

**Play Dead:
The Living and the Dead on the Shakespearean Stage, 1587-1612**

by
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ABSTRACT

In late medieval English society the dead remained amongst the living through the Church's all pervasive intercessory practices (memorial, commemorative, and liturgical services) to send succour to souls in Purgatory. In 1576 the Church of England officially dismissed the doctrine of Purgatory as an invented fiction and all intercessory services were abandoned effectively separating the living from the dead. Such cultural and religious changes were traumatic for many and even those who welcomed the reformed religion had to find new ways to remember the dead. My dissertation looks at four of Shakespeare's great works (the *Henry VI* plays, *Hamlet*, *Titus Andronicus*, and *Macbeth*) and examines the ways in which, through performance, these plays create a space inhabited by the living and the dead which simultaneously evokes traditional dealings with the dead and mourning for those traditions thus allowing a re-imagining of relationships between the living and the dead.

Keywords: Shakespeare, Early Modern Drama, Reformation, Death, Performance, Commemoration, Purgatory, Catholicism

DEDICATION

For Mark

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Approval	ii
Abstract	iii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Table of Contents	vi
INTRODUCTION	
Playing Dead on the Shakespearean Stage	1
CHAPTER ONE	
Monuments Without Tombs	
Death, Nationalism, and Performing Remembrance in the Henry VI plays.....	9
CHAPTER TWO	
Catching Consciences	
Individual Grief and Communal Remembrance in Hamlet	54
CHAPTER THREE	
Gazing Upon Ruins	
Images of Dismemberment and Dismembered Images in Titus Andronicus	105
CHAPTER FOUR	
The Sleeping, The Dead, and the Damned	
Present death in Macbeth	146
CONCLUSION	
“Twixt these two ways”	186
WORKS CITED	
	189

INTRODUCTION

Playing Dead on the Shakespearean Stage

To play dead is to lie still and pretend to be a corpse but this is not always how the dead were played on the Shakespearean stage. In the early modern theatre the dead walked out onto the stage, they told stories, they made demands, they were present: Banquo returns from the grave to push Macbeth from his stool; the ghost of Old Hamlet marches back and forth across the stage; Titus' dead sons demand a sacrifice; and the corpse of Henry V is an ominous presence in the opening scene of *1 Henry VI*. The dead are not always welcome amongst the living nor are their intentions always benevolent and relations between the living and the dead in these plays are vexed. Strained relations with the dead were a concern for many in Shakespeare's England due to ecclesiastical changes to commemorative and funerary rites brought about by the Reformation. The Protestant denial of the doctrine of Purgatory and elimination of all intercession for the dead severed ties between the living and the dead; but the dead, it seems, were not so easily dismissed. My dissertation examines tensions surrounding the dead in four of Shakespeare's great dramatic works, the *Henry VI* trilogy, *Hamlet*, *Titus Andronicus*, and *Macbeth*. Recognition of the cultural and religious strife surrounding the dead in early modern England supplies a key to re-open areas of these works that have often been dismissed as anachronistic, oblique, or simply confusing. My thesis presents a reading of these plays that demonstrates that the imaginative matrix from

which Shakespeare created these rich and sometimes disturbing playworlds was informed by controversy over relations between the living and the dead.

The story of the Reformation in England has shifted from one that lauded the popularity of reforms to a revised narrative that emphasizes the destructive impact of religious change.¹ Within the last three decades revisionist Reformation historians have made a case for the strength and popularity of late medieval Catholic practices and thought.² These revisionist accounts of the English Reformation oppose the view that the official break with Rome was accompanied by a popular and quick rejection of the old religion; rather, they argue, for the majority of English people it was a traumatic break with long-held, cherished traditions. Following these revisionist accounts of the Reformation in England, “post-revisionist” historians, as they are often called, are now engaged in a vibrant body of work that re-thinks the reception and accommodation of the

¹ A. G. Dickens, *The English Reformation*, and G.R. Elton, *Reform and Reformation*, present what is now generally recognized as a Protestant biased “master Whig” view of the English Reformation. The most important “revisionist” works are J. J. Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People*; Christopher Haigh: *The English Reformation Revised* and Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*. The best summary of the historiography of the English Reformation is Peter Marshall, “(Re)defining the English Reformation.” See also Jackson, Ken and Arthur F. Marotti, “The Turn to Religion in Early Modern Studies” (169-71).

² Duffy’s *Stripping* is the most influential work to promote the vitality of the late medieval Catholic Church in England. *Stripping* was initially hailed by many historians as ushering in a re-ordering of the Reformation in England. The work is unabashedly nostalgic and the fact that Duffy is a practicing Catholic has drawn criticism that his revisionism replaces a Protestant biased narrative with a Catholic biased view of Reformation events. Other important revisionist / post-revisionist scholars are also practicing Catholics; Peter Marshall has recently addressed the question of “whether the academic study of the English Reformation is bedeviled by the retention, or even the revival, of confessional perspectives and allegiances among historians themselves” (“(Re)defining” 570).

reformed religion amongst the English people.³ The tendency amongst post-revisionist scholars is to extend the chronology of the Reformation into the seventeenth century.⁴ Extending the chronology of the English Reformation into the Jacobean period allows for a reconsideration of the extent to which Shakespeare's plays were influenced by religious controversies that, until recently, were thought to be long obsolete by the time the Globe theatre opened its gates.

My research is built upon revisionist Reformation scholarship and equally important to my dissertation is the growing field of social studies of death.⁵ Recent work on death in medieval and early modern England has “dramatically improved our understanding of the mortuary culture of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England” (Marshall *Beliefs* 1). The pioneering work of Philippe Ariès, for example, recognized the importance of the Protestant denial of Purgatory and noted post-Reformation reluctance to abandon the dead to “an unknown and fearful destiny” (462). Recognition of the ways in which the late medieval Roman Catholic liturgy kept the dead amongst the living and offered a consolatory, constructive way of dealing with grief and bereavement runs like a refrain through the work of Gittings, Cressy, Houlebrooke and Marshall. Peter Marshall

³ A few of the most important revisionist works are David Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells*; Ethan Shagan, ed., *Catholics and the 'Protestant nation'*, and *Popular Politics and the English Reformation*, and Alexandra Walsham, *Church Papists*.

⁴ The chronology of the English Reformation is another point of scholarly debate, which is also addressed by Marshall in “(Re) defining,” (566-9).

⁵ See Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*; David Cressy, *Birth Marriage and Death*; Patrick J. Geary, *Living with the Dead and Phantoms of Remembrance*; Claire Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual*; Bruce Gordon and Peter Marshall eds., *The Place of the Dead*; Ralph A. Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion, and the Family*; Peter C. Jupp and Clare Gittings eds., *Death in England*; Peter Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead*.

in particular has been foundational to my thinking about the dead in Shakespearean England and I borrow heavily from Marshall's formidably well-researched scholarship on the dead. While decidedly post-revisionist, Marshall presents a balanced view of religious beliefs in early modern England that re-considers the extent to which some of the English population held on to Roman Catholic practices, but keeps the progress of the ultimately successful Protestant Reformation within sight. Patrick J. Geary's work on relationships between the living and the dead in the middle-ages, and especially his elucidation of the importance of memory in medieval society, has been immeasurably valuable to my imaginings of what it might mean to live with the dead, and what it might mean to the living to end that long relationship.

Literary critics have also begun to re-consider the events of the English Reformation in light of revisionist and post-revisionist scholarship.⁶ Relevant to my doctoral work are studies of drama that consider the impact of the Protestant denial of Purgatory.⁷ One of the first, and still the best, studies of death and drama in light of revisionist Reformation thinking is Michael Neill's *Issues of Death*. Neill asserts that early modern tragic drama "needs to be understood in terms of a wider preoccupation with the importance of remembrance in a culture forced to devise new ways of accommodating itself to the experience of mortality" (38). Stephen Greenblatt's *Hamlet*

⁶ See Ken Jackson and Arthur F. Marotti, "The Turn to Religion."

⁷ See, for example, Michael Neill, *Issues of Death*. Stephen Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory*; William E. Engel, *Death and Drama*, and *Mapping Mortality*; Harry Morris, *Last Things in Shakespeare*; Thomas Rist, *Revenge Tragedy and the Drama of Commemoration*, and "Religion, Politics, Revenge."; Richard Wilson. *Secret Shakespeare*; Richard Dutton, Alison Findlay and Richard Wilson, eds., *Theatre and Religion*; Beatrice Groves, *Texts and Traditions*.

in Purgatory also attempts to consider the centrality of relationships with the dead in late medieval society. But while Neill is acutely attuned to the emotional claims exercised on the living by the dead, Greenblatt's tales of souls returning from Purgatory seem more like quaint anecdotes than evidence of important societal belief systems. I hold that the Protestant denial of the doctrine of Purgatory was more than a rejection of Roman Catholic liturgical practice. The cessation of intercession for souls in Purgatory caused a rupture between the bereaved and the departed, and by extension, the past and the present. To intercede for the dead was to keep the dead in memory and memory brings the past into the present. Four hundred years of anti-Catholic harping on Purgatory as a money making scheme for corrupt clergy has lost sight of the ways in which concern for the dead was an important way of ordering one's place amongst the living. By focusing on dealings with the dead my thesis demonstrates that, in these plays, commemoration, remembrance, the place of the dead in this world and the next, and connections between the past and the present, are all contested sites of concern.

In chapter one I analyse the series of death scenes in the *Henry VI* plays within the context of the medieval tradition of memorializing war dead. I begin, as so many critics do with the first *Henriad*, with Thomas Nashe's rather extraordinary claim that plays, which borrow from the English Chronicles, essentially raise the dead. According to Nashe, valiant English forefathers, such as Sir John Talbot in *1 Henry VI*, are rescued from graves of oblivion. Talbot and the other valiant English forefathers who die on stage to have their bones "new embalmed" (Nashe) with the spectators' tears are also medieval dead whose rites of remembrance were disrupted or abandoned during the Reformation. The first *Henriad*, then, is essentially a narrative of loss. King Henry VI,

we are repeatedly told, loses France and all the glory won by his famous father, the victorious Henry V. But performance surrounding the dead in the trilogy is commemorative and in this way there is a gain amongst all the losses. The first *Henriad* is, at one level, a project of recovery that seeks to reconnect with England's medieval past. Most of the nobles featured in the *Henry VI* plays had tombs and monuments that were destroyed by the dissolution leaving them quite literally in graves of oblivion, but through commemorative performance the dead are made present and become "monuments"—in the sense of "to be perpetually remembered" (*OED*)—without tombs.

The fascinating figure of the ghost of Old Hamlet and how this "dreaded sight" (1.1.25) evokes concern over dead ancestors is the subject of chapter two. Young Hamlet's play-within-the-play, *The Mousetrap*, is the device the Prince uses to "catch the conscience of the guilty King" (2.2.592). Using drama to catch guilty consciences was the explicit purpose of the English traditional religious drama, and *Hamlet*, I would like to suggest, owes a more extensive debt to the passion and morality plays than has previously been recognized. The perturbed spirit is a "questionable ghost" and the question I ask is why did Shakespeare make the questionable eschatology of the ghost part of the play? I argue that such ambiguity about the place of the dead in the next world was a wider cultural concern. The repeated appearances of the ghost, accompanied by Prince Hamlet's frustrated attempts to memorialize his father, dramatise the troubled question of how to commemorate the dead once relations between the living and dead have broken down. The ghost in *Hamlet* was a particularly unsettling apparition on the Elizabethan stage because he operated as an intrusive, needling prick of conscience to remember the dead at a time when many were unclear on the place and state of the dead.

My third chapter opens with a reading of the puzzling appearance of monastic ruins in *Titus Andronicus*. The play is set in ancient Rome and the lusty Goth's talk of wandering from his troops to gaze on a ruined monastery has long been dismissed as an anachronistic oddity. I argue that, contrary to reading the ruins as out of time and place in *Titus Andronicus*, the appearance of the ruins offers a key to interpreting dismemberment in the play. Ruined monasteries were products of iconoclastic violence, which left behind maimed and dismembered remains of buildings, images and statuary. The maimed Roman Catholic ruins gazed upon by the worthy Goth may be seen as reflective of the dismembered "poor remainder of Andronici" (5.3.130), who, as the play progresses, become maimed and dismembered Roman ruins. I suggest that the Andronici are staged as "quick images" of dismemberment that are evocative of the dismembered images and statuary which Elizabethan congregations faced daily in their recently purged churches.

Finally, chapter four turns to examine the dark world of *Macbeth* as a dramatization of hell-on-earth. When Duncan learns of the treasonous Thane of Cawdor he pronounces his enemies' "present death" (1.2.67), and the Thane becomes a dead-man-walking. The witches greet Macbeth with "present grace" (1.2.55) and hail him Thane of Cawdor but "The Thane of Cawdor lives" (1.2.79) and the "strange images of death" (1.3.97), particularly a kind of death-in-life, begin. In *Macbeth*, I argue, there is an annihilation of eschatological space where "last things"—the afterlife—become "present things" and Hell is made present. The hell-on-earth created by the damned Macbeths is informed by contemporary theological and cultural debates over the nature of Hell, the state of the soul between death and the last judgment, and the doctrine of

eternal torment. I examine how the afterlife of the play-world of *Macbeth* operates within theatrical space and time and makes use of the medieval Harrowing of Hell legend of Christ's descent into Hell. In this way, *Macbeth* participates in early seventeenth century discussions of eschatology and, I suggest, it is through a particularly theatrical imagining of a state of damnation that Shakespeare is able to create such a compellingly powerful impression of the presence of evil.

The order of my chapters is intended to illustrate how thematic concerns over relations between the living and the dead introduced in Shakespeare's early works (the *Henry VI* plays, and *Titus Andronicus*) resurface in later works (*Hamlet* and *Macbeth*) in a more fully developed fashion. The fear over a break with the past, for example, as expressed in the first *Henriad* as a fear of erasure of the markings of memory, materializes as a breakdown of both personal and communal memory in *Hamlet*. In the fractured world of *Titus Andronicus* the dismembered Andronici become life in death figures. This idea of death in life becomes amplified in *Macbeth* by the dramatization of eschatological space that is present and figures that become dead-men-walking.

CHAPTER ONE

Monuments Without Tombs

Death, Nationalism and Performing Remembrance in the *Henry VI* plays

Thou art a Monument, without a tomb,
And art alive still, while thy Booke doth live,
And we have wits to read, and praise to give.

(Jonson 22-4)

I- Raising the Dead

The *Henry VI* plays are rarely staged and have attracted little critical attention in comparison to the second tetralogy.⁸ Shakespeare's first Henriad tells the story of how "Henry the Sixt . . . lost France, and made his England bleed; / Which oft our stage hath shown" (*Henry V* Epilogue 9-13). The epilogue of *Henry V* also advertises the unlikely cause for celebration—loss of France and a bleeding England—and the plays' somewhat surprising stage triumph; yet it is due to the rousing success of *1 Henry VI* that we have Thomas Nashe's quite singular account of the popularity of this play:

⁸ On the critical tradition of the *Henry VI* plays see Thomas Pendleton's introduction in *Henry VI: Critical Essays*. On the staging history of the *Henry VI* trilogy see Homer D. Swander "The Rediscovery of *Henry VI*,"; on the recent minor revival of interest in staging the trilogy, see Phyllis Rackin, "*Henry VI, Part 1* A Modern Perspective." For an analysis of the plays that seeks to explain their popularity in light of performance theory see Brian Walsh "Unkind Division."

What if I prove Playes to be no extreame; but a rare exercise of vertue? First, for the subject of them is borrowed out of our English Chronicles, wherein our forefathers valiant acts (that have line long buried in rustie brasse and worme-eaten bookes) are revived, and they themselves raised from the Grave of Oblivion, and brought to pleade their aged Honours in open presence: than which can be a sharper reproofe to these degenerate effeminate dayes of ours? How would it have joyed brave *Talbot* (the terror of the French) to thinke that after he had lyne two hundred yeares in his Tombe, hee should triumphe againe on the Stage, and have his bones newe embalmed with the teares of ten thousand spectators at least (at severall times), who, in the Tragedian that represents his person, imagine they behold him fresh bleeding.

(qtd. in Burns 212)

Andrew Gurr calculates that Nashe underestimated the number of spectators by at least half, which means that over 20,000 playgoers wept over brave Talbot (*Playgoing* 165). Talbot's bones are "newe embalmed" by the spectators' tears and in this way the playgoers *effect* the state of the dead. Nashe claims that this embalming would have "joyed" Talbot as he is imaginatively exhumed to report his martial acts ("Honours") in the open presence of the playhouse. In early modern culture, to be confined to a "Grave of Oblivion" was to be forgotten and the opposite of such a fate was to be posthumously remembered and thus saved by the "triumph of memory" (Engel *Mapping Mortalitie* 3).

Talbot and the other valiant forefathers who die on stage in the *Henry VI* trilogy are famous English war dead but they are also medieval dead whose rites of remembrance were disrupted or abandoned during the Reformation leaving them quite

literally in graves of oblivion. The late medieval liturgical practice “not only commemorated the departed but made them present” (Geary *Phantoms* 16) and similarly, in the *Henry VI* plays England’s valiant forefathers—“ they themselves raised” (Nashe)—are made present for the sake of commemorative performance. Nashe trumpets the play’s ability to promote national pride as the valiant acts of those forefathers represented on the stage are taken from *English Chronicles* while at the same time the performances bring “joy” to the dead who are rescued from oblivion. The performance is strongly commemorative. But while the plays celebrate and commemorate, the *Henry VI* trilogy is essentially a narrative of loss; beginning with the death of the famous Henry V followed by martial defeat, the death of brave Talbot, the loss of France and the slipping away of England’s victorious past.⁹ Moreover, the military defeats are punctuated by a series of mournful death scenes. Alexander Leggatt suggests that the death scenes “slow the action down as each death is held in a freeze-frame to let us contemplate it before the pace picks up again and history moves on” (“The Death of John Talbot” 12). I would argue we are meant to mourn rather than contemplate, and that the mourning of these national heroes has the double effect of raising medieval war dead for tearful commemoration while simultaneously celebrating Englishness. I believe it is this paradoxical joining of mourning and celebrating (loss of France and joyful remembrance of English forefathers) that is one key to the plays’ popularity. In *Hamlet* Claudius promotes “mirth in funeral [and] dirge in marriage” (1.2.12), so the *Henry VI* trilogy offers “delight in dole” (*Hamlet* 1.2.13) or joy in dirge and gain in loss. Criticism on the histories in recent years has concentrated on the role they played in the emergence of a

⁹ See Brain Walshe, “Unkind Division” on the play’s obsession with loss.

national consciousness in early modern England.¹⁰ Anthony B. Dawson writes that in post-Reformation England “the struggle to define a theology and a church government that were unique, and strategically placed in relation to both Catholic and Protestant Europe contributed to a developing sense of a specifically English identity” (61). Similarly, Andrew Escobedo argues that the Reformation broke with “centuries of devotional and ecclesiastical tradition”(4) causing a sense of historical discontinuity and that the early modern English national consciousness emerged out of a sense of belatedness that sought to recover the past. One way the past was recovered, posits Escobedo, is through “the invocation of distinctly *national* heroes from the past” (24) and this invocation of national heroes recalls how Nashe sees the staging of English history. D. R. Woolf argues that the period between 1590 and 1620 was “an important turning point in the ways in which history was presented to and perceived by, the public in England” (187). Both *Hamlet* and the *Henry VI* plays are concerned with the problem of memorialization within a reformed culture in which commemorating the dead is still troubled by association with “papist” intercessory practices.

I’d like to begin with the posthumous treatment of Talbot in 4.4 and the concerns the scene raises over treatment of the dead. The death of Talbot and his son does not end the scene: the bodies remain on stage while the French, followed by the English, come to “survey the dead” (4.4.169). Unsurprisingly, the French insult their foes but the Bastard

¹⁰ See Richard Helgerson *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England*, and Claire McEachern, *The Poetics of English Nationhood, 1590-1612*. For a recent re-thinking of nationalism that includes a discussion of religious change and Shakespeare’s history plays see Philip Schwyzer, *Literature, Nationalism, and Memory in Early Modern England and Wales* (126-50). For an analysis of early modern history plays as a genre “which reflects on England’s religious settlement” see Jeffrey Knapp, *Shakespeare’s Tribe* (61-79).

suggests violent postmortem mutilation: “Hew them to pieces. Hack their bones asunder, / Whose life was England’s glory, Gallia’s wonder” (4.4.159-60). The Dolphin will not allow such an atrocity: “O no, forbear. For that which we have fled / During the life, let us not wrong it dead” (4.4.161-2). Sir Lucy enters and immediately begins to memorialize “Valiant Lord Talbot” (4.4.60-71) while Joan interrupts to mock the “silly” epitaph and verbally abuse Talbot’s “stinking and fly-blown” (4.4.188) corpse. Lucy is enraged and demands the bodies for “burial as beseems their worth” (198). In this scene, concern over posthumous care, including disrespectful treatment of the dead, memorializing the dead, and proper interment of those “who’s life was England’s glory” are all foregrounded and these concerns surface again and again in the *Henry VI* trilogy. And as the audiences mourns the loss of “Valiant Lord Talbot” they simultaneously celebrate “England’s glory, gallia’s wonder” and here begins of the trope of joy in dirge that operates through the trilogy.

Talbot is raised from the grave to be remembered as the plays revive the dead to live again in memory. Living through memory is a constant theme throughout the trilogy, especially with respect to Henry V who, although deceased before the events of the plays begin, maintains a presence as “that ever living man of memory” (*1 Henry VI* 4.3.50). The English Chronicles are just another grave where valiant acts lie “buried” and the “fame that is due to true Nobilitie deceased” (Nashe 1.213) is performed on the stage. Nashe uses “fame” to mean to speak a public report, and thus the importance of the public space of the theatre.¹¹ Anthony B. Dawson argues that part of the pleasure of playgoing was a kind of affective communal audience participation:

¹¹ Fame, from Latin *fama*, report, and Greek *oavas*, to speak (*OED*).

In the theatre, the physical memorial, the habit, is absent; it is gestured toward, represented. Or rather a different habit is put into play, an institutional one specific to theatre in which we might say that social ritual is “remembered” and a temporary community nostalgically configured.

(Dawson and Yachnin 173)

Theatrical performance of Talbot’s death has resulted in the formation of just such a nostalgic temporary community who simultaneously remember the social habit of repeated liturgical performances that made the dead present.

II- Medieval Commemoration of War Dead

The *Henry VI* plays, then, celebrate national heroes through commemorative performance. Commemoration of those who died fighting for England was an established medieval practice that was disrupted by the Reformation and memorialisation of war dead had its own traditions that were typically maintained by the crown. The Towton battlefield chapel, for example, was founded by Edward IV and patronage continued under Richard III. Battle dead were often buried where they fell, as evidenced by the 1996 discovery of a mass burial-pit at Towton field, and battlefields became consecrated ground.¹² Battlefield chapels were special purpose built chantries positioned overlooking the battle site to commemorate those who lay under the battlefield.

¹² See Fiorato V, Boylston, A. And Knusel, C. *Blood Red Roses*. Oxford: Oxbow books, 2000. See also www.brad.ac.uk/acad/archsci/depart/resgrp/towton/ on the “Towton Mass Grave Project” for a fascinating forensic report of the physique of the soldiers buried at Towton and the nature of their battle injuries; including evidence of perimortem mutilation such as the cutting off of noses and ears. This discovery lends historical precedence for the bizarre treatment of Clifford’s remains in *3 Henry VI*, and French threats to desecrate Talbot’s corpse in *1 Henry VI*.

