marcellus's position, Horatio is "something of an elitist – one who tacitly or explicitly rejects Marcellus's belief in ghosts in favour of some form of scholarship that is at the same time aligned with insider political knowledge" to which the castle guard has no access (Warley 1027). Hence, from the outset, he cannot be "disinterested" in what he observes. Furthermore, despite his active investment in scepticism, his position is instantly eroded by the ghost's appearance, subverting not only the "security of the scholar" but also the "security of the idea that one could be disinterested, objective, and just" (Warley 1027). Horatio is neither detached from, nor open to, whatever knowledge the spectre might bring, nor equipped to elicit that which invites his own undoing.

It is little surprise, then, that his attempt to talk to the ghost fails utterly. Derrida draws upon this failure to claim that:

> There has never been a scholar who really, and as scholar, deals with ghosts. A traditional scholar does not believe in ghosts – nor in all that could be called the virtual space of spectrality. There has never been a scholar who, as such, does not believe in the sharp distinction between the real and the unreal, the actual and the inactual, the living and the non-living, being and non-being ('to be or not to be,' in the conventional reading), in the opposition between what is present and what is not, for example in the form of objectivity. Beyond this opposition, there is, for the scholar, only the hypothesis of a school of thought, theatrical fiction, literature, and speculation. (*Specters* 12)

It is this figure, according to Derrida, of which Marcellus is apparently unaware when he optimistically perceives Horatio to be best positioned to speak with Old Hamlet's ghost. Horatio is unable to speak with the spectre because he does not believe in spectrality. His belief in categorizations such as real and unreal, living and

dead, past and present, is so pronounced that the best he can manage is to fall back on alternative constructions of ghosts from an assortment of discourses because any set of distinctions is better than none. Warley criticizes Derrida here for according this "traditional scholar" a "purportedly objective position," but it is objective only in the sense that it endeavours to restore the nature of objects, the ordering of the material (and by extension, the spiritual) world (1028). Derrida's scholar is actively invested in a particular outcome for authorization of his function as scholar in mapping out and defending certain boundaries as he ostensibly pursues (or thinks he pursues) that which lies beyond them. Horatio's efforts to immobilize the spectre and loosen its tongue are unsuccessful because they function as a (failed) means to intercept and delimit its implications, that is, to counteract its spectrality by determining its purpose and its ontological status, thereby assigning it a meaning and a fixed position.

Accordingly, Derrida suggests that speaking with spectres is "even more difficult for a reader, an expert, a professor, an interpreter, in short, for what Marcellus calls a 'scholar.' Perhaps for a spectator in general. Finally, the last one to whom a specter can appear, address itself, or pay attention is a spectator as such" (*Specters* 11). Those who "believe that looking is sufficient" take up their perceptual role in the visual spectacle at the cost of participating in it as an event (11). For Derrida, this is Marcellus's fundamental error, and such a pervasive error that Derrida refers to it as "the illusion, the mystification, or the *complex of Marcellus*". Marcellus is unable to realise "that a classical scholar would not be able to speak to the ghost" because he "did not know what the singularity of a position is, let's not call it a class position as one used to say long ago, but the singularity of a place of speech, of a place of experience, and of a link of filiation, places and links from which alone one may address oneself to the ghost." Instead, he "naively" asks Horatio to address it "as if he were taking part in a colloquium" (12). Warley objects that Marcellus is, on the contrary, "far from a naïve student," for he already holds his own beliefs about the possible nature of the ghost (1028). He makes his request to Horatio "not only as part of a deference to 'he that knows'," but also in mockery of him: "go ahead, scholar, speak to this." Thus, according to Warley, "the line that is regularly taken as a scholarly call to arms is, in part, making fun of the pretensions of scholarship"

(1029). He thereby redefines the "Marcellus complex" as something that signifies, "not the misidentification of a position as universal – Derrida's account – but rather the means by which positions themselves become apparent: the distinctions that distinguish the distinguisher" (1030).