Chaplains sang daily masses for the souls of the battle dead and anniversaries of deaths were marked by dirges and requiem masses, much like the chantries described by Henry V where the “sad and solemn priests / Sing still for Richard’s soul” (*Henry V* 4.1.298-99). But by time *Henry V* was staged priests had long since stopped singing for souls. In 1547 the Chantries Act of 1545 condemned chantries for “devising and phantasing vain opinions of Purgatory” (qtd. in Duffy *Voices* 119). Most of the chantries were destroyed by 1548 and all memorial services came to a halt.¹³ The destruction of the battlefield chantries also contributed to a sense of disconnection with England’s medieval past. The Abbey ruins could be viewed as representative of England’s break with Rome and the island’s new independence.¹⁴ In contrast, the battlefield chantry chapels represented English history. When the battlefield chantries were destroyed, battlefields became vast abandoned graveyards, reminders of those who had died fighting for an England that had now forgotten them. The Towton chantry sent out songs daily for the souls of the battle dead for almost 100 years, but “the abolition of purgatory left the military dead alone where they lay” (Morgan “Battlefield Church” 3) in oblivion until those happy few valiant forefathers, such as Talbot and Salisbury, were remembered, perhaps “with

¹³ On the dissolution of English chantries see Alan Krieder *The Road to Dissolution*. On the function and role of chantries in medieval culture and ecclesiastic practice, see G. H. Cooke, *Mediaeval Chantries*, Kathleen Wood-Legh, *Perpetual Chantries in Britain*, and Simon Roffey, *Chantry Chapels and Medieval Strategies for the Afterlife*. See also Ironically, for my reading of the connection between war dead and the tradition of chantry chapels, Duffy notes that funds garnered from the dissolution of the chantries were “intended to fund the war with Scotland” (*Voices* 119).

¹⁴ Margaret Aston articulates the influence of the dissolution on the early modern sense of the past but does not discuss chantries: see *Lollards and Reformers* (313-37).

advantages” (*Henry V* 4.3.50-60), when raised to “triumphe againe on the Stage” (Nashe).

Battlefield chapels were one abandoned tradition associated with interment and commemoration of battle dead, but also important to my reading of performing remembrance in the *Henry VI* plays is the medieval practice of exhumation of illustrious battle dead for burial in English soil. Nashe takes credit for raising Talbot from his tomb but Nashe was not the first to exhume the bones of the terror of the French. Holinshed reports that Talbot was killed in the battle of Castillon where his “corps was left on the ground, & after was found by hys frendes, & conveyed to Whitechurch in Shopshyre” (236), but Talbot’s posthumous return to England did not in fact take place until decades later. The Earle was originally buried where he fell, on the battlefield at Castillon, where his remains lay for almost fifty years until they were exhumed and removed to England by his grandson. John Leland reports:

This John [Talbot] had among his Brethern one caullid Gilbert Talbot, after a Kinght of Fame, the which buried the Erle his Grandfathers Bones browght out of Fraunce at Whitechirche in a fair Chapelle, where he is also buried himself.

(qtd. in Boswell-Stone 233)

Talbot was brought home and interred at Whitechurch where his tomb still stands.

Talbot’s re-interment meant that he would be given full burial rites complete with all attending intercessory services and the establishment of annual memorial services.

Talbot was also returned to his homeland so that he could be commemorated as a national

hero and even his wife's monument at St. Paul's commemorates Talbot's service to his country:

Here before the image of Jesu, lieth the worshipful and right noble ladie
Margaret Countess of Shrewsburie, late wife of the true and victorious knight
and redoubtable warriour, John Talbot Earle of Shrewsburie which worship
died in Guien for the right of this land.

(Stow 1: 336)

These lines make it clear that it was both Talbot's bones and his "valiant acts" that were rescued from oblivion when he was brought home for burial.

Talbot is not the only noble featured in the *Henry VI* trilogy to have been rescued from obscure burial. Remarkably, the remains of Salisbury, Warwick, Suffolk, York, Rutland and even King Henry VI were all either exhumed or brought home for burial in English soil. The posthumous treatment of illustrious war dead was important to the chroniclers and Halle reports on the death and interment of Salisbury:

The Earle was conveighted to Meum upon Loyre, where he laie wounded viij
daies, during whiche tyme, he received devoutly the holy Sacramentes, and so
commended his soule to almight God, whose body was conveyed into
England, with all funeral and pompe, and buried at Bissam by his progenitors

(145)

It is notable that Halle's account, first published in 1542 prior to both the dissolution of the chantries and changes to the Order for Burial in *The Book of Common Prayer*, records that Salisbury received the "holy Sacramentes" before his death and subsequent burial

with “all funeral and pompe” at Bisham Abbey.¹⁵ Published in 1577 *Holinshed’s Chronicles* simply reports that Salisbury “was conveyed into England, with all funeral appointment” editing out the popish references to sacraments and illustrative of on-going sensitivity over dealings with the dead. The body of Warwick “The Kingmaker” was removed from Pontefract to posthumously join Salisbury’s remains at Bisham Abbey. Even the remains of the disgraced Lord Suffolk were recovered: Halle reports that Suffolk’s killers “left his body with his head upon the sandes of Dover, which corse was togheere founde by a chapelayne of his and conveyed to Wyngfelde college in Suffolke, and there buried” (219). Removal and reburial of remains occurred at the highest level and on 12 August 1484, thirteen years after the king’s death, Richard III had the remains of Henry VI “honourably translated” from the Benedictine abbey at Chertsey to St. John’s Chapel at Windsor (Wolffe 351-3).

Eight years earlier Richard III had been involved in yet another reinterment that has been called one of the most spectacular events of the Yorkist Age, the reburial of the Duke of York and Rutland:

For nearly fifteen years, following the Battle of Wakefield, the bodies of Richard, Duke of York and his son Rutland, had lain in a plain tomb at Pontefract. The bodies were exhumed on the morning of 21 July 1476, and for the rest of that day, they lay in state in the choir of the church. The next day, the cortege set out for Fotheringhay, with Richard, Duke of Gloucester as principal escort. The procession took a week to reach Fotheringhay, where

¹⁵ The order for the dissolution of the chantries was issued in 1547, directly after the death of Henry VIII who had hesitated to commit to their destruction. The Order for Burial in the *Book of Common Prayer* was drastically shortened in the 1552 revision.

King Edward and his other remaining brother, the duke of Clarence, waited at the entrance to the churchyard. . . Masses were sung . . . The following day, in the presence of the court, more masses were sung, and the Bishop of Lincoln gave the sermon. After the funeral, the coffins were placed in a vault beneath the chancel, the ceremonies being concluded with the giving of alms to some five thousand people, and the serving of dinner to two thousand or more.

(Sutton and Visser-Fuchs 101)

Such astronomical expenditure on funerary ritual illustrates the importance of commemoration in medieval society and this event is all the more extraordinary considering that only sixty years later the tombs of the Duke of York and Rutland were destroyed and all memorial services abolished.¹⁶ Philip Morgan comments on the English tradition of bringing home war dead: “That the long-dead might seem so instrumental to the authority of the lineage makes the assault of the English state upon the cult of the dead in the mid-sixteenth century seem all the more remarkable” (“Of Worms and War” 141). When the *Henry VI* plays are examined in the context of the pre-Reformation tradition of raising “true nobilitie deceased” from graves of oblivion it is possible to see that, through performance that commemorates, the plays provide a similar type of recovery. The *Henry VI* plays not only rescue medieval war dead from oblivion, but through performance that raises the dead—“they themselves raised ”—the plays imaginatively recover the tradition of exhuming valiant forefathers from obscure graves.

¹⁶ On the destruction of the tombs at Fotheringhay, Peter Marshall writes “the Crown’s carelessness with regard to the monuments of royal progenitors which had been manifest in the late 1530s was repeated after 1547. The dissolution of the collegiate churches at Fotheringhay and Leicester led in a thoroughly evenhanded way to the destruction of the late medieval tombs of the dukes of York at the former, and of the earls and dukes of Lancaster at the latter” (107).

III- Loss of Remembrance

It is fear of the loss of this long-established tradition of preserving the memory of English nobility and their marshal deeds that causes Gloucester great anxiety in the opening scene of *2 Henry VI*. When the Duke learns that Henry's marriage will mean handing over French territories he is dismayed over the loss, not of the lands, but of the fame that he and his peers have gained through their marshal deeds:

Brave peers of England, pillars of the state,
To you Duke Humprey must unload his grief,
Your grief, the common grief of all the land. . .
Have you yourselves, Somerset, Buckingham,
Brave York, Salisbury and Victorious Warwick,
Received deep scars in France and Normandy? . . .
And shall these labours and these honours die?
Shall Henry's conquest, Bedford's vigilance,
Your deeds of war and all our counsel die?
O peers of England, shameful is this league;
Fatal this marriage, canceling your fame,
Blotting your names from books of memory,
Razing the characters of your renown,
Defacing monuments of conquered France,
Undoing all, as all had never been!

(1.1.72-101)

That Gloucester is extremely agitated is emphasized by the Cardinal's response: "Nephew, what means this passionate discourse?" (1.1.102). The meaning of Humfrey's outburst is fear of a future where memory of their honours, their very existence, has been *removed* as if they "had never been" (101). Gloucester is especially horrified at the mechanics of the removal of memory: the "canceling" "blotting" "razing" and "defacing," all instruments of undoing. While editors seem to agree that Gloucester is referring to the Chronicles when he says "books of memory" it is equally possible that Gloucester is referring to liturgical books, such as bede rolls where names were carefully recorded for masses and memorial services. Editors also read "monuments" as a metaphor for memory, but "defacing monuments" would surely be evocative of iconoclastic destruction of funerary monuments.¹⁷ This evocation creates a curious moment where, as the Duke looks forward and grieves future destruction, the theatre audience looks back at their recent past. Gloucester unloads his grief that is also "your grief" (referring to his on stage audience) but also the "common grief of all the land" meaning the England of his future and the playhouse's audience's past. This common grief of England is articulated by John Weever who expressed grief and anger over damaged and destroyed funeral monuments:

Having seen Judicious reader how carefully in other Kingdomes, the Monuments of the dead are preserved, and their Inscriptions or Epitaphs registered in their Church bookes And also knowing withal how barbarously within these his

¹⁷ See for example the Arden edition, edited by Ronald Knowles and the Oxford edition, edited by Roger Warren.

Maisties Dominions, they are (to the shame of our time) broken downe, and
utterly almost all ruinated, their brazen Incriptions erased, torn away, and
pilfered, by which inhumane, deformidable act, the honourable memory of many
veruous and noble person deceased, is extinguished

(“To the Author” 1)

Weever’s language closely echoes Duke Humfrey’s “passionate discourse”
(1.1.102) as he writes of “Church bookes” which he clearly sees as “books of
memory” (1.1.98) that survive in other Kingdoms, but not in England. Weever
calls the destruction of ancient monuments the “shame of our time” that must now
face “erased” inscriptions that have *extinguished* “the honourable memory” of
noble persons deceased thus “Undoing all, as all had never been!” (1.1.101) just
as Gloucester feared. Writing in 1631, Weever’s goal was to “revive the
memories of eminent worthy persons entombed” and almost forty years earlier
Shakespeare’s *Henry VI* plays performed a similar revival.

Duke Humfrey’s premonition of the undoing of memory might have been
particularly haunting to an audience that was very likely aware that the monuments of
most of the English nobles represented on the Southbank stage were indeed erased and
defaced. Every one addressed, “Somerset, Buckingham / Brave York, Salisbury and
victorious Warwick” (81-2) and Gloucester too, with the sole exception of Buckingham,
had splendid tombs, monuments or chapels that were defaced or completely destroyed.
Prior to the dissolution, at Bisham Abbey, for example, was interred Thomas, Earl of
Salisbury, killed at the Siege of Orleans in 1428 (*1 Henry VI* 1.4), and Richard Neville the
“setter-up and plucker-down of kings” (*3 Henry VI* 2.3.37). There is still today a strong

sense of regret at the wrong that was done to the memory of these war heroes as illustrated in this description of famous dead interred at Bisham Abbey:

. . . these illustrious characters [Thomas, Earl of Salisbury and Richard Nevil] all had splendid monuments in the conventional church; but these were all destroyed after the dissolution of the abbey, without regard to the rank or famed exploits of the deceased – not even excepting the tomb of Salisbury, “the mirror of all martial men, who in thirteen battles overcame and first trained Henry V to the wars”¹⁸

Salisbury’s tomb is gone, along with any memorializing inscription, and what we are left with is Talbot’s lines from *1 Henry VI* (1.4.77-78); evidently Nashe was right when he claimed that there is “no immortalitie can be given a man on earth like unto Playes” (1: 13). Nashe was concerned with reviving the acts of valiant forefathers, and similarly, it is these forefathers’ “famed exploits,” namely their martial acts in war, that are worthy of remembrance. In the *First Folio* Ben Jonson called Shakespeare “a Monument, without a tomb.” Salisbury’s tomb is gone and what now commemorates Salisbury are lines from Shakespeare’s play; Salisbury has also become a monument without a tomb.

Weever called the assault on funerary monuments a “barbarous rage against the dead” (50) but Reformation desecration of tombs and chapels sometimes went much further than erasing inscriptions. John Stow records a Reformation exhumation project, easily as extraordinary as the Yorkist exhumation and reburial of the Duke of York:

¹⁸ See http://www.bershirehistory.com/churches/bisham_abbey.html

Then was also in this chapell [in St. Paul's pardon yard] two brotherhoods. *Robert Barton, Henrie Barton Maior, and Thomas Mirfin Maior*, all Skinners, were intombed with their images of Alablaster over them, grated or coped about with Iron before the said Chappell, all which was pulled downe, in the year 1549. The bones of the dead couched vp in a Charnill vnder the chappell, were conueyed from thence into Finsbery field (by report of him who paid for the carriage) amounting to more than one thousand cart loades, and there laid on a Morish ground in short space after raised, by soylage of the citie vpon them, to beare three milles.

(1: 330)

Such a prolonged procession of human remains—“more than one thousand cart loades”—rumbling through the streets of a capital city would surely be the makings for traumatic cultural memory in any culture. But in a society that had very recently broke with centuries of cultural and ecclesiastical tradition that evolved around careful commemoration of the dead such a spectacle must have been profoundly unsettling. What Stow describes above is quite literally a *reversal*, an undoing, of the tradition of exhuming important dead for commemorative reburial: in 1549 the bones of the dead were removed from beneath their personalized tombs (“with their Images over them”) and taken for mass burial (“into Finsbury field”) in what was certainly a grave of oblivion. And in another surprising connection between the theatres and commemorating the dead, all those bones unceremoniously carted through London streets found a final

resting place under the ground upon which The Theatre and The Curtain were later built.¹⁹

The *Henry VI* plays, I have argued, perform a commemorative function that restores memory and in this way the plays were part of a nascent cultural movement towards restoring and recovering what was lost by the dissolution of the religious houses. When John Weever penned his *Ancient Funeral Monuments* in 1631 almost a century had passed since the dissolution but in the 1590s any sense of regret expressed over Reformation ruins was seen as indicative of “papist” sympathies. John Stow was accused of Romanist leanings and his theological beliefs remain under scrutiny to this day.²⁰ In his *Survey of London* Stow generally strives for a neutral recording of facts but at times his anger at the desecration of monuments is evident. For example, there was, he tells us, a vicar who plucked up “many plates fixed on the graves, and left no memory of such as had beene buried under them: a greate injurie both to the living and the dead” but Stow is quick to follow with state support: “forbidden by publike proclamation, in the raigne of our soveraigne Lady Queene Elizabeth” (2: 75). It is rather extraordinary that most of what John Stow records in his *Survey* is simply not there. The Church of St. Ballophs, for example, is described as “a proper church, and hath had many fayre monuments therein, now defaced and gone” (1: 207). Almost every page of *Survey* tells us more about London’s past than present. On a single page for example we read of Robert Drope and Lady Lisle, “their Tombe is pulled downe, no monument remayneth of them” and “Robert Fabian Alderman that wrote and published a Cronicle of England . . . His

¹⁹ I am indebted to Anthony B. Dawson who pointed out to me the connection between Finsbury field and the theatres.

²⁰ See my discussion of Reformation ruins, regret and nostalgia in chapter two.

monument is gone” and “Edmond Trindle, & Robert Smith, William Dickson and Margaret his wife, buried in the cloyster under a fayre tomb now defaced” (1: 197). For Stow, London is a city mapped out by the absent: missing monuments, defaced tombs and razed memorial characters. But while Stow writes of what is lost he simultaneously recovers memory of the dead through his scrupulous recording of the names and often the deeds (such as acts of charity, the writing of chronicles) of those beneath the missing monuments. And like the *Henry VI* plays, Stow’s *Survey* effects a recovery through lamentation of loss and his recording of what is lost becomes a book of memory.

Defaced monuments were not only evocative of iconoclastic rage they were also, like the battlefield chantry chapel ruins, reminders of memorial services that were no longer performed. Stow is very careful how he brings up this contentious issue of the link between lost objects and lost intercessory / commemorative services but part of the losses that he records are these memorial rites. There was, for example, one John Tulus who set up relief for the poor, but Stow notes in the margins, “his gift to the Church not performed but concealed” and there was also the “appointed sermons to be preached there, not now performed” (1: 198). Stow uses the term “sermon” but undoubtedly what “the said John Rudston, deceased in 1531” had appointed to be “preached” were masses for his soul (1: 198).

One of the main reasons for the defacement of funerary monuments, so lamented by Stow, was because, like the chantry chapels, they supported “vain opinions” of Purgatory. Peter Marshall explains the connection between funerary monuments, their intercessory function and their destruction:

[The] role of pre-Reformation funeral monuments, made explicit in their iconography and inscriptions, was to serve as foci of intercessory prayer . . . [when] royal commissioners tore down and defaced tombs and funeral monuments. They were motivated partly by an animus against all religious imagery, but more particularly by a hostility to prayer for the dead. . . all funeral monuments were potentially monuments of superstition

(Beliefs 21-177)

Inscriptions on monuments were calls for remembrance and in the late medieval church to remember the dead meant to pray for the dead. John Weever notes that inscriptions on funeral monuments were iconoclast targets “especially if they began with *orate pro anima*” pray for the soul (51). But destruction of tombs not only halted prayer for the dead, it threatened remembrance because in the traditional Church remembrance was performed by liturgical and charitable actions and inscriptions on tombs were calls to perform commemorative acts. Patrick Geary stresses the importance of tombs to the preservation of memory in medieval society:

Memoria was a key organizing principle, not only in medieval theology but in every aspect of medieval life. It meant memory, but also those objects and actions by which memory was preserved. These included first of all tombs and funerary monuments

(Phantoms of Remembrance 16)

Once the doctrine of purgatory was officially abandoned, reformers were faced with the problem of separating intercession for the dead from remembrance of the dead. The *Henry VI* plays were concerned with entertaining audiences and part of

their popularity might be attributed to the ways in which they offered remembrance of the dead unburdened by ecclesiastic concerns. At the same time, however, commemoration of the dead on the stage was evocative of traditional rites in that remembrance was *performed*. Performances were repeated (“at several times”) and these performances were communal as spectators wept “in open presence.” The evocation of traditional rites for the dead on the stage is especially present in the funeral scenes of *I Henry VI* that operate very much like late medieval obits.

Also called anniversaries, obits were popular from the thirteenth century until the Reformation and usually performed annually to commemorate the deceased on the anniversary of their death. Obits were complete re-enactments of the deceased funerals, save interment, and the goal was to evoke the presence of the dead, very much in the way that Nashe claimed that the stage plays revived the dead to live again in memory by the actors who represented their presence. And just as playhouses needed props and actors, parishes had to keep “properties” on hand, such as a pall, hearse, candles, “maintained and in good repair” (Burgess “A service for the dead” 206) and hire criers, bell-ringers and pall bearers to perform the service. Obits were a part of life in medieval society and Burgess describes the anniversary service as a very visible way in which the dead remained amongst the living in medieval English society:

Socially, the rites of death and the demands of the dead were inescapable.

With their vivid and repeated funerary re-enactment, anniversaries were among the most insistent reminders that the dead were hardly less than

present in a parish and that they be accorded their dues . . .the living must constantly have been aware of the presence of ‘all the faithful departed.’

(206)

According to Burgess, one might have expected to see obits at least weekly winding their ways around the streets of late medieval Bristol and records show that the wishes of the dead were faithfully observed. Peter Marshall writes of the gradual decline of requests for intercessory services in wills, with an important exception:

Though detailed prescriptions for post-mortem intercession had begun to disappear from a number of wills in the mid-1540s, Henry VIII’s was not one of them. At the end of 1546 the king directed that 1,000 marks be given in alms to the poor, with instruction to pray for his soul; four solemn obits were to be maintained at St George’s Chapel Windsor.

(*Beliefs* 91)

Henry’s “solemn obits” and masses for his soul, however, were halted shortly after his death under the Edwardian program of reform, and in the spirit of *sola scriptura*, replaced with reading of scripture:

In 1550 royal injunctions were issued remodeling the arrangements for the commemoration of benefactors at St George’s Chapel, Windsor. In place of the traditional obsequies, the dean and canons were henceforth to assemble four times a year for a reading of Ecclesiasticus 44 (‘Let us now praise famous men’), as well as a sermon commending the benefits of their founder Henry VIII.

(108)

The abandonment of Henry's obits not only meant that they would no longer be performed in all their Romanist bell-ringing splendor, it meant that the King would also be deprived the all important *memoria* – preservation of his name and deeds. A close look at Ecclesiasticus 44 in the 1540 Great Bible reveals, I think, that while reformers sought to halt prayer for Henry's soul, they were attempting to find a way to preserve the memory and deeds of the King:

Let us commend the noble famous men, and the genracyon of our foreelders and fathers . . . These have left a name behind them, so that their praise shall always be spoken of . . . Afterwarde, there wer some, whose remembrance is gone. They came to naughte and perished as though they had never bene: and became as though they had never been borne: they and their children with them.

The phrases “as all had never been!” and “perished as though they had never bene” echo Gloucester's fear over lost remembrance. In the 1560 Geneva translation the phrase “some whose remembrance is gone” becomes “some also which have no memorial” and the shift from “remembrance” to “memorial” shows, perhaps, that lost memorials had come to mean lost memory. The reading of Ecclesiasticus 44 at Windsor demonstrates reformers' efforts to maintain *memoria* but separate remembrance of the dead from intercessory obsequies. But while some may “have left a name” the names are not spoken because to name the dead was to evoke prayer for the dead. As early as 1540 even the very famous dead were in danger of fading into oblivion.

IV- Death as a Central Thematic Concern of the First *Henriad*

Halle's Chronicle account of the "troubleous" reign of Henry VI begins: "Death the determinate end of mannes life . . . dismaied and appalled the hertes and corages of the englishe nacion" (114). Halle's decision to begin his story of Henry VI with "Death" must have struck a cord with Shakespeare because the word "death" occurs more often in the *Henry VI* trilogy than in any other of his plays: 36 times in *1 Henry VI*; 56 in *2 Henry VI*; and 35 in *3 Henry VI* for a total of 136 occurrences. The play that comes closest is the next in this tetralogy, *Richard III* with "death" making 55 appearances. This is quite remarkable when compared to the two tragedies that come closest, 37 times in *Othello* and 32 in *Romeo and Juliet*. The *Henry VI* plays are Shakespeare's first attempt at historical narrative and death is a central thematic concern. Moreover, when the three plays are viewed as a continuing historical narrative it is possible to see that, both within the individual plays and the trilogy, the death scenes are dramatically structured to evoke remembrance of previously staged death scenes. In *1 Henry VI* the opening funeral procession of Henry V—1.1. (*Dead March. Enter the funeral of King Henry the Fifth . . . SD*)—is mirrored by the funeral procession for Salisbury at—2.2. (*. . . their drums beating a dead march. SD*). In *2 Henry VI* the death of Gloucester found "dead in his bed" is recalled by the deathbed scene of the Cardinal and this inverse mirroring is explicitly staged in the father and son scene in *3 Henry VI*. And finally, the disturbing abuse of Clifford's remains are recalled when Richard repeatedly stabs the corpse of King Henry VI. The death scenes in the trilogy reflect, recall and, in a sense, remember other scenes of death and in this way the plays are structured so that in that they enact

remembrance. As each death scene recalls a previous death in the trilogy, the plays dramatically “remember” and become a kind of study of death, a kind of staged version of an *ars moriendi* woodcut series.