The two readings are not so far apart though, for both establish that the inability of Horatio to speak to the ghost rests with his role as scholar, his subscription to the structures of knowledge that refuse to accommodate the presence or effects of the spectre. In looking at the spectre, Horatio can only see reflected back a form of what he already knows, a form that, although utterly alien, can only be viewed through the familiar frameworks and systems of belief that shape the world and the position that he occupies in it. Although he can view the spectre, hail it and demand that it expose itself, he cannot elicit a response because his own viewpoint is in the way. He cannot realise his inability to read the unreadable. As Derrida observes, the spectre "*is* something that one does not know, precisely, and one does not know if precisely it *is*, if it exists, if it responds to a name and corresponds to an essence." The onlooker cannot hope to assimilate the spectre within his existing framework of knowledge, "not out of ignorance, but because this non-object, this non-present present, this being-there of an absent or departed one no longer belongs to knowledge. At least no longer to that which one thinks one knows by the name of knowledge. One does not know if it is living or if it is dead" (*Specters* 5). Horatio does not know if it is living or dead, or what purpose it might have, or how (or why) it takes the dead King's form, although he does know prior to seeing the ghost that it is purely Marcellus and Barnardo's "fantasie" (Sig. [B1v]). He also does not know that to pursue this knowledge by endeavouring to ascertain the precise nature of the ghost through the systems of thought that had, until a moment before, excluded its existence, is to learn nothing at all. Worse still, it is to fail in the attempt to quell the ghost's effect upon the living and the present. Horatio's conjuration – his recitation of the list of possible reasons for the ghost's appearance and his demands for the ghost to speak – conjures up the voices of both present and past, the somewhat more tractable ghosts of numerous beliefs and mythologies from other contexts and times, but it cannot lay the spectre to rest.

Here, of course, is where Hamlet steps in, who is willing to "wipe away all triviall fond records, / All sawes of books, all formes, all pressures past," to erase all knowledge from his mind in order to speak with the spectre, to subscribe to the spectre's story and commandments despite its frightening indeterminacy and to suffer the consequences (Sig. [D3v]). Derrida speculates that Marcellus may in fact have been "anticipating the coming, one day, one night, several centuries later, of another 'scholar,' one who is able:

> beyond the opposition between presence and non-presence, actuality and inactuality, life and non-life, of thinking the possibility of the specter, the specter as possibility. Better (or worse) he would know how to address himself to spirits. He would know that such an address is not only already possible, but that it will have at all times conditioned, as such, address in general. In any case, here is someone mad enough to hope to *unlock* the possibility of such an address. (*Specters* 13)

If Hamlet is not that scholar, then he is surely the figure that anticipates and inherits his arrival. Horatio is in no doubt as to whether Hamlet is better equipped to talk to the ghost. After the botched attempt to force the ghost into speaking, Horatio swears "uppon my life / This spirit dumb to us, will speake to him" (Sig. [B3v]). *Upon my life* – Horatio is so certain that he is correct in this assessment that he is willing to offer up this most serious vow in anticipation of Hamlet's success with the spectre. And Horatio is right; his fellow scholar Hamlet, who knows of the dangers, who calls out "Angels and Ministers of grace defend us" as he approaches the ghost, can speak to the spectre where Horatio has failed (Sig. D1v]).

Landau argues that Hamlet fares no better than Horatio, insofar as he too resorts to employing "a cumulative embarrassment of incompatible discursive modes," vacillating between "Catholicism, Protestantism, agnosticism, neo-stoicism, and sheer materialism" (221). But unlike Horatio, Hamlet's principal motive is not epistemological. Hamlet ends his own, less formed speculations with a series of open-ended questions. "What may this meane," he asks the ghost, that it makes "we fooles of nature / So horridly to shake our disposition / With thoughts beyond the reaches of our soules, / Say why is this, wherefore, what should we doe[?]" (Sig.

[D1v]). Although he does subsequently become more insistent with the ghost, he is willing nevertheless to allow it to dictate the terms of their conversation:

> HAMLET
>
> Whether wilt thou leade me, speak, Ile goe no further.
> GHOST
> Marke me.
> HAMLET.
> I will. (Sig. D2[r])

The ghost speaks: Hamlet offers him pure attention. For good measure, the ghost then insists "but lend thy serious hearing / To what I shall unfold." Hamlet reaffirms "Speake, I am bound to heare" (Sig. [D2v]). Hamlet knows what Horatio does not: that for the ghost to speak, he must be willing to hear anything, to erase all other considerations, and to suspend his reliance upon his preconceptions of what the ghost might be able or likely to say. Just as Marcellus warns Hamlet that the ghost "waves you to a more remooved ground," this willingness to enter into the ghost's world inevitably dislocates Hamlet at least partially from the structures of his existing knowledge of ghosts (Sig. [D1v]).