V- Death and Nationalism

In his highly influential *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson begins “a consideration of the cultural roots of nationalism with death” (10). Religion, claims Anderson, offers “an imaginative response to the overwhelming burden of human suffering—disease, mutilation, grief, age and death” (10). While post-Reformation England replaced one religion for another, and there was a profound change in the way in which Catholicism and Protestantism negotiated grief, death and relationships between the living and the dead. Eamon Duffy believes that the Protestant denial of Purgatory “was an attempt to redefine the boundaries of human community, and, in an act of exorcism, to limit the claims of the past, and the people of the past, on the people of the present” (8). Purgatory was “an imagined community of the living and the dead” (Gittings 141) and while I do not wish to suggest that Purgatory was one nation replaced by another and there is a link between England’s “reinvention of death” (Neill 3), with its individualization of grief, memory and the limitation of claims of the past on the present, and the rise of nationalism in the period.

Anderson writes that religion is able to transform “fatality into continuity” (11), and that, similarly, “it is the magic of nationalism to turn chance into destiny” (12). The *Henry VI* plays also apply a pattern to history that turns “chance into destiny” (Anderson 12). Paul Budra argues that Shakespeare’s histories are influenced less by classical

tragedy, where the focus is usually on one death, than the *de casibus* form of the endless rise and fall of princes (73-93). In the *Henry VI* trilogy we do not see the end of a great man but in the *de casibus* pattern we see the rise and fall of a series of men. In light of Anderson's observation on the magic of nationalism, Shakespeare's application of the *de casibus* model to historical narrative seems particularly well suited to turn "fatality into continuity" and "chance into destiny." Moreover, one of the powerful mysteries of nationalism is that it makes it possible for so many people "not so much to kill, as willingly to die" (Anderson 7) for their country. And in the *Henry VI* trilogy, we witness not only a succession of deaths, but the deaths of those who died for England. In the *ars moriendi* tradition, based on the model of Christ's death, "to die well is to die gladly" Morgan ("Of worms and war" 125). And it is notable that Nashe's "forefathers" such as Talbot and Gloucester, die *willingly* for their nation and there is a conflation between the craft of dying well, in the old tradition, and dying willingly for one's country, another way in which the deaths in the plays contribute to the works affecting a rising sense of nationalism.

VI- Death in *1 Henry VI*

The trilogy opens with the funeral of Henry V. We have entered a world where, like *Titus Andronicus*, burial rites are stilted and there is anxiety that disrespectful treatment of the dead will result in the living being disturbed by the returning dead. Henry V's funeral is interrupted by a messenger's announcement of great losses in England's war with France and Bedford's first concern is how this news may offend the dead King:

What sayest thou man, before Henry's dead corse?

Speak softly, or the loss of those great towns
Will make him burst his lead and rise from death.

(1.1.62-64)

Bedford is clearly uncertain that death has put Henry V beyond the reach of the living and boundaries between the living and the dead are blurred.²¹ Due to the denial of prayers for the dead, one of the major changes to the Order for Burial after 1552 was that “the dead person [could] no longer be addressed” (Greenblatt *Hamlet* 245), a restriction meant to enforce the Protestant assertion that the dead were beyond the help of the living. It is therefore significant that the King’s funeral service is disrupted in the midst of Bedford’s direct address to the deceased:

Henry the Fifth, thy ghost I invoke:
Prosper this realm, keep it from civil broils,
Combat with adverse planets in the heavens;
A far more glorious star thy soul will make
Than Julius Caesar, or bright –

Enter a Messenger

(1.1.52-6)

Bedford’s calls the dead by name, evoking prayer for the dead, and this, coupled with his admonishment to the messenger, suggests that we are in a world where boundaries

²¹ Fears over insecure boundaries between the living and the dead were in no way restricted to the lower classes: “both Richard II and his usurper Henry Bolingbroke, took stern action against reported sightings of their murdered opponents. Richard had ordered the reburial of the Earl of Arundel’s corpse following rumours that the head and torso had been reunited, but continued to have bad dreams, and finally recruited a bodyguard which would protect him against the ghost” (Morgan “Of worms and war” 130-2).

between the living and dead are not fixed.²² We now inhabit a space within the play-world where there is an implied co-existence of the living and the dead, reminiscent of late medieval religious and social interactions with the dead. Within this theatrical space, the living demonstrate concern over the welfare of the dead and seem convinced the dead can somehow affect the world of the living.

Further, Michael Neill claims that by opening the play with a funeral, the traditional tragic ending, Shakespeare “creates the disturbing impression that we are actually watching the end of another (unwritten) tragedy” (289); and here the “rites” of theatrical and social conventions are simultaneously disrupted and displaced. Deserted by its principle mourners, the funeral procession exits the stage but we never see the completion of the internment. This disruption and displacement of burial rites resurfaces again and again in the plays. There is a suggestion that Henry V, with his ghost invoked and burial rites not performed, has not quite left this world. Henry’s ghost was called upon to keep the realm “from civil broils” (1.1.53), but the nation soon becomes embroiled in civil strife and France is lost. Perhaps the loss of France, coupled with the stilted burial rites, has so displeased the dead King that he has neglected his posthumous care of the realm. Although his ghost never appears, Henry V—“That ever-living man of memory” (4.3.51)—haunts the entire *Henry VI* trilogy as the memory of England’s former glory, “before they lost France, and made his England bleed” (*Henry V* Epilogue 12).

The funeral is interrupted a total of three times but it is the lengthy tale of Talbot’s capture (1.1.103-140) that spurs the desertion of the principle mourners. It is ironic that

²² For controversy over burial services see Duffy, *Stripping* (565-93).

Talbot, who is consistently concerned with proper burial, is instrumental in bringing the burial service of his King to a halt. The first time we meet Talbot the deaths, and subsequent concern with burial, begin when Salisbury and Gargrave are shot. Salisbury is still alive but Talbot quickly begins an epitaph for his friend and begins to catalogue Salisbury's achievements in war with the lines that will come to immortalize Salisbury: "In thirteen battles Salisbury o'ercame / Henry the Fifth he first trained to the wars" (1.5.77-78). Immediately concerned with interment, Talbot gives orders to "Bear hence his body – I will help to bury it" (1.4.86), and 2.2 opens with a dead march and Salisbury's funeral procession. The ceremony begins and Talbot vows to erect a monument to Salisbury:

Within their chiefest temple I'll erect
A tomb wherein his corpse shall be interred,
Upon the which, that everyone may read,
Shall be engraved the sack of Orleans,
The treacherous manner of his mournful death,
And what a terror he had been to the French.

(2.1.12-17)

The service is interrupted by Talbot's invitation to visit the French noblewoman and Salisbury is forgotten. The scene parallels the abandoned burial service at the opening of the play and the style of the service, with the bringing forth of "the body of old Salisbury" (2.2.4) to be publicly mourned is highly personalized. As such, although it is not an explicitly Catholic service, it is more traditional than Protestant. Further, as with

the abandoned opening burial service, there is the suggestion of a connection between disrupted commemorative rites, and disrupted civil order.

When Talbot comes upon the dying, but not yet dead Bedford, he instructs Burgundy to “regard this dying prince” (3.2.84) and after Bedford’s death he reminds Burgundy, “But yet before we go let’s not forget / the noble Duke of Bedford, late deceased, / But see his exequies fulfilled in Rouen” (3.2.129-131). Just as no monument was built for Salisbury, however, neither do we see Bedford’s exequies fulfilled. Despite Talbot’s repeated insistence on remembrance and proper burial, rites are not performed and the dead are forgotten. It is an oddity that Talbot’s remembrance of the dead largely takes place *before* they are deceased. In this way, his memorialization of the not-yet-dead is a form of displaced burial rites.

This kind of proleptic funeral service that memorializes the not-yet-dead attends Talbot’s own death. News of Talbot’s certain death at Bordeaux is delivered by Sir William Lucy whose sole function in the play seems to be to prepare us for the Talbots’ deaths.²³ In highly stylized heroic couplets, he pleads for assistance, or intercession, for the doomed Talbots. York is quickly brought to tears and joins the chorus of woe:

YORK

Mad ire and wrathful fury makes we weep,
That thus we die while remiss traitors sleep.

LUCY

O send some succour to the distressed lord.

²³ Burns calls Lucy an “authoritative messenger/choric figure” (n.32 112) and notes that he is not in the chronicle sources.

YORK

He dies, we lose, I break my warlike word.

We mourn, France smiles; we lose, they daily get,

All long of this vile traitor Somerset.

LUCY

Then God take mercy on brave Talbot's soul,

And on his son, young John, who two hours since

I met in travail toward his warlike father.

This seven years did not Talbot see his son,

And now they meet where both their lives are done.

YORK

Alas, what job shall noble Talbot have,

To bid his young son welcome to his grave.

Away vexation almost stops my breath,

That sundered friends greet in the hour of death.

(4.3.28-46)

Lucy's plea for "succour" is a request for military aid but the term can also mean assistance for the soul as in, "of whom may we seke for succour but of thee, O Lorde," (*BCP* Burial 1). Similarly, the call for God to take mercy on "Talbot's soul" at his "last hour" also echoes the same passage from "The Order for the Burial of the Dead" that is

sung over the grave.²⁴ Lucy and York lead us through a proleptic burial prayer as “we mourn” (4.3.32) and “welcome to his grave” (4.3.44) the not-yet-dead Talbot. But, just as Bedford directly addressed the deceased Henry V, York asks mercy for “Talbot’s soul” and similarly evokes the pre-1552 burial service, on ongoing site of contention.²⁵ David Cressy explains that “To avoid association with prayers for the dead, earlier reformers had excised the commendation of the soul at burial and reAs soon as York is brought to tears he begins to rhyme with Lucy, and this gives the sequence has a sing-song liturgical quality that further enhances the impression it is a kind of prayer. The Protestant denial of Purgatory separated the living from the dead but the practice of proleptic prayer has the result of creating a space in which the grieved and the grieving can coexist.

Moreover, it is clear that York and Lucy are not addressing each other, but rather, in Nashe’s words, they “pleade their aged Honours in open presence” to the soldiers that stand about on stage and to us, the spectators. Talbot’s death is England’s loss and the “we” as in “We mourn, France smiles” are the English, on stage and off. Lucy and York mourn for the loss of “France and England’s honour” (4.3.23) and Talbot’s impending

²⁴ The entire passage reads: “*When they come to the grave, whyles the corps is made redy to be layd into the earth, ye priest shal say, or the priestes, and clerkes shal sing.* Man that is borne of a woman hathe but a shorte tyme to lyve, and is full of miserye: he commeth up, and is cut doune lyke a foure, he flyeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one staye. In the middest of life we be in death, of whom may we **seeke for succour** but of thee, O Lorde, whiche for our sinnes justly are displeased: yet O Lorde God most holy, O Lorde Most mighty, O holy, and moste mercifull Saviour, deliver us not into the bitter paynes of eternall death. Thou knowest Lord the secretes of our hertes, shut not up thy mrecifull eyes to our prayer. But **spare us Lorde. But spare us Lorde moste holy, O God moste mighty, O holy and mercifull saviour,** thou most worthy judge eternall, suffer us not at **our last hour** for any paines of death to fall from thee” (“The Order for Burial of the Dead” *BCP* 1559 1-2; Emphasis added).

²⁵ On long-running controversy over the Order for Burial in the *Book of Common Prayer* see David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage* (409-11) and Peter Marshall, *Beliefs* (148-56).

death and national loss are conflated. Lucy, York, the soldiers and the audience join together in “open presence” to mourn their nation’s loss in a proleptic burial prayer. And like the abandoned funeral services, Salisbury’s never-erected tomb and Bedford’s unfulfilled rites, it is another disrupted rite associated with the dead. It is also another displaced rite that bodes ill tidings for the country: the death of The Terror of the French. Further, services are interrupted, displaced and uncompleted because we are not here to see the Tragedy of Henry V, Salisbury, Bedford, or even Talbot but we are here to see “our forefathers valiant acts” and mourn “England’s loss” and these broken rites are a part of that loss. Just as a funeral service at the opening of the play worked as a displacement of theatrical and social convention, the disrupted, displaced and stilted burial rites that continue through the play foreground the fact that we are watching a different kind of narrative, not of individual tragedy, but of a series of national losses. At the same time, the way the deaths in the play reflect religious controversies over the dead adds to the creation of a national nostalgia by recalling the old traditions of England’s Catholic past. In the *Henry VI* plays, mourning the dead is also a way of mourning the loss of the old ways.

As argued above, those who die good deaths in the *Henry VI* trilogy are those who die gladly and it is clear that no one would more willingly die for his country than brave English Talbot. Although not mentioned by Nashe, there are two Talbots that perish at Bordeaux. The first we hear of young John Talbot is during Lucy’s attempted intercession. Young Talbot is not in the Chronicles and one reason Talbot’s son is dramatically “born only to die” (Leggatt 14) is that he is instrumental in the creation of the final image of the scene: the bleeding father and son *pieta*. The soldiers bring dying

Talbot the body of his son and he gives his final speech. It is notable that Talbot, who was so insistent on the proper interment of Salisbury and Bedford, in his own hour of death, makes no request for burial. Instead, he addresses death itself and makes the extraordinary claim that “Two Talbots [. . .] thy despite shall scape mortality” (4.4.133-4). This can be read as a meta-theatrical moment in which Talbot seems aware that although he dies today, he will be “raised from the Grave of Oblivion” when he is exhumed for the next performance to be “newe embalmed” by the spectators’ tears.

The bodies remain on stage and we are left to contemplate the father and son death tableau. In the *Ars Moriendi* tradition, it was common to bring the dying a Crucifix “that in the image they may adore their redeemer” (Duffy 314). Here we are given a secular image of death, the father and son *pieta*, to contemplate that represents a form of immortality and offers us a chance at continuity. Rescued from oblivion, the Talbots have turned fatality into continuity and we, the English spectators, are a part of that continuity: they are our forefathers. This is the scene, let us not forget, that caused Elizabethan audiences to weep over and over. In this *pieta* the Virgin Mary is replaced by English Talbot, and this reclaiming of a highly contested Catholic image refashioned and presented for the audience to contemplate their national past, yet at the same time recognize the continuity of Englishness, allows a simultaneous mourning of the past and celebration of the present.

The Talbots remain on stage while the French enter to view the dead and Lucy arrives to claim the bodies. When asked who he is looking for, Lucy, begins to memorialize Lord Talbot, the “great Alcides of the field?” (4.4.172) and his following glines, according to Boswell-Stone, closely follow the inscription on the historical

Monument erected at Rouen.²⁶ But Talbot is not yet dead and neither is any monument erected for the terror of the French, and in this scene presents another proleptic burial practice that is displaced socially and dramatically. Joan taunts the grieving Lucy over the death of Talbot and this sets up her own death. In opposition to the brave forefathers who refused to flee death, she pleads for her life, denies her family, degrades herself and her final words are a curse against England (5.3.86-91): in short, she dies badly.

Although the Talbots seem to be forgotten in the final act, Joan's messy death works dramatically to recall the Talbots' glory. Further, we may remember that Joan claimed her power and visions came from "Our Lady" (1.2.74) the Virgin Mary; that power has deserted her and she has been forgotten. The stage-image of the father and son *pieta*, in which an English hero usurps the Queen of Heaven, is recalled to memory and once again the Talbots are rescued by Memory from the Grave of Oblivion.

VII- Death in *2 Henry VI*

The deaths of Talbot and Joan are carefully crafted to show the difference between a good death for England and the cursed death of one who dies cursing England. Similarly, in *2 Henry VI* the two deathbed scenes of The Duke of Gloucester and Cardinal Beaufort are offered for comparison. In the *Ars Moriendi* tradition, and well into the seventeenth century, *mors improvisa* or, sudden death, was greatly feared as it was

²⁶ On Lucy's speech and Talbot's monument, see Boswell-Stone (232-4). Boswell-Stone compares the monument Epitaph (apparently from the Rouen burial) line by line to Lucy's speech at (4.4.172-183). I read this speech as a metadramatic moment that calls attention to Talbot's immortality both within and without the play. Shakespeare has Joan comment on the writing, which draws further attention to the lines: "Here's a silly stately style indeed / The Turk [. . .] Writes not so tedious a style as this" (4.4.184-6).

important to meet death with a clear conscience. Accordingly, in the 1559 Order for the Visitation of the Sick the dying must be examined “whether he be in charitie” (*BCP* Visitation, 3). While it is true that Gloucester meets sudden death, he is not unprepared. In another displaced, proleptic Catholic rite associated with death, he is examined as to his moral state *before* his deathbed scene. The Duke pleads a “heart unspotted” that is “clear from treason” and pity is “all the fault” (3.1.100-125) he is guilty of. Further, the Good Duke Humfrey has studied only “good for England”; Gloucester is in charity with his fellowman *and* his country. With his conscience clear, he is resigned to his death and willing to die for his country. He resigns his staff with the wish that, “when I am dead and gone / May honourable peace attend”(2.3.38) the throne and claims “if my death might make this island happy . . . I would expend it with all willingness” (3.1.149-50). At the same time, however, Gloucester is aware of the role of his death in the play:

But [my death] is made the prologue to their play;
For thousands more that yet suspect no peril
Will not conclude their plotted tragedy.

(3.1.151-153)

Gloucester’s death is “quite literally the half-way point” (Saunders 27) in the trilogy and is of central importance. Gloucester dreamt that on his broken staff would be “placed the heads” (1.2.29) of Somerset and Suffolk. His dream saw past his individual tragedy and into the extended narrative of the trilogy. Warwick calls the Duke’s death a tragedy (3.2.194), but this is not Gloucester’s tragedy. It is, as he says, a mere prologue to the impending anarchy that, directly after his death, comes pounding on King’s door and eventually leads to the deaths of thousands at Towton.

Further, just as the examination of Gloucester's conscience took place *before* he went to his deathbed, the Visitation of the Sicke, that should have attended the dying man at his deathbed, occurs *after* death. In a perversion of the classic *Ars Moriendi* deathbed scene, the Duke is already "dead in his bed" (3.2.29) when he is brought forth to be examined on stage by those who crowd around the deathbed.²⁷ Warwick's detailed account of the horrible details, the black face, ghastly staring eyes, grasping hands, and disordered person (3.2.168-175), create the murder scene in our minds far more vividly than if it had been acted on stage. These are not indications of one who has died willingly but classic signs of "unholy death" as we shall shortly see when performed by the Cardinal.²⁸ We know from the murderers' account, who never heard "a man so penitent" (3.2.4), that Gloucester died a good death. The entire disturbing scene, from the premature examination of Gloucester's moral state to the displaced sickbed visitation, is prophetic of the impending disorder and the national "sickness" of civil war that follows the "prologue" of the protector's death. Moreover, like Henry V's interrupted burial service, Salisbury's disrupted funeral, Bedford's unfulfilled obsequies and the forgotten Talbots, Gloucester's death is further unfinished business with the dead that

²⁷ The deathbed tableaux would be familiar to most in the audience as the scene of the battle for the dying man's soul, which took place in a crowded room with the bed as the dominant image. This scene is particularly disturbing as an on-stage creation of a classic deathbed scene where witnesses crowd around the bed, not of a dying man, but a murdered corpse. Duffy writes: "The most influential chapter of the *Ars Moriendi* was devoted to the final deathbed temptations and their remedies. Reduced to the vivid form of eleven pictures with a brief accompanying text, this scheme became the basis for an immensely popular and influential block-book, circulating in England as in the rest of Europe, and accessible even to the illiterate" (*Stripping* 316-17, plates 117,118,119).

²⁸ On good and bad deaths in the late medieval English Church, see Rosemary Horrox, "Purgatory, prayer and plague, 1150-1380" (95-8).

haunts the play. It is also another instance of broken rites, specifically Catholic-flavoured rites, that precede ill tidings for the nation but at the same time celebrate the emerging sense of Englishness as the dead and dying give up their lives for their country.

While it is implied that Henry V's ghost lingers over the realm, Gloucester's ghost is explicitly assigned a role. Suddenly struck ill, The Cardinal "talks as if Duke Humphrey's ghost / Were by his side" (3.2.373-4). In the lengthy first scene of act three where, over the space of 382 lines, we heard Gloucester's defense and his enemies' plans for murder, we were carefully prepared and spared the pain of witnessing a sudden death. In contrast, the Cardinal's *mors improvisa* comes as a complete surprise. The announcement is sudden, unexpected and the Cardinal's death scene, a mere thirty-three lines is nasty, brutish and short. As Claire Saunder's writes, "the physical details [of Beaufort's death] echo, uncannily the earlier picture of the Duke of Gloucester's death struggle" (30).²⁹ As per the Order for the Visitation of the Sick, the dying is instructed to examine his state "Bothe toward God and man" (3) so when the Cardinal is reported as "Blaspheming God and cursing men on earth"(3.2.372), he performs a textbook example of an unholy death. As illustrated in the *Ars Moriendi*, the deathbed scene "was a crowded battlefield" (Duffy 317) for the soul of the Christian, where Christ's passion pleads repentance and devils tempt despair.³⁰ It is these unseen, but present participants, that the Cardinal fears and Henry calls out against: "O beat away the busy meddling fiend / That lays strong siege unto this wretch's soul" (3.3.21-2). The Cardinal calls for his

²⁹ See Claire Saunders "Dead in his Bed" (19-34) for an excellent reading of the two deathbed scenes in the *Memento Mori* and *Ars Moriendi* traditions.

³⁰ See Duffy *Stripping*, plate 119 for a medieval woodcut of a deathbed attended by Christ and hordes of devils—"busy fiends"—waiting to seize upon the sick wretch's soul.

sovereign at his hour of death and Henry VI steps into the role of priest. Existing largely as a character of secondary interest up to this point, Henry now begins to emerge as the pious “gentle King” and it is notable that here he represents issues of death and nation.

In addition to demonstrating that he is not “in charitie” with God or his fellow man, the Cardinal bargains with death by offering to bankrupt his country: “If thou be Death, I’ll give thee England’s treasure” (3.3.2). In opposition to Good Duke Humphrey who only “studied good for England,” the Cardinal turns against God, man and country. Clearly, in the *Henry VI* plays, in order to die a “good death” one must be in charity with God, man *and* the nation. The Cardinal dies out of charity with his country and Gloucester’s nightmare begins. For the first time in the trilogy, we get the “barbarous and bloody spectacle” (4.1.146) of beheaded corpses; as the state becomes headless, so too do the bodies. Despite the fact we are led “all to Meditation” by Henry at the end of the Cardinal’s death scene, there is no time for reflection before we are plunged into a nightmarish world where the Queen cradles the head of her lover, rebels march into London, York claims the throne and the King is forced to flee. The “busy meddling fiend” that won the war for the Cardinal’s soul is now in command of the country.

VIII- Death in *3 Henry VI*

Gloucester’s prophetic dream continues and *3 Henry VI* begins with Richard brandishing the head of Somerset in the deserted palace where, centre stage, sits the empty chair of state. York ascends the seat and, absurdly, King Henry enters to stand below and bicker for his throne. Naomi Conn Liebler sees the play as a game of King of

the Hill,³¹ and Paul Budra posits *3 Henry VI* “most clearly follows a *de casibus* model” (81). The game of war proceeds in a pattern of rise and fall that is acted out in the opening scene as York ascends the throne and then steps down, and this pattern continues through the play as the raised platform, that remains centre stage, alternates between throne and molehill. York steps down but soon reaches again for the crown and quickly falls to be scourged on a molehill. His end is headlined in both the folio and quarto texts and is possibly the most sensational death in the trilogy.³² In contrast to the stylized demise of the Talbots, York’s death is a tragic scene where even his enemies can hardly check their “eyes from tears” (1.4.151). He calls for God’s mercy (2.1.77) and dies a good death. Further, he is remembered after death and mourned as “the saddest spectacle” (2.1.67) by his followers. The death of York is played out as a tragedy because, in his hour of death, he is neither traitor nor valiant forefather, he is simply a father grieving for his son. Margaret taunts him with the napkin stained with Rutland’s blood and the “hapless father’s tears” (1.4.156) he sheds for his son cause others to weep for him. The Talbots died together fighting against the French but York and young Rutland, too young to fight, die in the midst of civil war. The model of “dying gladly” is based on Christ’s own death and York’s death, where like Christ he is “scourged” and made to wear a mock crown, is a reversed polluted passion scene where a father weeps for a son who’s death benefits no one. This is the first personal tragedy occurs at the

³¹ See Naomi Conn Liebler, “King of the Hill.” Lieber argues that teams toss the crown back and forth, oaths are made, broken and, players switch sides back and forth to follow the winning team.

³² The Folio title is: “The Third Part of King Henry the Sixt. With the Death of the Duke of York.” The Quarto title headlines the death of the Duke of York: “The true Tragedie of Richard Duke of York, and the death of good King Henrie the Sixt”.

highest level of politics and is a direct result of the national sickness of civil war that will shortly spread to infect the entire country at all levels.

Henry next ascends the molehill to witness a continuation of the father and son leitmotif that began with Talbot and young John on foreign land and is now reflected on English soil in the fractured mirror images of a “*Son who hath killed his father... and a Father who hath killed his Son*” (SD 2.4.53) at the famous Battle of Towton. According to Leggatt, the Towton allegory is “the most terrible echo of the Talbot scenes” (27). In *Henry VI* we were led to the Talbot’s death by Lucy’s proleptic prayer for the dead; the mourning figure at Towton is Henry VI. Holding his prayer book, he sits centre stage, and unheeded and unheard, Henry haunts the scene. As a King he has become so ineffectual that his throne is now a molehill and all he can do is act as chorus to the grief and woe of his country. Consequently, he begins to wish his own death for the good of his country: “Would I were dead, If God’s good will were so” (2.5.19) and, “O that my death would stay these ruthless deeds” (2.5.95) and he begins to prepare us for the “death of good King Henrie the Sixt” as headlined on the Quarto.

This is the first time since Talbot’s death that there is concern over burial. Although Talbot did not request his own burial, his final words were “Now my old arms are young John Talbot’s grave” (4.4.32). In this fractured reflection of the Talbot scene, the father must live with the memory of the unnatural murder of his son and he performs a private, internalized burial service:

These arms of mine shall be thy winding-sheet;
My heart, sweet boy, shall be thy sepulchre,
For from my heart thine image ne’er shall go;

My sighing breast shall be thy funeral bell;
And so obsequious will thy father be

(2.5.114-118)

The father's talk of images held in the heart and funeral bells are strongly reminiscent of the Catholic burial rites, no longer legal, but sometimes still practiced.³³ And in a society that denied prayers for the dead and the comfort of communal masses for the beloved departed, the father's grief must be internalized. The official line on public mourning was, as Claudius tells Hamlet, "A fault against the dead, a fault to nature" (*Hamlet* 1.2.103). This unnatural conflict, killing and individual mourning, led by the choric King, are communally grieved in open presence. Additionally, Henry is the image of a supplicating saint and this similarly evokes prayers for the dead that applied for saintly intercession on behalf of the dead.³⁴ The Towton father and son scene simultaneously evokes memory of recent performance (the death of the John Talbot and son), memory of the nation's past (Catholic burial services) and allows communal contemplation of individual grief and mourning.

The horrors of civil war continue in the next scene, one of the most disturbing in the trilogy, with the Yorkist's bizarre treatment of Clifford's remains:

WARWICK

I think his understanding is bereft.

³³ See Duffy *Stripping* (571) for a discussion of the ringing of funeral bells that, as part of the Episcopal visitations of 1560 and 1561, were a key area of official concern and an overt sign of resistance against reforms.

³⁴ See Edward Burns (106-8). The Church was in the process of canonizing Henry VI shortly before the Reformation and "he was popularly venerated as if he were a saint until well into the reign of King Henry VIII [. . .] memory of his holy status may be recalled in his own lines 'My meed hath got me fame' (*3 Henry VI* 4.8.38-43)."

Speak Clifford, dost thou know who speaks to thee?

Dark cloudy death o'ershades his beams of life,

And he nor sees, nor hears us what we say. . . .

GEORGE

Clifford, ask mercy and obtain no grace.

EDWARD

Clifford, repent in bootless penitence.

WARWICK

Clifford, devise excuses for thy faults

[. . .] They mock thee, Clifford: swear as thou wast wont.

(2.6.61-78)

The relentless repetition of Clifford's name, is a verbal assault on the dead and on the ears of the audience who hear the dead addressed and abused over and over. This scene could also be read as a displaced, polluted prayer for the dead in which the living requested mercy for the soul of the departed. Clifford is addressed again and again to "repent in bootless penitence" and "obtain no grace." And it may be significant that Clifford is directly addressed exactly five times as fivefold symbolism, representative of the five wounds of Christ, is ubiquitous in prayers for the dead.³⁵ Moreover, verbal abuse of the dead was not only disrespectful it was a chargeable offense. In 1598 Thomas Bett was in the Essex church courts for arresting a body with "unseemly, irrelevant and intemperate speech" (Gittings 150). That abuse of the dead was an offense so serious it may result in excommunication makes the Yorkist's abuse of Clifford all the more

³⁵ See Duffy (246). Many medieval wills had requests for prayers in multiples of five. See my discussion of fivefold symbolism and the cult of the wounds in chapter two.

remarkable.³⁶ Further, I would argue that the mocking of Clifford's remains, in the scene directly following the Towton allegory, is the culminating spectacle representative of the unnatural world of civil war that we now inhabit.³⁷ Further, this unnatural world extends to the domain of the dead and it is clear that, in this world, interaction between the living and the dead has gone horribly wrong.

Liebler writes that "intentional interaction with a corpse blurs the crucial distinction between the living and the dead" (49). This is not, however, the first interaction with a corpse that we have seen. Bedford's address to Henry V that forewarned of "civil broils" (1.1.54) similarly blurred the boundary between the quick and the dead and, arguably, we have been in a world inhabited by the living and the dead for the entire trilogy. It is not so much that the savage abuse of Clifford's corpse, that is probably physical as well as verbal, blurs the distinction between the living and the dead as it is representative of the complete breakdown of social order.³⁸ Proper treatment of the dead was so ingrained in early modern society that "the rituals of burial were maintained during plague time" (Gittings 150) and in spite of regulations against infection friends and neighbours would insist on carrying corpses to burial. Up to this

³⁶ See Clare Gittings, "Sacred and secular: 1558-1660." Gittings notes that "Those who fell foul of the church courts and were excommunicated also had their bodies punished after death, by the denial of Christian burial" (150).

³⁷ Shakespeare moved Clifford's death that is reported in the Chronicles as taking place near Ferrybridge. Burns suggests that "postponing Clifford's death enhances the sense that the tide is turning in York's favour" (2.6.n). I would argue that, in addition, the abuse of Clifford's corpse, that is also Shakespeare's invention, is strategically presented directly after the stylized father and son scene to represent the horrific reality of the unnatural world of civil strife.

³⁸ In the BBC Jane Howell production, for example, the Yorkists hold up Clifford's corpse to better abuse it physically and verbally.

point in the trilogy we have witnessed stilted, displaced and disrupted burial rites that suggested improper treatment of the deceased. This staged savagery against the dead, however, is disturbing in the extreme. Thus the Yorkist's abuse of Clifford's remains, in which the future King Edward takes part, foreshadows the doom of Edward's unnatural reign at the end of the play.

Richard is also an enthusiastic participant in the corpse abuse and this portends his act of regicide. As discussed above, the gentle King has begun to prepare us for his death by letting us know he would gladly die to "stay these ruthless deeds" (2.5.95) of civil war. It is not enough that Richard commits regicide by killing the helpless pious King, who with his dying words pardons his executioner, but he must again cross the threshold of social taboo by violating the dead. As reported by Halle "cruel Clifford [was a] deadly bloudsupper [and a] child-killer" (qtd. in Boswell-Stone 298) but his remains suffer largely only verbal abuse. By contrast, the gentle King, famous for pity, meed, mildness and mercy³⁹ is viciously violated: "If any spark of life be yet remaining , / Down, down to hell, and say I sent thee hither!" *Stabs him again* (SD 5.6.66-67). The death of "good King Henrie the Sixt" at the hands of Richard of Gloucester is not a stylized, drawn out meditation on death, but a brutal monstrous act made more monstrous by the monarch's posthumous punishment.

Finally, the play ends where it began, with Edward sitting in the chair of state. Ironically, he catalogues the deaths of those he has "mowed down in tops of all their pride!" (5.7.4) as he, in true *de casibus* fashion, has once more risen to shortly fall: a

³⁹ Henry's mercy extended to the dead. He ordered the removal of a corpse from Cripplegate because he would not "have any man so cruelly handled" (Morgan "Of Worms and War" 124).

continuation of the pattern will turn his hope for “lasting joy” to “sour annoy” (5.7.56,45). The King’s body is unceremoniously dragged off stage and Henry VI, with burial rites not performed, joins Henry V, Talbot, Gloucester, York, Clifford, the thousands killed at Towton and the host of other dead that haunt the trilogy. They are all part of England’s “ghostly national imaginings” (Anderson 9). Through the performance of communal mourning of dead heroes in “open presence” (Nashe) the *Henry VI* plays offer an opportunity of turning “fatality into continuity” (Anderson), as we the spectators experience the continuity of Englishness. During the performance, the spectators inhabit the world of dead heroes and, in this way, there is a formation of community that includes the living and the dead that is reminiscent of that pre-Reformation “imagined community of the living and the dead” (Gittings 140), Purgatory. This is no fantastical fantasy but rather a realistic recreation of England’s Medieval past where monks sang services daily in the chantries for the dead killed in service of their country, obits regularly wound their way through town streets and patronage of chantries was passed down and continued through generations; even Richard III continued patronage of the Towton chantries founded by Henry VI (Morgan “Worms and War” (123). The to-be-sainted King Henry VI was credited with the “allegedly proven miracles” (130) of repeatedly raising the dead. In Medieval England “a regular traffic back and forth across the bridge between life and death was taken for granted” (131). In the *Henry VI* plays, the long dead cross that bridge to “triumphe againe on the Stage” (Nashe) as part of a community of valiant forefathers who died for England.

O'erbears your officers. The rabble call him lord,
And, as the world were now but to begin,
Antiquity forgot, custom not known,
The ratifiers and props of every word,
They cry, "choose we! Laertes shall be king!"
Caps, hands, and tongues applaud it to the clouds,
"Laertes shall be king, Laertes king!"

(4.5.112-23)

The messenger's speech has to my knowledge attracted very little critical attention in considering the play's concern with memory but this character's description of what is happening is extraordinary. The ultimate transgression of boundaries is taking place, the commons bursting in upon the King and Queen, and this inversion of the natural order of the court is because Elsinore has become to the messenger like (or "as" as the messenger fittingly speaks in simile in a play where so many things seem "like" other things) a place where there is no memory because custom is unknown and the past ("Antiquity") is forgot. Elsinore has been come like a place without a past. This break with memory and the past in the play is foregrounded by Prince Hamlet's obsession with the fading memory of his recently deceased father who returns in the questionable shape of the ghost of Old Hamlet.

Hamlet's concern with memory and commemorating the dead has been recognized by a number of critics who link Hamlet's dilemma to the Protestant denial of Purgatory. Michael Neill was one of the first to carefully consider the play's connection to lingering controversy over remembrance of the dead and he argues that *Hamlet*

displays a “conscious engagement with anxieties” (246) over the Protestant displacement of the dead. Stephen Greenblatt suggests that in *Hamlet* “the space of the stage becomes the space of Purgatory” (257). Thomas Rist argues that *Hamlet* “regularly reflects and intervenes in the period’s religious controversies over the dead” (1). These critics agree with John Kerrigan’s assertion that Elizabethan revengers are “possessed of piercingly individual memories” (173). Greenblatt writes that Hamlet’s inwardness is “the hallmark of the entire play” (208), and Neill notes Hamlet’s lonely “preoccupation with memory” (246). *Hamlet*, then, is concerned with both purgatorial controversies over the dead and individual memory but in the late medieval English Church remembrance of the departed was a collective business. Hamlet struggles with his isolated memories, but it should be noted that his grief is performed for the collective concern of the audience. *Hamlet* presents a world where the living and dead co-exist and is thus reminiscent of traditional religious culture that fostered relationships between the living and the dead. Bringing the dead into the world of the living is a trope of revenge tragedy, but the ghost in *Hamlet* is different in that his eschatology is both questionable and directly questioned.⁴⁰ In this chapter I argue that through the staging of a ghost of hazy theological origins, *Hamlet* evokes social memory of reciprocal community with the dead and thus catches at the conscience of playgoers on remembrance due to the dead, especially dead kin—and by

⁴⁰ Critics have recognized that the genre of revenge tragedy often fosters community between the living and the dead: Thomas Anderson writes that in the *Spanish Tragedy* “Kyd emphasizes the visibility of the dead to spectators onstage and in the theatre” (139); Thomas Rist argues that revenge tragedies “reflect on and intervene in the period’s personally felt and key religious controversies over the dead”(3); Huston Diehl claims that the genre re-establishes the boundaries between the living and the dead; and Michael Neill posits that “Haunted by ghosts and other mementos of the past, this genre speaks to the same anxieties that produced the cult of *memoria*” (46).

extension “all Christians’ souls” (4.5.197) as Ophelia reminds us—at a time when relationships between the living and dead were in a state of flux.

II- Memory of Dead Kin

Hamlet is horrified at his mother’s hasty remarriage and his uncles’ truncation of all mourning duties to the last king, Hamlet’s father, but this disturbing story of forgetful kin was a familiar medieval cautionary tale. The medieval culture of *memoria* stressed the importance of commemoration due to departed family and this intense focus on remembrance raised fears of being neglected once one had left all worldly goods and family behind. Eamon Duffy identifies a late medieval literature of cynicism which dwelt on the covetousness of the living and the fickleness of family:

Do sum good, man, by thy lyffe,
Whilis thow hast thy mynde;
Thy children will for-gete the sone
Thy wyffe will be unkynd.

(qtd. in *Stripping* 350)

The man is warned to provide for his salvation through good deeds while he lives because his closest kin, his son and wife, will be unkind and forget their natural duty to remember and pray for dead kin. As Duffy points out: “If one’s kin did not remember, no one else could be expected to do so” (*Stripping* 352). And to be forgotten was to be left lingering in purging flames without the succour of intercessory prayers from the living. At one level *Hamlet* is an early modern re-telling of this medieval trope of unkind kin. The medieval focus on remembrance due to kindred is an extension of Christian

fellowship that is foremost recognized by a focus on the passion of Jesus Christ, the man-god or “bretheryn” most deserving of “kyndness,” or natural feelings of fellowship, that are to be extended to all Christian souls. To remember one’s departed kin was also to be prompted to remember the duty one owed to remember and pray for all souls departed.

Remembrance of one’s kin in *Hamlet* is emphasized by the ghost’s direction to his son: “remember me” (1.5.91). Although critics have pointed out that Hamlet is unique in the way in which the play engages with religious controversy over the dead they have to my knowledge ignored the liturgical implication of Old Hamlet’s command. A request from the departed for remembrance was a request for prayer and the rhetoric of kind kin is applied to relationships between the living and the dead as taught by the doctrine of Purgatory. In Thomas More’s *The Supplication of Souls*, for example, the faithful dead plead for the prayers of the living by reminding them “what kin you and we be together” (qtd. in Burgess *A fond thing* 70). In late medieval society a request for remembrance was a request for prayer, so when the ghost tells Hamlet to remember him the spirit evokes the practice of prayer for the dead—for his soul and for the souls of “all the faithful departed”—and it is this evocation of prayer for “all souls” that, I believe, would add another layer of unease over the appearance of the ghost.⁴¹ Commemorative services worked to prick the consciences of the congregation to pray for all departed kin, and sending succour to forgotten souls was especially kind. Stephen Greenblatt suggests that this practice is alluded to by Hamlet’s use of the Latin tag *hic et ubique* which is part

⁴¹ See Houlbrooke on *momento mori* in early modern culture and inscriptions of “remember me” (252).

of a prayer for souls “here and everywhere” (234-7).⁴² The practice of praying for all souls is explicitly evoked when Ophelia says a prayer for her father. Her orison ends with “God ha’ mercy on his soul!” to which she adds “And of all Christian souls” (4.5.201-3). Officially abolished in 1552, prayer for the dead had been “integral to the economy of salvation” (Koslofsky 8) since the second century. As Clive Burgess has elegantly demonstrated, at the heart of the medieval laity’s preoccupation with remembrance was the desire for prayer.⁴³ Prayer for the dearly departed also offered “therapeutic positive action for survivors” and was consolatory for the bereaved (Houlbrooke 243). Indeed, Rosemary Horrox identifies the intercessory aspect of belief in Purgatory as key to its doctrinal success: “the doctrine of Purgatory, and particularly the belief that the punishment of the soul could be lightened by the prayers of the living, was a theological success story” (90). Early reformers recognized that prayer for the dead was a deeply rooted natural human instinct and attempted to separate the practice from the doctrine of purgatory but to no avail.⁴⁴ Protestant doctrine was firm that, because only God could assist the dead, prayer for the dead was not only useless it was “against God and wicked” (Andreas von Carlstad qtd. in Koslofsky 5). Similarly, Claudius tells Hamlet that his insistence on mourning his father “shows a will most incorrect to heaven” (1.2.95). But fourteen hundred year old traditions are not easily

⁴² Shakespeare uses an English version of this phrase in two other plays: John Talbot is “Here, there and everywhere” (*1 Henry VI* 1.1.124) and Othello is an “extravagant and wheeling stranger / Of here and every where” (*Othello* 1.1.136-137).

⁴³ See Clive Burgess, “Longing to be Prayed For” (47-60).

⁴⁴ See Craig Koslofsky (7-9).

forgotten and as late as 1629 Sir Thomas Browne confessed he had often wished that prayer for the dead had not been “offensive” to his religion (67).

The appearances of the questionable ghost repeatedly bring the dead into the world of the living in *Hamlet* which, combined with the play’s concern with remembrance and due rites to the dead, evokes controversy over intercessory prayer for the dead. Purgatory has been called a “community of the living and the dead” (Gittings 141) but bonds between the living and the dead were formed and maintained by prayer. Eamon Duffy explains that

a recurrent motif in treatments of Purgatory is the centrality of both natural and supernatural bonding between the living and the dead. The souls in Purgatory were part of the church of the redeemed, and prayer for the dead was one of the principal expressions of the ties that bound the community together.

(348-9)

There is a distinction between the place Purgatory, which came into being in the late twelfth century, and the practice of intercession for the dead that is much older and is, indeed, the foundation of the doctrine of Purgatory (LeGoff 52-9, 154-76). Prayer for the dead was deeply established in social memory and it is this particular aspect of the old religion that I believe is being evoked in *Hamlet*. Most critics seem to agree that there is a problem with the presentation of any practices connected to Purgatory at the time *Hamlet* was staged. Stephen Greenblatt writes that,

by 1563, almost forty years before Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* was written, the Church of England had explicitly rejected the Roman Catholic

conception of Purgatory and the practices that had been developed around it.

(235)

Similarly, McGee argues that Purgatory was not a fit subject for controversy at the time and sums up the situation as “Catholics believed in Purgatory and Protestants did not” (46).⁴⁵ What is missing from these discussions is consideration of contemporary controversy over the continuation of traditional practices pertaining to the dead. David Cressy notes that “Prayer for the dead was such a deeply engrained practice in mid-Tudor England that it took several decades of preaching and discipline to draw it to a close” (398), and there was a need to continually police “papist” practices pertaining to the dead well into Elizabeth’s reign.⁴⁶ Visitation articles complain of offensive outlawed practices surrounding interment and commemoration of the dead such as,

masses, dirges, trentals, singing, ringing, holy water, hallowed places, year’s, day’s, and month’s minds, crosses, pardon letter to be buried with them, mourners, *De Profundis*, by every lad that could say it, dealing of money solemnly for the dead, watching of the corpse at home, bell and banner, with many more that I can reckon

(Pilkington qtd. in Marshall 127)

All of these funeral and commemorative customs were based on the belief that the living could intercede on behalf of the dead. Similar concerns were expressed in visitation articles of the 1560s, 1570s, 1580s, and into the seventeenth century. Huston Diehl

⁴⁵ When discussing the ghost in *Hamlet* most critics begin by responding to Dover Wilson’s seminal *What Happens in Hamlet*. For Dover the ghost is Catholic, he comes from Purgatory. Alexander Leggatt agrees and suggests that this is “information Hamlet never seems to absorb” (56).

⁴⁶ See David Cressy (398-403) and Peter Marshall (*Beliefs* 124-87).

acknowledges “that funeral practices were the most ‘recalcitrant’ of the older religious practices, persisting long after they had been officially banned,” and she links this to a continuing desire for community with the dead (122-3). Peter Marshall points out that it is difficult to tell if the continuation of such practices evidenced a continuation of Catholic belief or “an instinctive conservatism, deeply rooted in the social custom of local community” but they clearly demonstrate a “marked reluctance of conservative-minded laypeople to give up traditional practices pertaining to the well-being of the dead” (*Beliefs* 127). Just as Laertes is outraged by his father’s “obscure burial” (4.5.214) and his sister’s “maimed rites” (5.1.209) people obstinately insisted on traditional burial for their kin because such practices kept the dead amongst the living. Writing on the ghost in *Hamlet* back in 1906 Maurice Egan suggested that it “did not surprise the English of the beginning of the seventeenth century that the murdered King should come from the state of purgation in which many Englishmen still believed” (18). The question of where the ghost comes from is not as clear as Egan suggests, but his granting of a longer shelf life to the doctrine of Purgatory is in keeping with current scholarship.

When the ghost of Old Hamlet is read in the context of revisionist Reformation scholarship he proves to be a particularly Elizabethan ghost. The work of historians such as Peter Lake, Peter Marshall and Alexandra Walsham now extend the chronology of the Reformation in England into the early seventeenth century, what is now called England’s Long Reformation. Until recently many scholars generally agreed that by the 1580s the Reformation was beginning to bed down. Alexandra Walsham has shown, however, that it was at almost precisely this cultural moment that the term “church papists” emerged which was used in reference to someone who dutifully attended the Church of England

but was thought to practice or at least have sympathy towards the old faith. Walsham notes that the term “evidences the emergence of comment and concern about conformity in the late sixteenth-century society” (10). Walsham also suggests that a decline in reports of recusancy in the 1590s could be traced to more stringent fines and an increase in Catholic tolerance toward outward conformity (10). Concern over inward belief and outward conformity was expressed by Gregory Martin in 1597: “How many are there thinke you, of secret Catholikes, that wish for the Old Religion againe with al their heart, and follow the new only for feare” (qtd. in Walsham 49). At the turn of the sixteenth century Protestants had become increasingly concerned with hunting down “church papists” and Catholics were equally concerned with schismatics. As Peter Lake has demonstrated in his discussion of religious identities in early modern England, to divide Elizabethans into the neat binary of Protestants and Catholics is problematic (57-84). The emergence of the term “church papist” in the late 1580s “identified a sector of the populace that occupied a kind of confessional limbo” (Walsham 3); Hamlet’s concern with that within which “passeth show” was a wider cultural concern.