He succeeds in speaking with the ghost, because, although he too wishes to ascertain what the ghost's presence means, he is willing to accept its radical indeterminacy in order to grasp at the father whom he has lost and to retrieve some kind of inheritance where he has been denied any. He does not quite step into the role that Derrida envisions for a non-traditional scholar. He cannot think his way through, beyond, or between the oppositions that the ghost so disturbs, and indeed spends much of the rest of the play in meditating upon life and death and working to restore the logical functioning of time and justice. But he can speak to the spectre nevertheless because he is willing to immerse himself in spectral illogic, in the disruption of the present and of Denmark. It is not, as Landau claims, that the ghost "merely confirms what Hamlet had already suspected or, even worse, simply tells him what he wants to hear"; nor is it that Hamlet is a superior scholar, for he shows no more sophistication in his reading of the ghost than his fellow student and notoriously continues to show signs of doubt as to its nature well after reaching the conclusion that it is an "honest Ghost" (Landau 224; Shakespeare Sig. [D4r]).

Rather, it provides him with a focal point, a cause for the destruction of origins that has put his world asunder and a task to perform in remembering the father who inexplicably stands before him once more. Unlike Horatio, he does not really need to settle upon a final, fixed interpretation of the ghost's ontological state. On the contrary, his willingness to accept what the ghost says without ever really fixing upon a firm determination of the nature of its existence is precisely what renders him able to speak with it. Hamlet is willing to hear the ghost, to subscribe to its message even where it turns the emotional, political, and spiritual structures of his world upside down and inside out. He is willing to be haunted in every aspect of his life thereafter, and to proceed in an environment that, under the influence of the spectre, has long since ceased to make sense. Here, the ghost has the audience that it requires in order to be heard.

Of course, this does not resolve the matter of what it is that the ghost has to tell us; what secrets it holds, what is the nature of its frighteningly indeterminate state, or what it might mean for the ontology of the living. Landau offers up a useful image where he argues the general inconsistencies of the early ghost scenes to be a reflection of the epistemological disorder of early modern England:

> It is human knowledge on the whole – whether classical, superstitious, or religious – which keeps wandering in the dead of night, calling for others to unfold when it should actually unfold itself, speaking to what cannot be spoken to, charging what cannot be charged, offering vain blows to what seems to be here, and here, and gone. (220)

Landau's image appears to refer to Horatio in its reference to a figure calling out for others to reveal themselves, but conflates it with Marcellus (who strikes at the unknown), and the ghost (who stalks through the night), in order to draw all three into a metaphor for knowledge itself. It is curiously apt, for if Marcellus and Horatio's attempts to identify the ghost's meaning and render it static emerge through the structures of "human knowledge," it becomes all too clear that this knowledge is itself inadequate to call out to the spectre or to identify its function or substance. Like Horatio, knowledge is therefore displaced by Hamlet, whose ability to speak to the ghost draws upon the same frameworks of understanding but disrupts

them so that we see that its structural integrity was illusory all along. The spectre threatens to become more real than that which it unsettles and erodes.

Thus, the figure of Old Hamlet becomes exemplary of a wider ontological problem. If the effects it wreaks upon its audience draws out the inadequacies and instabilities of existing constructions of the living, the dead, and the apparition, the ghost not only troubles the categories themselves, but also the state of the living who function through their underlying structures. In "The Last Act: Presentism, Spirituality and the Politics of *Hamlet*," Fernie reads Derrida's argument in *Specters of Marx* as one that "*all* others are ultimately beyond knowledge" and that, "because identities are determined by the free play of difference," the issue of "'to be and 'not-to-be'" in *Hamlet* is not a matter of either, but rather, "of *being-in-between*" (193). He contends that *Specters of Marx* paints the ghost as "an avatar of the Other that additionally reveals the fleetingness and dependency of human being as such. In exemplifying our own 'lack-in-being', mortality and difference, it encourages solidarity not just with the living but equally with the dead and unborn" (193). For Fernie, Derrida's argument locates the ghost within his "philosophy of *différance*" in a way that mitigates its "terrifying strangeness," "crucially stripping it of the uncanny *sameness* that is a main source of its terrifying power" (195-96). In other words, by drawing the ghost's disturbing and uncertain ontological state into the same parameters as the living, Derrida paradoxically makes it less strange (in that its unfixed state is analogous to that of the human) but also not strange enough, in that it overemphasizes the alienness of the other and thereby safely distances it.