Greenblatt’s rethinking of the theological origins of the ghost of Old Hamlet is, in part, a response to on-going speculation that Shakespeare’s father was a practicing Catholic.⁴⁷ It is important to remember, however, that almost everyone in the Globe theatre audience would be able to trace a heritage, at least to their grandparents, to the old faith and it is this relation of kin that I want to stress here. In the Elizabethan period Protestants and Catholics alike “believed that the old faith persisted because people clung

⁴⁷ For a succinct and balanced review of the debate over the religion of John Shakespeare, see the introduction to *Shakespeare and Religious Change*, edited by Kenneth J. Graham and Philip D. Collington (1-4).

to the faith of their fathers” (Groves 26). From the outset of the Reformation in England popular concern over “what is become of our foregatherers?” who died in the dark days of popery was identified as one of “the greatest barre and hinderance unto us, for their conversion” (Thomas Morton qtd. in Marshall 206). Are “all our fathers lost?” people wanted to know and confessed that they wanted to stay in “same faith as my father” demonstrating that ties to the dead, especially dead ancestors, were part of long established social memory (Marshall *Beliefs* 205-7). Paul Connerton argues that collective memory is constructed through social groups, especially kinship and religious groups (36). In the traditional liturgy, the dead were kept amongst the living through continual intercessory practices. The main purpose of all funerary services was to provide intercession for the souls of the departed and commemorative ceremonies “provided for constant interplay between the living and the dead” (Burgess *A Fond Thing* 67). The performative nature of obits, for example, were designed to “jog memories and draw as many as possible into the collective business of intercessory prayer” (Marshall *Beliefs* 21). Performative, representative services for the dead were an *aide-mèmoire* to prick the conscience of the laity to pray for the dead. Connerton has shown that the Roman Catholic commemorative ceremonies in particular, with their quality of re-enactment, were “of cardinal importance in the shaping of communal memory” (61). It is through the rhetoric of re-enactment that collective memory was formed and this comes “most starkly into play in the represented presence of the dead” (Connerton 68-71). Clive Burgess claims that in the late medieval Church “Religion made past things present by constant and vivid re-enactment” (“Longing” 48), and it is significant that *Hamlet* opens with the repeated staging of an apparition that looks very much like the dead King.

Within the context of a Long Reformation it is possible to see that what could now be called the Long Death of Purgatory lingered on into Shakespearean England. Peter Marshall has shown that “attacks on Catholic teaching on Purgatory and the afterlife remained a commitment of Protestant theologians throughout the Tudor and early Stuart periods” (*Map of God’s Word* 129). Marshall writes that “scholarship to date has shown little interest in continuing Protestant attacks on Purgatory after the climacteric of 1547” (113). Marshall complains that much scholarship on death in post-Reformation England makes “only passing mention of the ‘absence’, ‘abandonment’ or ‘loss’ of Purgatory, almost as if the doctrine had been rather carelessly mislaid” (128-9). Far from being simply abandoned, the death of Purgatory was a long drawn out affair. Initially, even Martin Luther “sought to reform Purgatory rather than abolish it entirely” (Koslofsky1), and the first Reformation tract on Purgatory (c.1523) questioned the effect of intercessory prayers but did not dispute the existence of the third place. Early reformers also entertained the notion of soul sleep but would not get caught up in questions about where exactly the souls of the dead reside only that they “do sleep in a certain place unknown to us” (qtd. in Marshall *Map* 117). Teachings on Purgatory lacked coherence and it was not clear if it was an “ante-room of heaven or outpost of hell” (Duffy 343) highlighting a long-standing problem locating the middle state in relation to Heaven and Hell. This is evident in the vision literature of the Middle Ages in which the purgation of the souls of the “good but not very good [and] the bad but not very bad” takes place on the outskirts of both Heaven and Hell (Gardiner 180-2). As indicated by the title of John Veron’s *The Hunting of Purgatory to Death* the Protestant strategy was to demonstrate that Catholic teachings on Purgatory were false guides to the hereafter

that led nowhere. Thus Sir Thomas Hoby mocks that Purgatory “is in so many places, that indeed, it is in no place” (79). While reformers could not bring themselves to agree just where the dead might be, they were adamant that all ties between the living and dead be cut. The continuation of traditional burial practices, commemorative ceremonies and theological debate all combine to form a rather oblique picture of a time when beliefs on the state of the dead were in a state of flux. In this way things had not changed much from the original 1536 Church of England article on Purgatory where it was said of the dead that “the place where they be, the name thereof, and the kinds of pain there, be to us uncertain” (qtd. in Morgan “Of Worms” 141). For many, the idea that the dead might be in distress, in some uncertain place, but irrevocably cut off from any assistance from the living was nothing short of traumatic. Souls departed, destination unclear, and the living were left behind with no forwarding address. Equally, the dead now existed obscurely some place else with no incoming prayers. It is this “uncertain” space, where the dead be, that at times is evoked on the Shakespearean stage when boundaries between the living and dead are no longer fixed. *Hamlet* is a work infused with ambiguity and the confusion begins with the manifestation of the questionable ghost of Old Hamlet.

III – Being Kind in the Medieval Dramatic Tradition

Promotion of Christian kinship was also a dramatic tradition that dominated English religious drama, especially the passion plays. I believe that *Hamlet*, in both form and subject matter, owes a more extensive debt to the medieval drama than has largely been recognized. In *Hamlet* the “play’s the thing [to] catch the conscience of the King” (2.2.593-4); however, the use of plays to catch consciences dates back to the

English traditional church drama. The mystery plays' explicit purpose of playing was to instruct the audience to remember that Christ suffered and died for their sins. In the York Cycle, for example, Jhesus addresses the audience and reminds them of their natural Christian duty:

With bittirfull bale have I bought,
Thus, man, all thy misse for to mende,
On me for to looke lette thou nog[h]t,
Howe bainly my boedy I bende.
No wighte in this worlde wolde have wende
What sorowe I suffer for thy sake.
Manne, kaste the[e] kindinesse by kende,
Trew tente unto me that thou take,
And treste.

(qtd. in Bevington *Medieval Drama* 183-91)

When Jhesus says “kast the kindness by kene” he is appealing to mankind to recognize both his suffering for their sake, and that they owe him the natural affection that comes with ties of kinship. Bevington glosses lines 189-91 as “Man, think upon your feelings of kindred held by natural affection, in order to pay true attention and trust unto me” (586). Similarly, when Jhesu addresses the disciples in the N Town Passion Play he calls them “my dere frendys and bretheryn” (893). When Christ appeals to mankind and the disciples, he is directly addressing the audience who represent mankind; this is the cunning of the scene that works to catch consciences. John Cox explains that commemorating the passion was “the foundation of liturgical community, the

establishment of the social body by whom and for whom the mystery plays were performed [the crucifixion] was the primal event that established the play's audience as part of a socially cohesive community" (34). Focus on the passion in the medieval drama provided an *aide-mèmoire* to the laity to practice affective meditation on the suffering of the son and to promote the perception of Jesus as kindred and brethren.⁴⁸ (Duffy *Stripping* 235). To not sufficiently recognize the great debt paid by Christ was unnatural. This point is stressed over and over in both the liturgy and the plays.

The mystery plays, then, offered audiences an opportunity for communal consideration of their savour as kindred and brethren, a chance to be kind to the kin to whom they owed the most. By extension, in the traditional liturgy, to remember Christ was to recall one's duty to remember all Christians, living and dead and this was one of the ways in which the plays pricked the conscience. *Hamlet* is also concerned with using drama as a tool to catch consciences; catching the conscience of the King is the explicit purpose of *The Mousetrap*. It is within the context of both the traditional religious drama's concern with catching consciences and *Hamlet's* concern with remembrance due to his dead father that I would like to suggest a reading of Hamlet's first line that has been overlooked. When the Prince says "A little more than kin, and less than kind" (1.2.65) he is punning on his Uncle's unnatural relations with his mother through the King's marriage to Gertrude, Claudius' "sometime sister" (1.5.7). But Hamlet also employs the rhetoric of being kind to kin that would be deeply embedded in social memory from hundreds of years of the traditional drama and liturgy. I believe that Claudius would also be recognized as less than kind kin in the way that he actively seeks

⁴⁸ See Duffy *Stripping* (235).

to truncate all due commemorative rites to his brother, the last King of Denmark. Both Old and Young Hamlet emphasize Claudius and his deeds as unnatural: to the prince his uncle is a “kindless villain!”; and the ghost calls on his son to revenge his father’s “most foul and unnatural murder [. . .] Murder most foul, as in the best it is / But this most foul, strange, and unnatural” (1.5.761-4). *Titus Andronicus* employs similar rhetoric of being kind to dead kin when he worries about proper interment of his sons: “Titus, unkind and careless of thine owne, / Why suffer’st thy son’s unburied yet / To hover on the dreadful shore of Styx?” (1.1.86-8). What these lines perhaps demonstrate is that the medieval rhetoric of being kind to dead kin is still, at this time, in cultural currency. Given both plays’ concern with the dead (burial rites in *Titus Andronicus* and mourning in *Hamlet*) I believe that Hamlet and Titus are, at one level, speaking of being kind in the sense of remembrance due to the dead. The exploration of the affectiveness of drama in *Hamlet* is not a new phenomenon of the commercial theatres rather its origins are firmly rooted in the traditional drama.⁴⁹ Indeed, English religious drama owes its existence to the Church’s recognition of the usefulness of plays to prick the consciences of playgoers.

There is an explicit reference to the cycle plays in *Hamlet* when the Prince instructs the players on how to give a passionate speech. An actor must not, he tells the players, in the “whirlwind of [his] passion . . . split the ears of the groundlings . . . it out-Herod’s Herod” (3.2.9-14). Duffy claims that “only the older members of the audience of *Hamlet* would have know at first hand what ‘out-Heroding Herod’ actually involved” (582). But Beatrice Groves has made a strong case for social memory of the mystery

⁴⁹ There were also contemporary examples of early modern drama operating in this fashion as noted in the Arden *Hamlet* by G.B. Hibbard who writes, “A number of stories about malefactors who had been led to confess their crimes by seeing similar events in plays were current in Shakespeare’s day” (2.2.577-83n.).

plays continuing well into the mid 1600's. The cycle plays were staged into the 1570s and John Cox suggests that this "represents a perpetuation of traditional religious views well into Elizabeth's reign" (19). And in 1570, John Stow writes that in the past London "hath holy playes, representations of miracles which holy Confessours have wrought, or representations of torments wherein the constancie of Martyrs appeared" (92). Stow also sees a continuation of the traditional drama in "These or the like exercises have beene continued till our time, namely in stage playes" (93). It is very possible that more than a few in Shakespeare's audience would have some memory of the mystery plays. In *Macbeth*, as discussed herein in chapter four, the porter makes reference to the medieval *Harrowing of Hell* play suggesting that Shakespeare is assuming some audience familiarity with medieval drama.

The general influence of the traditional drama on the early modern stage has been widely recognized. Beatrice Groves suggests that the "the staging of suffering is central to both the mysteries and early-modern drama, and in Shakespeare it is often at these moments that the connection with medieval dramaturgy is strongest" (49-50). She cites *King Lear* and the slaughter at the end of *Hamlet* as examples of Shakespeare's use of violent spectacle, but I disagree with her analysis of *Hamlet*. It is true that the end of the play leaves the stage littered with bodies; however, the murders are all dispatched within 20 lines of the final act, and in contrast to *Lear*, there is no central spectacle of physical suffering in *Hamlet*. Polonius is killed behind a curtain, Ophelia drowns off stage, and the deaths of Rozencrantz and Guildenstern are reported. Rather, in *Hamlet*, the central spectacle of suffering is staged in the form of Hamlet's intense personal suffering as performed in his famous soliloquies. The Prince is intensely interested in passionate

speeches—he directs the players “Come, give us a taste of your quality, come, a passionate speech” (2.2.424) and his wonder over the first player’s “dream of passion” (2.2.540) is what leads to his insight into the cunning of the scene. And what if, asks Hamlet, the player had

the motive and the cue for passion
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,
Make mad the guilty and appal the free,
Confound the ignorant and amaze indeed
The very faculties of eyes and ears.

(2.2.549-54)

And as Hamlet stands on stage lamenting his lack of action he acts out his passion through his own speech that is surely at this moment cleaving ears and perhaps producing a few tears from the actor playing Hamlet. Hamlet’s soliloquies are lauded as the best speeches in drama and are widely recognized as what makes *Hamlet* a masterpiece. Groves writes, “rhetoric does not elicit a comparable emotional response to that created by actually observing pain and death” (49). But Hamlet’s speeches are not rhetorical; they are often broken, disjointed exhibitions of the poison of deep grief. One connection between the mystery plays and *Hamlet* may be found in the etymology of the term “passion” that originates in reference to both the physical suffering of Christ and the narrative of the passion. It was only in the 1590s that “passion” came to also denote “a literary composition or passage marked by strong emotion” (*OED*). This idea is emphasized, for example, when Duke Humphrey in 2 *Henry VI* expresses grief over the

erasure of memory and his speech is followed by the line, “what means this passionate discourse?” (1.1.102). And I think it is very possible that Shakespeare is punning, in a way, on the playing of passion as both suffering and passionate speech. The playing of passionate speeches is what Hamlet famously embodies—internal suffering outwardly expressed—and this expression is manifested most clearly when he is alone on stage. When the prince is alone on stage he is also, like the central figure of the suffering Christ in the passion plays, in the most intimate relationship to the playgoers. Janet Hill suggests “stretching from medieval drama to early modern drama is a long and vital tradition of stage-audience dialogue” (13). Hill argues that “Shakespeare’s audiences increasingly heard from his stage addresses not simply expository or declamatory, but more like the inclusive address of characters on the platea of medieval plays, the kind of “we,” “you,” “here,” and “now” that served to connect the medieval playworld with the world of the audience” (120). Thus in a similar fashion to the way in which the passion of Christ is utilized in the mystery plays to evoke sorrow of heart, in *Hamlet* it is the Prince’s “passion”, his struggles over memory and grief, that is offered for a collective consideration by the audience.

Hamlet’s debt to the traditional religious drama also includes the morality plays. Essentially dramatized sermons, the goal of the moralities was to encourage the audience to set their sights on the afterlife and thus be moved to penance and acts of charity. Like the mysteries the moralities were explicitly “aimed at catching the conscience of the audience” (Potter 36). In *The Castle of Perseverance*, for example, Penitence is sent to pierce the heart of Human Genus with the prick of conscience to cause him “sorwe of hert” (2845). John D Cox notes that “dramatic action in *The Castle of Perseverance* is no

less focused on the passion and its liturgical significance than are the mystery plays” (45) and the plays also employ the rhetoric of being kind to kin. The moralities do not stage the crucifixion but they often include passion narratives where the saviour’s suffering is described in excruciating detail, and those who are not moved by the passion are unkind. In *The Castle of Perseverance*, for example, the Good Angel instructs mankind to “have him alwey in minde, / That dyed on rode for mankinde” (335-6) and later despairs because “to crist he can nowt be kinde” (1289). This same rhetoric of being kind is echoed by the central figure in *Wisdom* who asks, “Wy art thou creature so on kynde?” (905). The basic plot of the moralities is a disruption of social order by a violation of societal norms ending with “the restoration of charitable community” (Cox 50). Critics have found connections to the morality play tradition in *Hamlet*. Groves notes that the play begins with the period of normative mourning, “disrupted by a wedding” (3) and Robert Potter makes a convincing case for calling *The murder of Gonzago* “the morality play within the play” (138). What the moralities offered was “a collective response to an individual problem” and the offer of “a liberation from individual guilt” (Cox 36). In the morality plays the audience are “participants in the process” (Potter 8). Through performances that prick consciences to remember duty to all Christian “brethryn” and kin the moralities worked to re-establish community by extending an individual problem, that is really a disruption of social order, outward for collective audience consideration. In *Hamlet* the Prince’s soliloquies are passionate speeches that focus on grief, loss, and death. The effect of such speeches, in *Hamlet* and the moralities, is to cause “sorowe of hert” as Hamlet demonstrates for us at the close of his first soliloquy: “but break my heart” (1. 2.159).

VI- Remembrance in the Revenge Tragedy Tradition

Recognition of the extent to which *Hamlet* addresses reciprocal concern between the living and the dead sheds light on the connection between the play's concern with revenge and duties owed to the dead. The genre of revenge tragedy often brings the dead into the world of the living. Michael Neill writes:

More consistently than any other form, it is now possible to see, it was revenge tragedy that spoke to the anxieties produced by this painful transformation in relations with the dead: its protagonists are haunted by ghosts because they are possessed by memory; the dead will not leave them alone, because the dead cannot bear to be left alone.

(245)

Neill understands the figure of the revenger to represent the living harnessed into service of the demanding dead; however, it is possible to see the problem of revenge in reverse. Patrick Geary describes medieval relationships between the living and the dead as a complicated system of exchange.⁵⁰ Geary explains that the gifts of inheritance are so great that it is was only by finding a suitable counter-gift that the receiver could “revenge” themselves on the giver. In fact the term “counter-gift” comes from the Latin *talio* which also means vengeance (*Living with the Dead* 80). One of the greatest gifts, a gift that was also of utmost importance to the preservation of memory, was a name:

What was expected in return for this name gift? Obviously, the preservation
Of the name, hence of the person, through deeds that would enhance an *illustre nomen*; through the recollection of the deeds of the person in oral tradition; and

⁵⁰ See Patrick Geary, *Living with the Dead* (77-92).

through the offering of prayers by the name carrier and his agent, the Church.

(89)

“Young Hamlet” (1.1.176) carries the gift and burden of his father’s name and he owes his dead father the preservation of his *illustre nomen* but in the world of Elsinore the name and deeds of last King of Denmark are being wiped from the tables of memory.⁵¹ Traditionally the living were able to “revenge” themselves on the dead through intercessory services but now there is no suitable “form of prayer” (3.3.26). While Greenblatt and Neill argue that the ghost’s command of remembrance marks a switch from revenge to remembrance they are not taking into account the liturgical significance of such a demand. A request from beyond for remembrance was a request for prayer. The perturbed spirit does not usher in a shift from vengeance to remembrance, rather, the ghost illuminates the fact that rights / rites of memory are revenge by other names. The performance of intercessory services allowed for a settling of accounts between the departed and the bereaved. The abolishment of this system of dealing with debts owed to the dead perhaps lead to a period of unfinished business between the quick and the dead.

The Spanish Tragedy must be included in any discussion of *Hamlet* within the context of the revenge tragedy tradition. Thomas Kyd is credited with single handedly creating the genre of revenge tragedy with his immensely popular and influential work. Highly original, Kyd’s play is one of the few dramatic works of the period that cannot be traced to a source. *The Spanish Tragedy* opens with the Ghost of Andrea describing his journey through the underworld. Although Andrea’s “funeral and obsequies were done” (1.1.26) he cannot find posthumous accommodation. The ghost can find rest neither in

⁵¹ Alexander Leggatt also writes of the importance of Hamlet carrying his father’s name. See *Shakespeare’s Tragedies* (80-3).

the “fields of love” (1.1.42) nor the “martialist fields” (1.1.47). Poor Andrea, a lover and a fighter, is forced to travel to the court of the underworld to learn his post-mortem fate.

The ghost describes his journey through the afterlife:

Three ways there were: that on the right-hand side
Was ready way unto the foresaid fields
Where lovers live and bloody martialist,
But either sort contained within his bounds.
The left-hand path, declining fearfully,
Was ready downfall to the deepest hell . . .
‘Twixt these two ways I trod the middle path,

(1.1.59-72)

It is notable that in Kyd’s afterworld there are three choices. John Kerrigan writes:

“Interestingly, Virgil, Kyd’s authority for most of the speech, reports in Book VI of the *Aeneid* that there are two paths, not three” (175). Interesting indeed, and I think that the “middle path,” while not specifically referring to Purgatory, implies a liminal middle state of souls (clearly existing between heaven and hell) that is inhabited by Andrea for the length of the play. He has just come from the court of the underworld where he was waiting to hear Proserpine pronounce his final resting place: “No sooner had she spoke but we were here / I wot not how, in twinkling of an eye” (1.1.84-85). Unable to find posthumous accommodation, Andrea now inhabits this “here,” the theatre, where he has come to see a play. Revenge tells him:

Then know Andrea that thou art arrived
Where thou shalt see the author of thy death

don Balthazar, the prince of Portingale,
Deprived of life by Bel-imperia.
Here sit we down to see the mystery,
And serve for Chorus in this tragedy.

(1.1.86-91)

The theatre audience have also come to see the mystery and inhabit the same space as Andrea's ghost. Andrea and Revenge have joined the theatre audience who have now joined Andrea and Revenge and all spectators, living and dead, now occupy the theatre. Not only is the theatre now a place where the dead and living coexist, it is an undetermined place caught between two worlds. Built between the heavens and hells, this "middle path" is evocative of that other "third place" Purgatory. Importantly, when Andrea arrives at the theatre he is still in a state of limbo because his final resting-place is undetermined and he remains "twixt these two ways" for the length of the performance. Unlike those souls who rest in heaven and hell where "either sort [are] contained within his bounds" (1.1.63), Andrea and his fellow spectators are now simply here, in the playhouse.

Hamlet borrows heavily from *The Spanish Tragedy* and the parallels are difficult to miss: a ghost; a suicidal madwoman; themes of grief, madness, delayed justice; a play-within-the-play; and even a character called Horatio. Like *Hamlet* the world of *The Spanish Tragedy* is chaotic and confoundingly confusing. The confusion in *The Spanish Tragedy* is first manifested in the ghost of Andrea and his lack of understanding of his place in the afterworld. One of the most innovative aspects of *The Spanish Tragedy* that Shakespeare borrowed from Kyd, I believe, was the device of bringing the dead into the

playhouse. In *The Spanish Tragedy* the ghost of Andrea is not a haunting figure but the ghost of Old Hamlet is superbly unsettling and one of the most disarming features of the ghost is his ubiquitous presence in the playhouse. The first time Hamlet appears on stage he is unaware of the repeated appearance of the ghost but the audience has known from the opening of the play that this is a world occupied by the quick and the dead. This blurring of boundaries between the living and the dead is our first introduction to the ambiguous world of *Hamlet* and the confusion begins with the ghost. The spirit of Old Hamlet does not play a spectator in the conspicuous manner of the ghost of Andrea but he knows who wears his crown and sleeps with his wife; he has been observing the action. In other words, the ghost is a member of the audience. Moreover, while the ghost's close attention to the action is implied by the tale the ghost tells Hamlet of his "most seeming-virtuous queen" (1.5.9-91), the spirit explicitly draws the audience's attention to his presence amongst the living by repeatedly calling out from under the stage, making it clear that he inhabits the theatre (1.5.157-89); the ghost is "*hic et ubique*" (1.5.164) here and everywhere within the playhouse. Through performance *Hamlet* creates a theatrical world inhabited on stage and off by the living and the dead, which allows the audience to collectively engage in an imaginative continuation of negotiations with the dead.

Hamlet does not, however, imitate Kyd's repeated staging of bloody violence. As Michael Neill points out, when *Hamlet* was first staged *The Spanish Tragedy* was not just an influence, it was still part of the competition (261). The 1602 additions to *The Spanish Tragedy* were written one year after the staging of Shakespeare's masterpiece at the new Globe theatre and I believe we can read the 1602 additions as a very possible response to

the ingenuity and success of *Hamlet*.⁵² Shakespeare imitated and re-worked Kyd's masterpiece into his own version of a revenge tragedy and, in turn, *Hamlet* might have inspired a re-write of *The Spanish Tragedy*. The additions consist of five additional passages: "Of the five additional passages, the first second and fifth are brief and of slight importance, and the fourth is the well-known Painter scene, which amplifies in a striking manner the theme of Hieronimo's grief" (Mulryne xxxiii). I would agree with Mulryne except to add that, with the exception of the brief second passage, amplification of the theme of Hieronimo's grief is the aim of each of the additions and that as scenes of grief, they are also scenes of remembrance of the dead. Hieronimo cannot forget his lost son and loses his "way to grief!" (*First Addition* 2.2.55), and the third passage gives the grieving father a soliloquy that in the spirit of *memoria* commemorates Horatio's marshal deeds when he "unhorsed the proud Prince Balthazar" (3.6.36). In the fifth passage Hieronimo says he has "grown inward with revenge" – a key phrase and as in *Hamlet* it is the outward projection of this inwardness that is the dramatic spectacle. What the additions add to *The Spanish Tragedy* is not more violent spectacle but more passionate speeches, more showing of "that within": Hieronimo's remembrance and grief. While it is true that Hieronimo, like Hamlet, is forced to internalize his grief and express it in private, this internal grief and individual memory is performed for the communal concern of the audience, and it is significant that the audience consists of the living and the dead.

V – The Ghost of Old Hamlet

⁵² On the possible connections between *Hamlet* and the 1602 additions to *The Spanish Tragedy*, see Michael Neill, *Issues of Death* (214-17).

It all begins, then, with the ghost. It is true that in *Hamlet* no one suggests that a commemorative rite be performed for the last King of Denmark or masses be said for the soul of Old Hamlet. However, because the living have ceased all intercessory practices does not mean that such rites of memory are not still a concern for the dead. I would like to suggest that through his repeated appearances, the spirit performs his own commemorative ceremony. When the ghost first appears to Horatio and the soldiers he is repeatedly referred to as something that is “like” the King’s that’s dead. Greenblatt reads “the perception of likeness” as an issue of memory (215-18) and Alexander Leggatt argues that issues of identity are at the heart of *Hamlet* and illuminate the very nature of theatre where actors are “figures *like* the character they are playing” (55-61). Now, as I have shown, the representation of something “like” the deceased was at the very heart of traditional liturgical ceremonies. Philip Morgan writes of the abandonment of the dead by the reformed liturgy: “The dead, it seemed, must shift for themselves” (“Worms and War” 143) is his rather plaintive phrase and this lonely idea may be applied to the opening scene of the play. Deprived of his memorial rites it seems that the ghost must take his commemorative matters into his own hands. Funeral scenes typically begin with the stage direction *A Dead March* and a “dead march” is exactly what the ghost performs in the first act as he crosses back and forth over the stage. Horatio fills Hamlet’s attendant ears with a description of the spirit’s stately procession:

Two nights, together had these gentlemen,
Marcellus and Barnardo, on their watch,
In the dead waste and middle of the night,
Been thus encount’red: a figure like your father,

Armed at point exactly, cap-a-pie,
Appears before them, and with solemn march
Goes slow and stately by them; thrice he walk'd
By their oppress'd and fear-surprised eyes

(1.2.196-203)

Commemorative services provided interplay between the living and the dead and it was through constant vivid re-enactment that late medieval religious practice made past things present; and key to evoking social memory was the represented presence of the dead. Moreover, Horatio's describes the march as "slow and solemn" and his language echoes the most common adjectives used to describe commemorative ceremonies. King Henry VIII, for example, requested in his will a "solemn obit" (qtd. in Marshall *Beliefs* 103). The play does not begin, like *1 Henry VI*, with *A Dead March* and funeral procession; rather, it opens with the dead performing his own funerary rite as the ghost of the last King of Denmark is forced to "shift for himself," as Morgan would have it, to stage his own noble rite.

Significantly, each time the ghost is about to appear the ringing of bells is brought to our attention. Bernardo informs his fellow soldiers "Tis now struck twelve" (1.1.7), and just as the soldiers sit down to assail Horatio's ears with the tale of the ghost, the spirit appears:

BERNARDO

Last night of all,
When yond same star that's westward from the pole
Had made his course t'illuminate that part of heaven

Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,
The bell then beating one—

Enter Ghost

(1.1.35-9)

Bernardo's talk of beating bells is the cue for the ghost's entry. And when the prince is brought to watch for the spirit, talk of bells again herald his coming:

HAMLET What hour now?

HORATION I think it lacks of twelve.

MARCELLUS No, it is struck.

HORATIO Indeed? I heard it not. It then draws near the season
Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

(1.4.3-6)

Bells, in obits and at funerals, were calls for remembrance and prayer for the dead.⁵³ The ringing of bells was repeatedly complained of in visitations because they serve to maintain belief in Purgatory and maintenance of prayer for the dead. It is notable that Sir Thomas Browne's impulse to offer an orison for souls of the departed is triggered by bells. Browne confesses: "I could scarce contain my prayers for a friend at the ringing of a Bell" (68). Peter Marshall explains that in a medieval parish "The ritual of tolling the community's bells to bring succour to the souls of all the faithful departed was designed to express the aspiration for a perfect charitable unity, both among the living, and between the living and the dead" (131). But by the late 1580s the banned practice of bell ringing as calls to remembrance and prayer was a problem and the practice demonstrated

⁵³ On Protestant concern over bells and the dead, see David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage* (421-25); Marshall, *Beliefs*, (128-31).

“an aggressive assertion of religious difference” (Marshall *Beliefs* 128). Bells, then, like the represented presence of the dead, were meant to prick the conscience to evoke concern for souls departed. As demonstrated by Sir Thomas Browne, objects and actions associated with commemorative services, as late as 1621, could still trigger deeply ingrained social memory of relationships between the living and the dead.

Commemorative ceremonies were designed as *aide-mèmoire* and the ghost’s “dead march” is effective in drawing his audience into a communal act of remembrance. Horatio, Bernardo and Marcellus sit down and talk of the deeds of the departed as they remember “Our last King, / Whose image even but now appeared to us” (1.1.85-86). As argued by Connerton, communal memory comes most powerfully into play in the represented presence of the dead. The ghost who was “this thing” this “dreaded sight” is claimed and named as “our valiant Hamlet” and lives again in memory. In this way the play opens with a very nearly complete commemorative performance. Commemorative ceremonies were designed to evoke *memoria* through the performance of liturgical remembrance; prayer for the dead and remembrance of the name and deeds of the departed and this is precisely what the presence of “the same figure like the King that’s dead” (1.1.45) effects. The soldiers sit down and engage in a communal act of remembering the illustrious deeds of the dead King. The repeated appearances of the ghost also work to maintain ties between the past and the present, and the claims of the past on the present. Importantly, the story the soldiers tell is one of patrilineal claims, of Old Hamlet’s claim to the land and subsequent claims by Old and Young Fortinbras. Inheritance, as Margaret De Grazia has recently emphasized, is the heart of the plot of *Hamlet*:

The premise is this: at his father's death, just at the point when an only son in a patrilineal system stands to inherit, Hamlet is dispossessed – and, as far as the court is concerned, legitimately. The promise of the patronymic is broken: Prince Hamlet does not become King Hamlet; Hamlet II does not step into the place of Hamlet I.

(1)

To re-historicize the tensions surrounding the appearances of the ghost is also, I believe, to return us to a focus on the plot because what De Grazia describes is both a break with tradition and a break between the claims of the past on the present, and these tensions are embodied in the restless ghost.

VI – The Playing of Passion

In the medieval drama focus on the passion as a central image of suffering was meant to operate as a prick of conscience to playgoers to remember their natural ties of kinship to all Christian souls, especially souls departed. In *Hamlet* the central spectacle of suffering operates in a similar way to shift the Prince's individual lamentations of loss outward to the audience. It is true that in Elsinore Hamlet must suffer his grief in isolation but Hamlet is also a man of words, words, words and his struggles with grief and memory are performed over and over in his famous soliloquies. In contrast to Kerrigan's reading of Hamlet's soliloquies as performances of isolated, individual memories the princes' soliloquies often function to draw the audience into a collective consideration of bereavement and loss, a common grief. Hill argues that in *Hamlet*, of all Shakespeare's plays, soliloquies operate in the mode of "open address" in that they are

often “audience interrogating” and thus both invoke audience presence and provoke audience response.⁵⁴ This is certainly the way that Charles Dickens imagines a performance of *Hamlet*:

Whenever that undecided Prince had to ask a question or state a doubt, the audience helped him out with it. As for example: on the question whether ‘twas nobler in the mind to suffer, some roared yes, and some no, and some inclining to both opinions said “toss up for it;” and quite a Debating Society arose

(Great Expectations 293)

Of course this is a fictional account but it highlights the fact that from the opening line—“Who’s there?”—this play never stops asking questions; always an invitation for audience response and Dickens’ audience behaves much more in line with Elizabethan audiences than our modern polite playgoers. Dickens’ audience feels compelled to help Hamlet out with his doubts, which illustrates that *Hamlet*, like the moralities, evokes “a collective response to an individual problem” (Potter 36), and thus includes the playgoers as participants in the process of Hamlet’s dilemma of remembrance. Connerton posits that the “idea of an individual memory, absolutely separate from social memory, is an abstraction almost devoid of meaning” (37); memories, he argues, are invoked by others and this applies equally to distant memories. In *Hamlet* the hesitant revenger’s struggles with remembrance both evokes social memory of the traditional rites due to the dead, and allows for a collective mourning of the loss of these consolatory “shapes of grief” (1.2.82).

⁵⁴ See Janet Hill, *Stages and Playgoers* (120).

Hamlet's first passionate speech is largely a reaction to Claudius' lack of due remembrance given to the last King of Denmark. The second scene of the play opens with Claudius giving what initially seems a "like" a commemorative speech:

Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death
□The memory be green, and that it us befitted
□To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom
□To be contracted in one brow of woe, □
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature □
That we with wisest sorrow think on him □
Together with remembrance of ourselves.

(1.2.2-8)

Shakespeare's audience might very well agree that it is fitting for the kingdom of Denmark to be in mourning for the recent death of Old Hamlet. But in the space of a sentence remembrance of his brother's death brings Claudius to "remembrance of ourselves" (1.2.7). Shakespeare's audience would be as bewildered as Laertes ("what ceremony else?") at such truncated rites. This denial of remembrance is indicative of not only a discarding of the dead, but a general dispatching of any kind of connection with the past; old Hamlet was not simply Claudius's brother, he was Denmark's King and as such belonged also to the people of Denmark: he was *our* last King, *our* valiant Hamlet (1.1.85-8). Just as the ghost is forced to conduct his own commemorative rites Claudius' denial of the rights of memory is another indication that the state of Denmark is "disjoint and out of frame" (1.2.19-20). Gertrude is called the "imperial jointress" but it is Claudius who shifts and re-joins foundational elements of society in highly disturbing

ways: “With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage / In equal scale weighing delight and dole—” (1.2.13-14). Claudius is a force of corruption and operates like a morality play vice figure—he could be called Unkynde Kyndred—by creating a sense of disorder through the “violation of communal norms” (Cox 46). The new King of Denmark is an incestuous murderer and eraser of memory. It is small wonder, then, that to Hamlet his uncle is “little more than kin and less than kind” (1.2.65).

Hamlet is berated for mourning his father and Claudius’ second speech in the play may be read as a reform sermon on moderation in grieving taken to the extreme. Hamlet is told that as a son he is obliged “for some term / To do obsequies sorrow” (90-91) for his father, but Claudius discards *any* remembrance. Hamlet is instructed to “throw to earth / This unprevailing woe and think of us” (1.2.106-7), and again it all comes back to Claudius. Whether or not Hamlet is a Wittenberg trained Protestant, it is clear that he wishes for a longer period of mourning and that Claudius wants none of that common theme. This scene comes hard on the heels of the appearance of an unsettled sprit staging his own rites of memory, and commemoration, remembrance, and obsequious sorrow, are all much too “greenly” dispatched. And, later, Claudius must admit that his neglect of the illustrious dead does not go unnoticed by the Danish people:

The people muddied,
Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts and whispers
For good Polonius’ death—and we have done but greenly,
In hugger-mugger to inter him

(4.5.83-5)

Claudius' disposal of all rites of remembrance for his dead brother and last King of Denmark might enlist Shakespeare's audience on the side of Danish people in their reaction to Claudius' hasty posthumous treatment of Polonius.

In his first soliloquy Hamlet rants against "things rank and gross in nature" (1.2.) and the most unnatural are Claudius and Gertrude. Hamlet knows nothing yet of the ghost but the audience is aware of the unsettled spirit, and the Prince's harping on months and remembrance—"but two months dead—nay, not so much, not two ... within a month... a little month" (1.2.138-53)—calls to remembrance the traditional practice of "month minds." "Minds" were monthly commemorative liturgical services held for the purpose of communal prayer for the dead during the first year after their death. The combination of a ghost appearing after the ringing of bells, commemorative talk of the last King that's dead, and now Hamlet's frustration over lack of remembrance for his father all combine to strongly evoke Roman Catholic rites for the dead. In 1569 it was exactly these practices that were forbidden:

At burials no ringing any hand bells, no month's minds,
Or yearly commemorations of the dead, nor any other
superstitious ceremonies to be observed or used, which tended
either to the maintenance of prayers for the dead, or of the
popish purgatory

(Grindal qtd. in Potter 24)

Bells, month's mind and commemorations of the dead were banned because they are all *aide-mèmoires* to promote prayer for the dead but now there is no form of prayer and here we have Hamlet's dilemma. His grief cannot be denoted by "actions a man might

play” nor can he perform rites of memory. What the Prince can do, however, is to perform that which passeth show, his individual grief and memory. In his soliloquies Hamlet demonstrates that being able to show “that within”—his passionate sorrow and frustration—*maketh* show. The Prince’s passionate speeches are dramatic spectacle, and they are the central spectacle of suffering in *Hamlet*. In *Macbeth* the witches stage the pageant of kings to “show his eyes and grieve his heart” (4.1.115), but in *Hamlet* it is speeches that grieve hearts because in Elsinore the entry to the soul is the ears. The action of poisoning in the dumb show does not affect Claudius, rather, it is “the talk of the poisoning” (3.2.276) that strikes his soul, and Gertrude tells Hamlet that his “words like daggers enter in my ears” (3.4.98). Focus on the passion in the traditional drama worked to evoke “sorowe of heart”, and similarly, Hamlet’s words cleave Gertrude’s “heart in twain” (3.4.158).⁵⁵ Even Claudius articulates the power of hearing what he holds within expressed—“How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience!” (3.1.49)—in contrast to his own “painted” words. Hamlet is, as Kerrigan argues, possessed with individual memories of his father, “So excellent a King” (1.2.139), but the Prince’s suffering often lies in the tension between the compulsion to remember—“Must I remember?” (1.2.143)—and public pressure to forget: “Do not forever with thy veiled lids / Seek for thy noble father in the dust” (1.2.70-71). Philippe Ariès claims that in the old Church grief was “distributed among a greater number of individuals rather than limited to the members of the conjugal family. It was extended to ever-widening circles, and diluted” (472). Shakespeare uses a similar image in *I Henry VI* when Joan says that glory “is like a circle in the water, / Which never ceaseth to enlarge itself / Till by broad

⁵⁵ See Potter an analysis of *The Mousetrap* as a morality play-within-the-play (138-43).

spreading it disperse to nought” (1.2.133-5). Similarly, in *Hamlet* individual grief performed on stage extends out into the audience and social memory is evoked to consider the “common grief” of troubled relations with the dead.

VII- The Ghost of Old Hamlet and the Place of the Dead

Hamlet, then, brings the dead into the world of the living but the play also explicitly questions the returning spirit’s eschatological origins. Roland Mushat Frye argues that the origins of old Hamlet’s ghost remain one of the great ambiguities of the play (14). For Michael Neill the ghost’s enigmatic, secretive nature is its most striking feature and he notes the spirit is “singularly reticent about its place of suffering” (256). The ghost makes a reference to purgatorial flames when he introduces himself to Hamlet:

I am thy father’s spirit
Doom’d for a certain time to walk the night,
And for the day confin’d to fast in fires,
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purg’d away.

(1.5.9-13)

But the cagey spirit does not name Purgatory; rather, in keeping with the nature of the spirit and much else in this play, the ghost describes something “like” Purgatory. Frye suggests that this theological “ambiguity was both necessary and desirable” (29) for the audience to identify with Hamlet’s hesitation to act on the ghost’s word, but *Hamlet* is singular in addressing the eschatology of the ghost. The question to ask is why does Shakespeare make the spirit’s questionable theological origins part of the play at all?

One reason for this confusion may be related to uncertainty over the state of the dead. The ghost will not say where he is from, but he makes it very clear that he comes from someplace where the dead are in distress:

But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
Make thy two eyes like stars start from their spheres,
Thy knotted and combined locks to part,
And each particular hair to stand on end,
Like quills upon the fretful porcupine.

(1.5.13-20)

The spirit's claim that he is forbid to tell the *secrets* of his prison house echoes the sentiment of several eminent Protestants on the question of the location of the dead.

Peter Marshall summarizes the debate:

According to Tyndale, this [the residence of the dead] was 'a secret laid up in the treasury of God', and Frith remarked that 'God would that we should be ignorant where they be.' [and] John Calvin, expressed himself in almost identical terms by noting that 'many torment themselves greatly with discussing what place they occupy [. . .] It is foolish and rash to enquire into hidden things.'

(qtd. in *Map* 117)

Just like Reformation theologians, the ghost will not get caught up in questions on the place of the dead. Thus the ghost's enigmatic explanation of the afterworld, combined

with his assertion that he cannot disclose the truth, reflects contemporary theological debate over the dead. The ghost's vivid description of the blood freezing, hair-raising result on the living of the tale he *could* tell of the horrors beyond would catch at the conscience of anyone uncertain on the place and state of the dead, particularly those concerned "what is become of our forefathers?" (qtd. in Marshall *Beliefs* 204). Indeed, old Hamlet wields a parent's ultimate weapon: guilt. The presentation of a spirit from an uncertain yet horrific place demanding that his closest kin "remember me" (1.5.91) might harrow up the souls of anyone unclear on the place of the dead. The ghost's command of remembrance would ring in the ears of many as evocative of as a request for prayer. And as emphasized, a request for prayer was always an *aide-mèmoire* to remember one's own kin and a prick of conscience to be kind and pray for all souls departed. This evocation of remembrance was surely a needling reminder in a time when remembrance for the dead without intercession was a troubled area of societal concern.

Horatio touches on intercession for the apparition when he asks if "there be any good thing to be done / that may to thee do ease and grace to me" (1.1.134-5), which goes straight to the heart of the sixteenth-century Roman Catholic system of indulgences, masses and prayers, "all directed to alleviating the pains of souls in purgatory and to lessening the time which they must spend before passing on to the unmixed bliss of heaven" (Frye 22). The only direct reference the ghost makes to his afterworld residence is "my prison-house," and when combined with the claim that he is there for a "certain term," this portrait of a confined spirit would be particularly uncomfortable to many in Shakespeare's audience. Greenblatt argues that the phrase "For a certain term" sets up the theological claim of the word "purged" noting that that the difference between Hell

and Purgatory was that the suffering of those in the former were only for a certain term (230). But what if the ghost means “a certain term” in the sense that his time in his prison-house, like earthy prisons, was fixed? Spending a fixed time in Purgatory is contrary to the founding doctrine of the “third place” which was to allow the living to hasten the purgation process through intercessory prayer. Key to Purgatory’s theological success was that, in contrast to Hell, one’s time in the third place was temporary and uncertain. The possibility that the ghost is stuck in some intermediate state with no chance of succour might be hair-raisingly horrible to some. What is certain is that the eschatology of the last / late King of Denmark is unclear. To Dover Wilson and others he is a Catholic spirit but I disagree and believe that the ambiguous theological nature of the ghost, coupled with the fact that this ambiguity is foregrounded and explicitly questioned, makes him a particularly Elizabethan ghost. The questionable ghost is a manifestation of contemporary religious controversy, come to the Globe theatre to demand, and subsequently evoke, his rights of memory.

Although the ghost has a “countenance more in sorrow than in anger” (1.2.231) the reaction to the spirit is, without exception, fear. As evidenced by the opening line of the play, “Who’s there?” the Elsinore guards are extremely agitated by “this thing,” “this dreaded sight” that fills them with “fear and wonder” (1.1.1-44). Contrary to what the play would have us believe, a popular explanation at the time for the appearance of spirits was that of “the spirit which returns from heaven to earth to give miraculous help” (Bowyer 186). In late medieval Catholicism “a spirit returning from the Other World did not necessarily mean ...something sinister, malevolent, or frightening, but could equally well mean something holy, joyful and benevolent” (187) and was often a saint come to

assist the living. While Protestants rejected the intercession of saints, and officially would not accept that the dead could return to earth, they still believed in the visitation of spirits. According to Ludwig Lavater there was only one explanation for the appearance of spirits on earth; they were angels (Gordon 95-100). Lavater reasoned that God would not permit the dead to return, and Satan had no power to do so, therefore all spirits were angels although they could be both good and malevolent (Gordon 100-2). Hamlet does consider this possibility the first time he encounters the ghost:

Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damned,
bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,
be thy intents wicked or charitable

(1.4.20-2)

The ghost twice expresses concern over Gertrude's spiritual well being: indicating that he does have some charitable intent:

But howsoever thou pursuest this act,
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
Against thy mother aught—leave her to heaven,

(1.5.84-5)

And

But look, amazement on thy mother sits.
O, step between her and her fighting soul!

(3.4.104-106)

The idea that the ghost is a good spirit is never seriously entertained but the ghost's concern for his wife's soul indicates that he does have some charitable intent and is illustrative of reciprocal concern between the dead and the living.

VIII- Communal Remembrance and Commemoration

The haunted Danes, however, do not apply to a Church authority for help in determining the nature of the spirit. Instead, they seek out the closest kin, and this implies that their strongest conviction is that the spirit is the returning dead. It is significant that this is a decision made by a community of "friends, scholars and soldiers" (1.5.146) to whom the spirit chooses to appear. Writing on death, possession and communal memory in late medieval society Nancy Caciola argues that, "the process of collectively constructing the spirit's nature and meaning is fundamentally a social act, deeply expressive of community priorities and interests" (82). The ghost appears twice to Marcellus and Bernardo, who call in Horatio to witness the apparition and speak to it, but the ghost will not talk to him. Horatio in turn decides that they must tell young Hamlet because "This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him" (1.1.153) and the Prince is brought in to make the positive identification. Frye suggests that when Horatio speaks to the ghost, "he uses the same degrading *thou* which is applied to the witches in *Macbeth*" (24) and this may be why the spirit remains dumb to Horatio, but the scholar is merely using the language of familiarity. More significant is that Horatio will not recognize the ghost as the returning dead or honour it with a name, which is one of the first things that Hamlet does when faced with the figure like his father: "I'll call thee Hamlet" (1.4.23). Hamlet addresses the dead by name, positively identifying the ghost, providing him an *illustre*

nomen and re-establishing communication between the living and the dead. This is the final step in what has been a gradual, communal process of identifying the spirit.

The ghost insists on drawing Hamlet apart, and considering that he can appear to his son alone, as he does in the closet scene (3.4) it is remarkable that he does not do so earlier. The ghost does not simply appear at Hamlet's bedside because the haunting is not solely a personal matter; there is something rotten in *the state* of Denmark in both senses of "state" and the meaning of the spirit is collectively constructed before kin are notified. Nancy Caciola explains how, in late medieval society, dealing with hauntings operated as a function of social memory:

The procedure of identifying the possessing spirit—of gradually attaching meaning and familiarity to the invading entity—is an act of collective memory. In the creative process of constructing meaning, we see local knowledge, memories and idioms interwoven to express the evolving self-definitions of the group as well as its collective anxieties.

(84)

The haunting in *Hamlet* begins with that little community of friends, soldiers and scholars and is then brought to bear on the individual, Hamlet. The Prince is, indeed, as Kerrigan claims, "possessed of piercingly individual memory" (173), and to be possessed by memory is to be haunted by memory:

HAMLET

My father—methinks I see my father—

HORATIO O where, my lord?

HAMLET

In my mind's eye, Horatio.

(1.2.184-6)

Hamlet is possessed by grief: the memory of his dead father. The first haunting in the play, however, is communal, and *Hamlet* also deals in collective memory. The spirit is a dreaded sight because he is, quite simply, the dead come amongst the living, and as such he is a manifestation of this particular societies' troubled relationship with the dead.