Fernie argues that it is instead Old Hamlet's "death-defying sameness" – manifested through the repeated observations that it is "'most like' Old Hamlet," that it is "'like the king that's dead'" and that it is as similar to the King as Horatio's hands are to each other – that renders it uncanny. It "at once reduces difference to sameness *and* alienates self from self. . . . The sameness of the other is what encroaches on and threatens the autonomy of the self, particularly in the case of a father and son both called simply 'Hamlet'". Fernie positions this sameness as at least partly a matter of identity, an erosion of the son's interiority by the father but also an "identification and solidarity" between the two that then informs the way in which death erases distinction when Hamlet is in the graveyard (196). However, the

distinction between the two arguments is not as substantial as Fernie seems to think. Derrida is very clear in linking the capacity of the ghost (all ghosts) to be uncannily "frightening" to their relative familiarity (*Specters* 181). His reading of "man" as "the most 'unheimlich' of all ghosts" arises on this basis, because "the most familiar becomes the most disquieting." That which we know best – that which we *are* – becomes "strange, distant, threatening" when disrupted by the fleeting impression of a presence that, in its similitude, encroaches upon our sense of unique, contained interiority (181). In Derrida's reading, as in Fernie's, the ghost becomes most terrifying where it identifies most closely with the living because, where the utterly alien figure of the ghost overlaps with ourselves, the self no longer appears identical with itself but becomes frighteningly unfamiliar and contaminate. This is why "the specter first of all sees us" – because it returns our gaze with the use of our own eyes so that, in perceiving the anomaly that appears before us, we must see also the disjunctures within – the disjunctures that *constitute* within. The spectre's evocation of a sense of perpetual movement of differences, deferrals, and referrals is what brings about the sameness that Fernie describes – the sense that one is not quite oneself *by* oneself.

Hence Derrida raises the possibility of inviting the spectre in, despite our wariness of it and our "desire to exclude" it, without "accepting him or her," but recognizing that the "stranger . . . is already found within (*das Heimlich-Unheimliche*), more intimate with one than one is oneself" (216-17). This illicit knowledge arises from the spectre's entry into movements of which we are normally unaware, the gaps, the discontinuities, the slippage that characterizes the containment of our selves and that of the other, particularly where that other is a ghost. The reflections generated by the spectre thereby expose discontinuities and instabilities within the very relation between outside and inside. And it is our reception of this disintegration of the oppositions upon which we rely and through which we live that determines our ability to speak with the spectre, to ask questions that enable it to return a response, and to listen to that response rather than endeavour to suppress it. Derrida envisions a "'scholar' of the future" who might discover "not how to make conversation with the ghost but how to talk with him, with her, how to let them speak or how to give them back speech, even if it is in oneself, in the other, in the other in oneself; they are

always *there*, specters, even if they do not exist, even if they are no longer, even if they are not yet" (221). It is a seductive thought, this scholar, and it is an idea that undoubtedly informs the growing critical enquiry into issues of spectrality. At the same time, it seems clear, at least within the body of literature I have discussed in this thesis, that the living speak with spectres whether they know it or not, whether they want to or not, even or especially in the course of attempting to banish their existence. As Lavater shows in his repeated conjurations of the dead and Horatio discovers when Hamlet unwittingly escalates the indeterminacy and the threat of Old Hamlet's ghost, spectres are most inclined to arise where the living work hardest to eradicate them.

It is for this reason that Elizabethan literature is rife with ghosts. As the presence of the dead becomes increasingly unwelcome and the theological and ideological frameworks of the living work to exclude them, spectres find ever more sturdy structures to haunt. They arise precisely where they cannot belong, where they have no place because their presence is prohibited and illogical. The epistemological systems through which the living comprehend their world is subject to this kind of breaching because the language through which those systems arise is based upon the instabilities and the spectral relation between constituent parts that they work to exclude. Spectrality is particularly prone to arise in relation to the subject of death because, in haunting the terms of both language and psyche, the disruption to divisions between the living and the dead threaten the distinctions that tell us who the living are and what they carry with them from the past. The ghosts that haunt the living in the theatre but also the Elizabethan period's wider discourses of the dead speak not only about those who have breached the strictures of burial, but about those who view them, who find themselves peering into a spectral mirror that denies their separation from the dead, the past, and even from the outer world that surrounds them. They tell us that what is inherited from that which has gone before – whether medieval theology or Senecan drama, classical mythology or popular superstition – is not isolated from that which has departed but inhabits the present still. They tell us the same thing about the future also, for this too is marked within the living as it is within the period's literature and culture.

Lavater writes that "They which will strike spirits and ghosts with a sword . . . fight with their owne shadow" (215). Horatio might learn something: but so might we all. To hit out at a ghost is to attempt to silence it but in the process, to strike at that which is part of ourselves. If we wish to speak with spectres, it seems, we must learn the lesson that Horatio cannot, that blinds his realisation that the ghost who holds the keys to the unknown has more to say than what we know to ask. We must look to that which hovers just beyond our field of vision and outside our grasp; we must listen to hear what it might have to say if asked the right questions, if we invite it in rather than seeking to exclude its presence. In this way of talking to the ghost, we may find newly productive ways of addressing the ontologies of the living and the dead, of asking what it is that has gone before us and haunts us still.

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