Furthermore, the ghost appears to the soldiers who watch over Elsinore from the threat of invasion by Norway, a threat that is a result of the last King's martial efforts. Marcellus, Barnardo and Horatio keep this "strict and observant watch" (1.1.71) to the "post-haste and rummage in the land" (1.1.107), the entire state, and thus encompasses the community that is Denmark. More than anxiety over the neglected dead, what seems to be at stake here is collective fear of a larger forgetting. Eamon Duffy links the abolishment of Purgatory to a much broader break with the past:

The Reformation attack on the cult of the dead was more than a polemic against a "false" metaphysical belief: it was an attempt to redefine the boundaries of human community, and, in an act of exorcism, to limit the claims of the past, and the people of the past, on the people of the present

(8)

Is this not exactly what Claudius, that "agent of oblivion" (Neill 248), seeks to do? His marriage to his "sometime sister," transgresses one of the oldest of boundaries, incest, and his place on the throne has usurped young Hamlet's right. Claudius is the King of Denmark, but the soldiers repeatedly refer to the ghost as "King": The phrase "the King that's dead" is particularly odd, implying that old Hamlet's right to the throne has

extended to the afterworld. This denial of Claudius' rule is an attempt to re-establish Old Hamlet's claims on the present and his rights of memory. Finally, when Hamlet speaks directly to the ghost he says "I'll call thee Hamlet, / King, father, royal Dane," (1.4.44-6) and he simultaneously effects direct communication with the dead by calling his father by name ("Hamlet") and recognition of the claims of the past on the present by acknowledging the ghost's ties to Denmark ("King"). Hamlet also places the dead in both personal memory ("father") and communal memory ("royal Dane"). One reason the soldiers find the spirit so disturbing is because he has appeared where a breach of national security is feared, and he may be read as a reflection of broader collective fear over a breakdown of the boundaries of community.

The connection between the ghost and social memory is implied by the communal identification of the spirit, but the connection is made explicit when Hamlet brings the audience's attention to their collective memorial role:

Remember thee?

Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat

In this distracted globe. Remember thee?

(1.5.95-97)

As noted by Dawson, this distracted *globe*, as in the Globe theatre, is "the skull and the theatre." He argues:

The pun is germane, since it suggests a connection between the personal, subjective dimension of memory—which gives Hamlet both interiority and substance—and the cultural one—the theatre in which memory and forgetting hold a privileged place.

(Dawson and Yachnin 117)

Hamlet also alludes to both the Renaissance art of memory that uses an imaginary theatre in the mind, and the audience sitting in the theatre.⁵⁶ Thus individual memory (the memory theatre in Hamlet's mind), and collective memory (the Globe theatre audience), are not only connected, the two "globes" are imploded in this meta-dramatic moment as memory simultaneously holds a seat in both theatres. Notably, it is the ghost who has distracted these globes, and lest we forget he reminds us by repeatedly calling out from within the theatre: "*Ghost cries under the stage*" (SD 1.5.157). And Hamlet accompanies the ghost as a kind of chorus: "You hear this fellow in the cellarage?"; "*Hic et ubique?*"; "Well said, old mole"; "Rest, rest, perturbèd spirit." (1.5.158-90), and this is one of the most relentlessly self-reflexive scenes in the play. While the Hecuba speech (2.2) and The Mousetrap (3.3) famously highlight performance, this scene demands attention to the space of performance. Space is an important medium in the transmission of social memory and Peter Burke points out that the relationship between space and memory is highlighted in the classical and Renaissance art of memory that stresses "the value of 'placing' images that one wishes to remember in particular locations such as memory palaces or memory theatres" (101). The ghost is *hic et ubique* here and everywhere, where "here" is the Globe theatre, and "everywhere" is all those individually distracted globes, the spectators. The audience, who hold a seat in this distracted theatre, are memory, individually and collectively. Through self-reflexive performance that draws the audience's attention to the *space* of performance—a space inhabited by the living and the dead—Hamlet and the Ghost makes explicit what the staging of the

⁵⁶ On the art of memory and memory theatres, see Frances Yates *The Art of Memory* (29-159) and William Engel *Death and Drama* (37-64).

returning dead implies. Furthermore, William Engel claims that through the staging of fatal dumb shows “English tragic dramas evoked, and themselves became, melancholy Memory Theatres” (53). He discusses the dumb show preceding the murder of Gonzago, but I would argue that *Hamlet* opens with a fatal dumb show— “this spirit dumb to us”— the ghost.

IX – The Space of Remembrance

This theatrical memorial space is evocative of another space that operated as a kind of memory theatre, the late medieval Church. As noted by Duffy, the doctrine of Purgatory was “the single most influential factor in . . . the physical layout and appearance of the buildings in which men and women worshipped” (301). Chapels were built to commemorate the dead and gifts, inscribed with donor’s names and requests for prayers, were bestowed on churches in hopes of remembrance. One such inscription reads, “may Christ be my witness, this is displayed not to earn praise, but that the soul may be remembered” (John Clopton qtd. in Duffy *Stripping* 302). Clive Burgess explains the ways in which the laity literally wove themselves into the liturgy by embroidering their names on church fabrics, on hangings, names engraved on vessels, and their “images might too appear in the church, in glass, in brasses, and as effigies and etchings on tombs” (“Longing” 53), all in the service of remembrance and prayer. Clearly, in the old religion the people of the past made claims on the people of the present for remembrance and such requests quietly called from all corners of the church. In the church an “*aid-memoire* became a prick of conscience” (47) to remember those named and to extend pray to all Christian souls. When reformers stripped the churches of

images and adornments they not only swept away the Saints and the cult of the Virgin, they also swept away “the more humble dead” (64). And perhaps most remarkable, in the context of a connection to our other memory theatre, it seems memory held a seat in the church:

as more churches were pewed, more testators began to ask for burial “afore my seat”, against my pue and set there”, “where as I was wont to sit”, indicating a desire to retain their place in the community quite literally.

(Duffy *Stripping* 332)

Thus in *Hamlet*, where memory also holds a seat, the space of the theatre becomes a space suited to the transmission of social memory.

The space of medieval churches transmitted social memory through images, objects, and effigies that adorned the space of worship. The theatre of course also deals in images, but in *Hamlet* it is the highlighting of the space of performance that works to prick the conscience. Significantly, at the beginning of the two most meta-theatrical scenes in the play—the arrival of the players (2.2) and the staging of Hamlet’s play-within-the-play (3.3)—Hamlet and others make what G. R. Hibbard calls “theatrical in-jokes” (3-4) that specifically reference the Globe theatre. Rozencrantz and Guildenstern explain that the players have been drummed off “the common stages” (2.2.337) by the boy companies who have carried away “Hercules and his load too” (2.2.356), and “according to Stevens and Malone, Hercules supporting the world on his shoulders was the sign of the Globe theatre” (Hibbard n.357-8 p.222). Further, these theatrical in-jokes, strategically placed directly before the audience will watch on-stage audiences watch performances, act as *aide-mèmoires*. They remind the audience that the fellow in the

cellarage, the ghost, is also watching. What is Hecuba, asks Hamlet, that players should weep for her? She is Hamlet's favourite part of Aeneas' tale to Dido, "Say on, come to Hecuba" (2.2.49), because she is a figure of grief.

The Hecuba speech reminds Hamlet of his "dear father murdered" (2.2.572) and suggests his course of action:

—I have heard
That guilty creature sitting at a play
Have by the very cunning of the scene
Been struck so to the soul that presently
They have proclaimed their malefactions;
[. . .] The play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King.

(2.2.577-94)

It is remarkable that the Player King's long speech (3.2.174-203) is largely concerned with forgetting—"most necessary 'tis that we forget"—and can be read as a pragmatic sermon on grief which must necessarily be a process of forgetting as well as remembering. Indeed, this was recognized even in the old Church where, according to Philip Morgan, remembrance of the recently dead operated on

a kind of nine-year moving average, older souls joining the ranks of All Souls at one end, as the passing of years added new members at the other. There were clear physical limits to the community of the dead in much the same way that once the principle of interment in consecrated ground had been established in the tenth century, graves were reused, cemeteries levelled and ossuaries filled.

(“Worms and War” 133)

We witness the mental and physical limits of remembrance in the last act of the play with the notable absence of the ghost and the grimly practical graveyard scene where poor Yorick must shift his bones for Ophelia. But Claudius, operating at warp speed from murder to marriage, has fast-forwarded past *any* remembrance and when his conscience is caught, it is rewound and he is forced to remember.

Lastly, that the ghost has been observing the action is made clear by his final appearance:

Do not forget. This visitation
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.
But look, amazement on thy mother sits.
O, step between her and her fighting soul!
Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works.
Speak to her, Hamlet.

(3.4.102)

Hamlet’s play-within-the-play has struck Claudius to the soul but the ghost remains markedly unimpressed. The ghost’s primary concern is for remembrance, and although he cries “Hamlet Revenge” he never specifically commands murder. Perhaps this is why once the catching of consciences is complete and Hamlet, Claudius, and the court of Elsinore must finally recognize the claims of the past on the present, the ghost, who has exchanged his armour for a nightgown, goes to his rest. At the end of *The Spanish Tragedy* the ghost of Don Andrea and Revenge remain on stage to gleefully comment on Hieronimo’s bloody revenge, but in *Hamlet* the ghost was never accompanied by

Revenge. In his last visitation, his first words to Hamlet are “Do not forget,” re-enforcing his concern for remembrance, but his final command, “Speak to her Hamlet,” expresses concern for the living, and despite his departure reciprocal concern between the living and the dead remains.

CHAPTER THREE

Gazing Upon Ruins

Images of Dismemberment and Dismembered Images in *Titus Andronicus*

I- Gazing Upon Ruins

In the opening scene of the final act of *Titus Andronicus* Aaron the Moor is apprehended by a lusty Goth thanks to the soldier's desire to take in the view of a ruined monastery. The Goth explains:

Renowned Lucius, from our troops I strayed
To gaze upon a ruinous monastery,
And as I did earnestly fix mine eye
Upon the wasted building, suddenly
I heard a child cry underneath a wall.

(5.1.120-4)

The soldier does not leave his troops to investigate the ruins; rather, he wishes to “gaze” upon the monastic ruins. He “earnestly” fixes his eye to the task and his language indicates both respect for the ruins and a sense of dismay over the “wasted building.” Ironically, it was this kind of veneration of religious objects and images that was largely responsible for the dissolution of the monasteries in England during the iconoclastic fever of the Reformation. The strange appearance of these monastic ruins in *Titus Andronicus* is often noted as anachronistic and dismissed as having little to do with ancient Rome or

the events of the play.⁵⁷ Scholars have not thus far taken the time to unpack this passage in the context of the play as a whole and I believe that the ruins are one explicit reference to the Reformation in England in a work that is haunted throughout by iconoclastic violence.⁵⁸ And, in particular, the soldier's side trip to look upon a ruinous monastery offers a key to interpreting the violence and dismemberment in the play.

It is fitting that Aaron, "chief architect and plotter" (5.3.121) of the dismemberment of the Andronici, is captured by a ruined monastery, a symbol of iconoclastic violence. The "scale of destruction in 1547-53 was entirely unprecedented" (Marshal *Beliefs* 104) and the dissolution of the religious houses in England left behind maimed and dismembered remains of buildings, images and statuary. The maimed Roman Catholic ruins gazed upon by the worthy Goth may be seen as reflective of the dismembered "poor remainder of Andronici" (5.3.130), who, as the play progresses, become maimed and dismembered Roman ruins. The Goth is praised for capturing Aaron, "the incarnate devil / That robbed Andronicus of his good hand!" (5.1.40-1), and the moor is immediately identified as a perpetrator of violent dismemberment. Aaron is also responsible for the dismemberment of Lavinia; he gleefully confesses to Lucius that he was "tutor to instruct" (5.1.98) Chiron and Demetrius who "cut thy sister's tongue

⁵⁷ See for example, Anthony B. Dawson, "The Arithmetic of Memory", Jonathan Bates's introduction to the Arden *Titus* and Robert S. Miola, "An alien people." Bates argues that the monastic ruins bring a "reformation context" into the play, but he reads this context as participant in the idea of London as the new Rome. I think that few London playgoers would make this connection; and I agree with Dawson and Miola that the talk of gazing on religious ruins is much more likely to be evocative of recent religious strife.

⁵⁸ See Thomas P. Anderson *Performing Early Modern Trauma*. Anderson also recognizes *Titus* as a work haunted by the Reformation although his analysis of the play is primarily concerned with the "crises over the meaning and intention of language that was at the centre of Reformation debates" (21).

and ravished her / And cut her hands and trimmed her as thou sawest” (5.1.91-2). In this chapter I argue that in *Titus Andronicus* the Andronici are staged as “quick images” of dismemberment that are evocative of the dismembered images and statuary which Elizabethan congregations faced daily in their recently purged churches.

II- Iconoclasm and Dismemberment

Monastic ruins in the ancient Roman countryside of *Titus Andronicus* may seem out of time and place but they are related to the pattern of ruined Romans and images of dismemberment, which dominate the play. Dismemberment abounds in *Titus Andronicus*: Alarbus has his limbs hewed; and the Andronici loose heads, hands, a tongue; and even Rome is described as headless. Titus and Lavinia survive their violent dismemberment to remain on stage with their hewed hands to which our attention is constantly drawn. The Andronici become dismembered Roman ruins, and when read in light of other papist references in the play—the “popish tricks and ceremonies” (5.1.87) that Aaron observes and the “roman rites” (1.1.143) performed for the dead—evoke the maimed and dismembered images that abounded in Elizabethan churches as a result of iconoclastic violence. Margaret Aston claims that English literature bears witness to an awareness of the departed monastic period and she begins her discussion with *Titus*:

Accustomed as they had become to the dismembered remains of their religious revolution, Elizabethans could have taken as their own the setting of *Titus Andronicus*, when a Goth comes on stage and says: “ from our troops I strayed / To gaze upon a ruinous monastery”

(315)

While it seems no pun was intended, it is fitting that Aston chooses to describe the religious remains in *Titus* as “dismembered,” and this was a term generally applied to the maimed remains of iconoclastic violence. Weever often uses terms of disfigurement to describes iconoclastic violence: tombs “hackt and hewne apees” and funerary images “broken, erased, cut or dismembered” (50). It was not necessary to roam the English countryside to experience dismembered remains, London itself was seen as maimed by Henrican Reform. Consider for example the description of the city by a visiting Venetian Ambassador in 1554: “The ruins of many churches, with the monasteries which formerly belonged to friars and nuns, greatly disfigure the city” (qtd. in Aston *Lollards* 324). Indeed, Peter Whitfield notes that the dissolution of monastic houses and land in and around London amounted to thousands of acres and “formed the single largest land transfer in the history of London” (27). Within the short space of ten years medieval London had essentially disappeared. Abbey ruins are generally associated with the English countryside but they were a large part of the cityscape of early modern London, not that much evidence can now be found. On the scale of the secularization in London Peter Whitfield writes: “ Only the smallest traces of monastic London now survive, in stone or in pictures, and this is, in itself, a testimony to the suddenness and completeness with which the fabric of medieval London vanished in the 1530s” (27). It is remarkable that Whitfield, writing in 2006, is able to evoke an almost traumatic sense of loss and like Stow, Whitfield is concerned with mapping out the absent.

Defaced and maimed remains, then, were often described as “dismembered” in the sense that they had been disfigured, but many statues and images were literally dismembered. This pattern of dismemberment may be seen today and is quickly

revealed in any series of photos of iconoclasm in English churches. In Eamon Duffy's *Stripping of the Altars*, for example, there are photos of paintings of the Apostles where "the faces, hands, and feet of the Apostles have been gouged off the wood" and a statue of St. Anne with her "head and hands" battered away (Plates 140, 144). Armless and handless statuary were one of the most ubiquitous remains of iconoclast violence and dismemberment was in fact an iconoclast strategy: "The spectacular burning or dismemberment of idols served the purpose of winning support for religious change by calling crowds to witness the ritual dismissal of rejected cult objects" (Aston "Iconoclasm" 49-50). Thus dismemberment of statuary was publicly "staged" for crowds of witnesses to incite religious change. Dismemberment was often the easiest damage one could inflict as revealed by this story of iconoclast zeal that took place in 1581: attempting to pull down a cross and failing, the iconoclasts had to settle for defacing an image of Mary and attacking "the other Images by striking off their armes" (Stow 2:34). Elizabethans experienced what Clifford Davidson calls the "third wave" of iconoclasm and waves of iconoclastic violence continued until the 1640s.⁵⁹ Sitting in their churches surrounded by "mutilated statues, razed altars, [and] defaced funeral monuments" (Aston 328), and "mangled funeral inscriptions" (Weever 661) it must have been difficult not to feel a sense of unease. Aston writes that the demolishing of images "was a declaratory act of faith which presented a physical rupture with the past" ("Iconoclasm" 48). Aston discusses the ruins of the religious houses that dotted the English countryside but more immediate than the large monastic ruins were the dismembered statuary and images that remained in Elizabethan churches. As demonstrated in my discussion of the *Henry VI*

⁵⁹ See Clifford Davidson, *Iconoclasm vs. Art and Drama* (94).

plays, early modern England witnessed a working out of a new sense of history that had to deal with a traumatic break with the medieval past. The dismembered remains were markers of this break that, quite literally, bore the scars of the violent rupture with the past.

The Goth's desire to gaze on the wasted monastery suggests an almost nostalgic relationship to the pre-dissolution past. Anthony Dawson writes that the appearance of the Reformation ruins in *Titus Andronicus* "recalls the painful strife of the recent past, and signals how theatrical allusion can evoke a brief nostalgia" (61). Similarly, Margaret Aston claims that the dissolution of the religious houses led to "New zeal, new desolation, new nostalgia" (Aston, *Lollards* 318). The talk of wasted buildings is not the only nostalgic moment in the *Titus Andronicus*. After the carnage of the final scene that sees the death of almost all the principle characters, Lucius take a moment to affectionately remember his father:

LUCIUS [to his son]

Come hither, boy, come, come and learn of us

To melt in showeres. Thy grandsire loved thee well:

Many a time he danced thee on his knee,

Sung thee asleep, his loving breast thy pillow;

Many a story hath he told to thee,

And bid thee bear his pretty tales in mind

And talk of them when he was dead and gone.

(5.3.159-65)

The sad Andronici fondly recall an idyllic time before the events of the play when, it seems, Titus spent long days doting on his grandson. The past is portrayed here as a golden time with Titus “many a time” dancing the child on his knees, singing lullabies and telling stories. This portrait of “Rome’s best champion, successful in wars” (1.1.68) comes as a bit of a surprise. Titus has spent the last ten years battling the Goths and has returned home only five times during this long war. Lucius’ remembrance of his father is nostalgic and illustrates how an embellished recollection of the past can operate as a way of dealing with loss and trauma. The Andronici have suffered horrific violent loss and Lucius eases the pain of grief by setting before the survivors a glowing domestic past, even if they all know that this past never really existed. Susan Bennet writes “memory, like nostalgia, might resemble only superficially the past which it is said to represent” (8). Katherine Rowe suggests it is at this point in the play that revenge tragedy conventions call for a recapitulation of events and this nostalgic remembering deviates from genre expectations.⁶⁰ (303). The final scene of *Titus Andronicus* goes astray from dramatic traditions just as the Goth strayed from his duties to look at the religious ruins; the Goth’s desire to gaze on ancient ruins demonstrates a similar kind of nostalgic engagement with the past.

Titus Andronicus can hardly be described as a nostalgic work, but Lucius’ act of remembrance and the Goth’s yearning to look upon a ruinous building both sound nostalgic notes in the final act of the play. From the Greek *nostos* (return home) and *algia* (painful condition, grief), the word “nostalgia” was coined in 1688 by Johannes Hoffer to describe acute homesickness. To have a nostalgic relationship to the past is to

⁶⁰ See Katherine Rowe “Dismemberment and Forgetting” (303).

desire to return to an idealized home, an improved version of the past. This longing for an imagined past necessarily suggests that the present is less desirable than the past.

Susan Bennett explains that,

in all of its manifestations, nostalgia is, in its praxis, conservative (in at least two senses – its political alignment and its motive to keep things intact and unchanged): it leans on an imagined and imaginary past which is more and better than the present and for which the carrier of the nostalgia, in a defective and diminished present, is some way or other longs.

(Performing Nostalgia Bennett 5).

By the end of the play the Andronici exist in a “defective and diminished present” and Lucius’ imagined idyllic past is understandable. They are now the “poor remainder of Andronici” (5.3.30) and in this way they are, like the monastery that attracted the wayward Goth, ruinous, wasted, dismembered remains of the diminished family. The nostalgic notes sounded by the grieving Andronici and the earnest Goth in the final act suggest that we take a moment to look back on the events of the play in light of a fraught relationship to the past.

III- Nostalgia and Antiquarianism

The moment of the gazing Goth in *Titus Andronicus* not only evokes the trauma of the dissolution, the reference brings into focus a contemporary relationship to the recent past that at this time was dangerous. In late sixteenth-century England many believed that a return to Catholicism was possible, or even likely. And even if they did not wish for a return to the Romanist Church any expression of a yearning for the “old

ways” was interpreted as a sign of papist sympathies. Alexandra Walsham explains that in the 1590s a nostalgic relationship to the pre-Reformation past ran the risk of having oneself labelled a “church papist”; that is, one who conformed outwardly yet was inwardly sympathetic to Roman Catholicism. Walsham documents Protestant convictions that those who demonstrated any kind of yearning for the pre-Reformation past was proof that they were “Catholic in mind”:

Vague nostalgia for a golden age, a medieval “mery world when there was lesse preaching, and when all things were of cheap, that they might have xx. Eggs for a penny” was [read as nothing] but a degenerate strain of “popery” festering on within Protestant society. The puritan activist John Field also caricatured those who disconsolately repined the passing Of the pre-Reformation period . . . since Protestantism had put the people On a pedestal, they moped, things had taken a distinct turn for the worse. This, commented Field, was simply the “common speech of papists.”

(103)

Elizabethans were not familiar with the term nostalgia but they clearly recognized that the overwhelming characteristic of the nostalgic experience is “the adoration of the past that triumphs over lamentations of the present” (Davis 16); and that nostalgia is always, as Susan Bennett points out, politically conservative in its motive to keep things unchanged. So when the lusty Goth wanders off to fix his eye on monastic ruins he not only evokes the whole iconoclastic controversy, his desire to gaze on such a sight would be interpreted as an indication of papist sympathies. And the ruinous monastery does indeed lead the soldier astray—the worthy Goth *strays from his troops* to visit the ruins

as indeed, any kind of veneration of papist ruins would have be read as a straying from the troops, as it were, of the Church of England.

The wayward Goth has been read as an early “tourist” in search of ruins and by the late seventeenth century visiting Reformation ruins became an acceptable pastime.⁶¹ The wayward soldier, however, has much more in common with early English Antiquarians. The end of the sixteenth century witnessed a nascent burgeoning of Antiquarian interest in the remains of the religious houses, which, at this time, required some careful navigation. As Margaret Aston has shown, “Antiquarian activity [in the late sixteenth century] held hazards for the amateur archaeologist, however orthodox his religious position” (*Lollards* 329). Early antiquarians had to be careful to reconcile regret for the loss of such magnificent, yet papist, structures within their Protestant faith. If a vague nostalgic relationship to the pre-Reformation past was a sign of a Catholic state of mind, then desire to earnestly fix one’s eye on monastic ruins was decidedly suspicious. Yet the ruins of the great religious houses were difficulty to ignore:

The dispossessed religious, despite the rupture and hardships which dislocated their lives, took their pensions and capacities and went their various ways, to be absorbed into the rest of society. The sites which they had inhabited, on the other hand, remained—mutilated, dismembered, or converted—as constant reminders of the corporate life which had been so abruptly terminated.

(Aston *Lollards* 324)

⁶¹ Anthony B. Dawson writes, “How strange that in late antique Rome an early German tourist should be fixing his wayward eye on a sight new to the English countryside of Shakespeare’s England: a ruined monastery!” (*Arithmetic* 61).

As reminders of the abruptly terminated life of the recent past, the mutilated ruins were haunting reminders of the recent past. In keeping with Walsham's observations on the connection between the demonstration of a vague nostalgia for the past and papist sympathies, John Stow's portrait of the medieval past as a time of abundant charity and good cheer was certainly interpreted as a sign of going astray from the true religion.⁶² When Shakespeare introduces this anachronistic moment into the play, the setting "metamorphoses" into the landscape of contemporary England.⁶³ Although England was beginning to negotiate a relationship to such ruins that was capable of engaging the past without the taint of papist sympathies, such negotiations at this time were still very difficult.

IV – Nostalgia and Returning Home

Titus Andronicus ends, then, with "the poor remainder of Andronici" (5.3.130) expressing a desire to return to an idealized past, or "home" in the nostalgic sense of *nostos*, but the theme of "returning home" runs throughout the play in a series of returns. Titus returns to Rome to bury his sons and, importantly, ensure they are given their due funerary rites. Thomas Rist argues that the concern with Roman rites brings a Reformation context into the first act of the play. I would add that the fact that some of the oldest family monuments in England existed in the monastic houses suggests a link between the "ruinous monastery" in act five and the Andronici monument. Titus "by the

⁶² John Stow's theological allegiances remain under scrutiny to this day. Patrick Collinson takes up the question of Stow's "superstitious books" and argues that in his possession were Catholic tracts that reveal Stow to be a "dedicated student of the doctrine of real presence" ("John Stow and Nostalgic Antiquarianism" 43).

⁶³ Robert Miola argues that when the Goth strays to gaze upon the monastic ruins "Ancient Rome metamorphoses into the familiar landscape of contemporary England" ("Shakespeare's Ancient Religions." 34).

senate is accited home” (1.1.27) but the Rome to which he returns is “headless” (1.1.186). The home to which Titus returns is diminished, dismembered. Decapitated Rome is one of the first images of dismemberment in the play, but the Andronici family also enters the play in a state of dismemberment by the loss of the sons. Titus “returns with precious lading” (1.1.72), the remains of his dead sons and Titus is anxious to attend directly to the dead:

Titus unkind and careless of thine own,
Why suffer'st thou thy sons, unburied yet,
To hover on the dreadful shore of Styx?

(1.1.86-88)

It is notable that Titus speaks of being “unkind” to his dead kin in the context of giving the dead their full burial rites. As discussed in chapter two with reference to Hamlet’s famous first line— “A little more than kin, and less than kind.” (1.3.84)—concern over being “kind” in the sense of one’s “natural” duty to dead kin was the rhetoric used to promote the doctrine of intercession for the dead. Titus’ kin utilize similar rhetoric of being kind / natural to dead kin when they implore the general to allow Mutius burial in the family tomb: Marcus pleads, “Brother, for in that name doth nature plead—”, and Martius chimes in with “Father, and in that name doth nature speak—” (1.1.370-1). The moment of the gazing Goth brings both a brief nostalgia and a reformation context into the final act of the play, but Titus’ return to Rome coupled with his intense concern with being kind to dead kin, is evocative of per-Reformation dealings with the dead. In a play that relentlessly pummels the ears of the audience with horrific puns, it is not a stretch to read the performance of “roman rites” as evocative of Roman Catholic rites. The

performance of these Roman burial rites are one of the “popish tricks and ceremonies” (5.1.76) that Aaron was so careful to observe.⁶⁴ What I want to point out is that the play begins very much the way that it ends – with the Andronici’s thwarted attempt to return to an idealized home and this introduces a nostalgic relationship to the past. In the world of *Titus Andronicus* one can’t return “home” but, as I will show, the past repeatedly “returns” to traumatically intrude upon the present.

The returning Andronicus family consists of both the living and the dead and the unity of the quick and the departed is repeatedly emphasized. We are invited to “Behold the poor remainder alive and dead” (1.1.81); the Goths must give up Albarus for the Andronici brethren “alive and dead” (1.1.123) and Marcus addresses his nephews as “You that survive, and you that sleep in fame!” (1.1.73). The unity of the living and dead Andronici, particularly the phrase “alive and dead” is evocative of intercessory prayer for the dead. The world of *Titus Andronicus* is one where boundaries between the living and dead are not fixed and the play is haunted by a sense of unease over the state of the dead. The first act of dismemberment, the sacrifice of Albarus, is a locus where dismemberment, religion, Roman rites, concerns with burial and appeasing the dead all intersect. It is Titus’ concern with managing relations between the living and the dead that is a catalyst to killing of Albarus:

Give us the proudest prisoner of the Goths
That we may hew his limbs, and on a pile
Ad manes fratrum sacrifice his flesh
Before this earthly prison of their bones,

⁶⁴ Aaron does not speak but is present on stage during the first act, as the Peacham drawing reminds us.

That so the shadows be not unappeased,
Nor we disturbed with prodigies on earth.

(1.1.96-101)

In order for the dead to be appeased the sacrifice must not only be performed, it must be performed *for the dead*. Albarus is taken off stage to be killed but his entrails and limbs are brought back to be burned “before this earthly prison” (1.1.99), the family tomb. The dead here are palpably present, existing in an uneasy truce with the living. Titus tells Tamora that his sons “Alive and dead, and for their brethren slain / Religiously they ask a sacrifice” (1.1.123-4). The killing of Albarus spurs Tamora into a revengeful wrath and the revenge tragedy begins. Titus’ relationship to his sons does not end with their deaths or even their burials and apprehensive negotiations between the living and the dead continue.

It is the impetus to return the dead to “their latest home” (1.1.86)—where “home” is the Andronici family tomb—to be buried with their ancestors, that repeatedly brings Titus back to Rome. As I have shown in my discussion of the *Henry VI* plays, the return home of war heroes for burial with their ancestors was an English Medieval tradition; a tradition that was disrupted by the dissolution of the monasteries, many of which housed tombs and monuments of English nobility that were now destroyed and defaced. The Andronicus family monument, however, is both ancient and carefully preserved:

Traitors, away! He rests not in this tomb.

This monument five hundred years hath stood,

Which I have sumptuously re-edified.

Here none but soldiers and Rome’s servitors

Repose in fame; none basely slain in brawls.

Bury him where you can, he comes not here.

(1.1.349-53)

In opposition to the state of Elizabethan funeral monuments now crumbling into oblivion (as frequently lamented by Stow) this “sumptuously re-edified” tomb has been lovingly maintained. Titus here provides an example of pagan respect for ancestral tombs that was lauded by the likes of John Weever:

Funerall Monuments (especially of the godly and religious) have ever beene accounted sacred...And they were accounted the more sacred, by how much they were of more continuance . . . In such reverend and religious regard the very Pagans had the Tombes of their Ancestors. But, with us, in these days, I see no such reverence that sonnes have to their fathers hands, or to their Sepulchres

(Weever 37)

Having stood five hundred years the Andronici tomb is certainly of long continuance and held in religious regard. Weever uses the pagan example to chastise the English for their disgraceful treatment of sepulchres; and Titus’ reverence of his family tomb evokes the pre Reformation importance of funeral monuments. This attention paid to the importance of maintaining monuments evokes controversy over treatment of monuments in Elizabethan England.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Weever writes of the Elizabethan attempt to stem the tide of destruction by issuing a “Proclamation against breaking or defacing of Monuments of Antiquitie, being set up in Churches, or other publike places, for memory, and not for superstition” (52).

Titus exhibits a palpable fear over keeping the dead at bay, but it is not groaning shadows that return to disturb the Andronici, rather, is their own dismembered remains. Katherine Rowe argues that the return of Titus' dismembered hand performs a haunting:

Severed and returned to him, Titus's hand represents a kind of dramatic mortmain, the grasp of past experience reappearing in the present: goad, reminder, and material confirmation of the promise of revenge. In this respect it plays the role that ghosts typically inhabit in the revenge tradition, an unforgettable reminder of his purpose.

(291)

The hand is a manifestation of the past returning to intrude upon the present, which was also the impetus for the sacrificial dismemberment of Alarbus. His limbs are "lopped" and "hewed" and this wrong is returned to the Andronici through the dismemberment of Lavinia. Marcus echoes these unkind adjectives used to describe Alarbus' fate when he asks his niece what hands "Hath lopped and hewed and made thy body bare" (2.4.17)? Critics have made much of the horrific puns used to describe poor Lavinia ("O, handle not the theme, to talk of hands" 3.1.29) but not all puns in *Titus* are oral, some are visual. When the dead are brought home for burial we are invited to "behold the poor remains" (1.1.81) and the spectacle of Andronici remains continue to be staged for our beholding:

Enter a Messenger with two heads and a hand

MESSENGER

Worthy Andronicus, ill art thou repaid

For that good hand thou sent'st the Emperor.

Here are the heads of thy two noble sons,
And here's thy hand in scorn to thee sent back—
Thy grief their sport, thy resolution mocked,
That woe is me to think upon thy woes,
More than remembrance of my father's death.

(3.1.232-39)

The Messenger's language directs us to look on the dismembered remains: "*Here* are the heads . . . And *here's* thy hand." At the same time that we behold the remains, it is notable that we are also looking upon "the poor [dismembered] remains" of what is left of Titus and Lavinia. Much has been made of the display of the heads and hands in this scene but I think it is important to remember that Lavinia and Titus are on stage and are quick images of dismemberment when the body parts arrive. The Andronici remains return to what remains of the Andronici. The returning remains—like our ruin-gazing Goth—evoke the trauma of violent religious revolution to intrude in the present moment of the theatre. Robert Miola reads the body parts as evocative of "current controversy over relics"(35) and suggests that that the heads and hand "become the centre of a religious ritual" (36). The body parts do indeed present disturbing images of dismemberment, but they are only briefly staged. The images of dismemberment that we "gaze upon" for the entire second half of the play are the maimed bodies of Lavinia and her father. Titus and his daughter are "quick images" of dismemberment that I would argue are far more likely to evoke maimed and dismembered statuary that Londoners faced daily in Elizabethan churches than theological controversy over the veneration of religious relics. And like the statues and images targeted by iconoclasts Lavinia—

“Rome’s rich ornament” (1.1.52)—and Titus—“Rome’s best champion” (1.1.65)—are *Roman* images. Titus and Lavinia become wasted, ruinous images of dismemberment that we must look upon. The returned remains draw our attention to the absent. Lucius looks on Lavinia and laments: “my noble sister, / O would thou wert as thou tofere hast been!” (3.1.291-2). For Marcus the manifestation of the body parts also highlight Lavinia’s disfigurement: “see thy two sons’ heads, / thy warlike hand, thy mangled daughter here” (3.1.253-4). The ghostly returns in *Titus* manifest in the form of the dismembered Andronicus body parts, reminders of past trauma that physically intrude upon the present in what seems like a cruel attempt to make whole again what cannot be made whole.

It is not ghosts, then, that return to haunt the Andronici but gruesome reminders of their past horrors of dismemberment. But there is one instance where the dead return to disturb the living. Aaron has been careful to observe the Roman concern with interment of the dead and the fulfilment of Roman rites. This is why the Moor takes great glee in tormenting the studiously religious Lucius, who, Aaron astutely notes, has a thing “called conscience” (5.1.75). Aaron boasts to Lucius of his desecration of burial sites:

Oft have I digged up dead men from their graves,
And set them upright at their dear friends’ door,
Even when their sorrow almost was forgot,
And on their skins, as on the bark of trees,
Have with my knife carved in Roman letters,
‘Let not your sorrow die, though I am dead.’

(5.1.135-140)

Note that the moor has a target audience – he uses *Roman letters*. Aaron’s act is a physical manifestation of the effect of iconoclastic violence. Aaron’s exhumation is also evocative of Reformation desecration of opening of tombs and removal of the dead recorded by Stow, as discussed in chapter one. The violation of funeral monuments effected “unsufferable injurie” to the honourable memory of the dead (Weever 2) and in a reflection of how wrongs are visited upon Lavinia’s body, Aaron dishonours the memory of the dead by literally defacing the dead by exhuming and carving up their bodies. Ever the opportunist, Aaron has noted well the Roman fear of being “disturbed” with prodigies on earth and literally “returns” the returns the dead. Just as Aaron delights in literalizing the “lending a hand” (3.1.186), by dismembering Titus, Aaron enacts a return of the dead by depositing their bodies on doorsteps. Thomas P. Anderson discusses *Titus* in the context of the “crises over the meaning and intention of language that was at the centre of Reformation debates” but he also suggest that, “the play is also a monument that memorializes the effects of the cultural desire for a Roman inheritance” (21). I believe Anderson is missing a pun that he is making here as the play also negotiates, through literalization of language, the loss of a Roman Catholic inheritance and its monuments. Aaron’s message of forgetting goes to the heart of late medieval societies’ preoccupation with remembrance. It is not enough to simply desecrate the bodies; Aaron must increase the suffering of the bereaved by accusing them of forgetting the dead. Aaron’s desecration of graves and mutilation of corpses that “return” to ask for remembrance is a demonic reversal of late medieval burial and commemorative ceremonies. *Titus Andronicus* takes place in ancient Rome but there is a decidedly Roman Catholic concern over serving the dead by proper burial rites and a tangible sense of shifting borders

between the worlds of the dead and the living. The returning corpses, body parts and the maimed bodies of Titus and Lavinia are nightmare images the Reformation violence against images and religious houses.

V – The Arms of the Passion and the Pilgrimage of Grace

The staging of body parts and the wounded bodies of Titus and Lavinia, when read within the context of Reformation violence and a vague nostalgia for the traditional faith, are evocative of an important religious iconographic image of dismemberment: the Arms of the Passion, or *Arma Christi*. The Arms of the Passion is an image of the five wounds of Jesus in which the hands, feet, and heart of Jesus are heraldically displayed. Katherine Rowe discusses the “iconographic traditions invoked by the figure of the hand” (280) and examines the heraldic trope of the severed hand in Renaissance emblem books. The hands in these books are typically attached to arms that emerge from puffy clouds to wield swords, which suggest that they are alive and perhaps, somewhere within their little clouds, attached to a body. By stark contrast, in the *Arma Christi* the hands and feet of Christ are severed, bleeding and clearly disembodied. The display of the five wounds of Jesus offers an early modern iconographic image of dismemberment that is a useful key to unlock the relationship between dismemberment, ruinous monasteries, and Roman rites for the dead in *Titus Andronicus*. The relevance of the symbolism of the five wounds to my reading of a Reformation context in *Titus Andronicus* is multifold: the image explicitly foregrounds dismemberment; the *Arma Christi* is a powerfully affective image that evokes the tradition of meditation on the wounds of Christ; the cult of the wounds is

important to intercession for the dead; the five wounds were an explicit symbol of protest against the dissolution of the religious houses.

The significance of the Arms of the Passion to the Reformation in England, and the dissolution of the religious houses in particular, may be traced to the very beginnings of Henrican reform. Recognized as the single greatest challenge to Henry's rule, the 1536 Pilgrimage of Grace was primarily a rebellion against the dissolution of the monasteries.⁶⁶ Led by Robert Aske and joined by priests and 40,000 men of York, the pilgrims occupied the suppressed houses in York and re-instated Nuns and Monks. In Aske's article of 9 October 1536 to the King he writes that the "suppression of so many religious houses at this instant time [. . .] is a great hurt to the commonwealth" (qtd. in Hoyle 455). Flying on banners at the head of the Pilgrim's army was the insignia of the Five Wounds of Jesus, and Lord Darcy had five wounds badges made up to be worn on the arm of each and every Pilgrim. Geoffrey Moorhouse posits that the Badge of the Five Wounds of Christ was the most potent and evocative symbol of the Pilgrimage of Grace.⁶⁷ Eamon Duffy explains why the five wounds was adopted as the chief insignia of the Pilgrimage:

Into what appears to be a simple affective devotion to the Passion, there was compressed the essence of the practical soteriology of late medieval religion. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the symbol of the Five Wounds should have been chosen by the Pilgrims of Grace as the emblem of their loyalty to the whole medieval Catholic system.

⁶⁶ On the history of the Pilgrimage of Grace, see Geoffrey Moorhouse, *The Pilgrimage of Grace* and R. W. Hoyle, *The Pilgrimage of Grace and the Politics of the 1530s*.

⁶⁷ See Moorhouse, *Pilgrimage* (120).

(248)

The pilgrims recognized that an attack on the religious houses was the beginning of the end of the whole religion in England, as they knew it. Once apprehended, Lord Darcy was barraged with questions about the five wounds badges, which seemed to obsess his interrogators who asked fourteen consecutive questions about the badges (Hoyle 300-417). When Aske repented his role in the rebellion and sought to show his loyalty to the King he symbolically tore off his badge of the wounds:

Aske knelt before Norfolk, demanded that on one ever call him captain thereafter, and pulled from his coat his badge of the five wounds of Christ. All the others there present likewise cast off their badges, saying, “we will wear no badge but the badge of our sovereign lord.”

(qtd. in Hoyle 362)

By offering to replace the badge of the wounds with the badge of the King, the Pilgrims demonstrate that the insignia of the wounds represents all that is in opposition to Henrican reform. That the Arms of the Passion became symbolic of protest against religious reform in England is made clear by the fact that in 1569, more than thirty years later, the Northern Rebellion that marched against Elizabeth also took up the Five Wounds insignia. Setting out to restore the “ancient customs” of the religion of their ancestors, they carried at their head some of the very same banners of the Five Wounds used in the Pilgrimage of Grace (Moorehouse 321). The iconography of the Arms of the Passion emerged about 1200 and the image was ubiquitous in late medieval culture. It was carved on bench-ends, painted in glass, put on grave brasses, and distributed in the form of cheap woodcuts (Duffy 246); and not surprisingly, given its connection to

religious rebellion, the image became an iconoclast target. It is perhaps ironic that at a time when they could not have foreseen the unprecedented destruction to come, the Pilgrims of 1536 chose an image of dismemberment as their symbol of protest against the dissolution when many images of Christ, Mary and other statuary would so soon be maimed and dismembered.

The Arms of the Passion, then, is an iconic late medieval symbol of dismemberment that was symbolic of protest against the dissolution of the religious houses. One of the justifications of the dissolution was that the monasteries were “purgatorial institutions” (Rist 44) and this sheds light on the connections between the Pilgrimage of Grace, the symbol of the Five Wounds, and the rebels’ support for traditional ideas about the dead.⁶⁸ (Hoyle 276). The iconography of the five wounds developed out of devotions to the passion, which concentrated on the suffering of the corporal body of Christ, which in turn led to the popular late medieval Cult of the Wounds. Devotion to the wounds was practiced in prayer and masses and “the symbolism of the Wounds and their importance is everywhere evident in the medieval imagination” (Duffy 245). Duffy explains that “Devotion to the five Wounds was specially linked to intercession for the dead [and] fivefold symbolism in reference to the passion was a striking feature of medieval English piety[. . .] the Mass of the five wounds most commonly specified in obit provisions [and] fivefold symbolism was ubiquitous in wills”(244-6). Moreover, just as the Arms of the Passion displayed the disembodied wounds, the prayers for the wounds sometimes addressed the hands, feet and heart of Christ as individual body parts. Consider for example this prayer to the left

⁶⁸ See Hoyle, *The Pilgrimage of Grace* (276).

hand of Jesus: “O Blissful Ihesu for the wounde of your lefte hand kepe me from The synne of envy and yeve me grace” (qtd. in Duffy 244). Devotion to the wounds of Jesus was one of the most popular cults of late medieval Europe, and “in England was growing in popularity up to the very eve of the Reformation” (238). The point I want to stress is that there is a long history of association in the early modern imagination between intercession for the dead, dismembered body parts and meditation on the wounds. Katherine Rowe notes that Titus’ hand is sent as a form of “gift-exchange” (293) for the life of his sons and indeed, the Messenger sees the hand a part of an exchange that ends in Titus being poorly “repaid” (3.1.234). Titus’ severed hand here evokes the intercessory function of the dismembered body parts in the iconography of the Cult of Wounds. This reading offers a connection in *Titus Andronicus* between dismemberment, religious ruins and the play’s intense interest in the wellbeing of the dead that is played out through the performance of “Roman rites” (1.1.143). Fivefold symbolism also heralds Titus’s return to Rome: “Five times he hath returned / Bleeding to Rome, bearing his valiant sons in coffins from the field” (1.1.35). The combination of bleeding, burial, the play’s obsession with rites for the dead, appeasing groaning shadows, and the manifestation of Monastic ruins, all support a reading of the fivefold symbolism as evocative of the Cult of the Wounds.

VI- Medieval Images of Pity

Affective display of the wounds of Christ was also a dramatic tradition that I believe offers a reading of suffering and dismemberment in *Titus* that has been overlooked. Scholars have argued that the medieval drama in England grew out of a

heightened concern with the corporeality of Christ. Beatrice Groves writes that it is “possible to argue that the emergence of the drama as a whole in medieval Europe coincided with the revaluation of the humanity of the incarnate Christ” (51), and she traces most extant dramatic texts to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries when theological debate that would emerge as the doctrine of transubstantiation was taking place. Groves overstates the case by claiming medieval drama as a whole, but scholars agree that the flourishing of cyclical drama in the fourteenth century in England, particularly in northern England, coincided with the establishment of the Feast of Corpus Christi, or the body of our Lord.⁶⁹ The passion is of central interest to the cycle plays and was part of a larger growing cultural obsession with Christ’s suffering and humanity in the popular religion. David Bevington explains:

The rise of the Corpus Christi cycle during the fourteenth century was one manifestation of a larger movement in religious art of the Middle Ages toward what is known as the Gothic style. A primary characteristic of Gothic art was its focus on the example of Christ’s humanity and suffering. Gothicism was to a considerable extent inspired by a new interest in popular education of the uneducated laity

(233)

Theodore Lerud discusses the relationship between popular religious art and the cycle plays and argues that “religious plays were seen as quick images, to be considered in the same general category as painted and sculpted images” (51). Lerud notes that the passion

⁶⁹ For a summary of the scholarly debate over the origins of the cycle plays in England see David Bevington, *Medieval Drama* (227-35).

plays were staged “to evoke the traditional iconography vividly familiar to the audience from representations of the scene in the visual arts” (52). And the five wounds were pervasive in churches. Virginia C. Raguin documents “constant representation of the Instruments of the Passion and the Five Wounds in fifteenth-century stained glass” (118). In the medieval drama the familiar iconography of the five wounds were evoked on the stage. In the York play of Judgement, for example, Christ instructs the audience to look upon his wounds and think of how he suffered for their sakes:

Here may ye see my woundes wide,
The Wilke I tholed for youre mysded
Thurgh harte and heed, foote, hande, and hide,
Nought for my gilte, butt for youre need.

(qtd. in Duffy)

Christ makes use of the dismembered imagery of the Arms of the Passion by referring to his wounds as body parts (“harte and heed, foote, hande and hide”) thus evoking the familiar affective visual aid used for meditation on the wounds.

In *Titus Andronicus* Shakespeare utilizes this dramatic tradition to heighten the audience’s response to the mutilated body of Lavinia when Titus says:

Had I but seen thy picture in this plight
It wouldst have madded me; what shall I do
Now I behold they lively body so?

(3.1.102-4)

Titus draws attention to the affective connection between a “deed” (dead) image, a picture of a wounded Lavinia, and the “quick” (live) image of her wounded body on the

stage. The suffering Christ figures in the cycle plays was staged to explicitly mirror popular passion images, especially those of Jesus displaying his wounds.⁷⁰ Just as we were instructed by the returning general to “Behold the poor remainder” (1.1.81) of Andronici, we now behold the mutilated “remains” of Lavinia. Titus’ imperative to “behold” the Andronici remains echoes the scriptures where Jesus displays his wounds as proof that he is the risen Christ: “behold my hands” (John 20:27), and “Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself” (Luke 24:39).⁷¹ Shakespeare evokes the tradition of staging iconographic images and simultaneously turns it on its heels. In the medieval drama the actor embodies a familiar image that is associated with emotive power in the popular imagination. In *Titus* the order of reference is reversed when Titus tells us how he would feel if he *had* seen a painting of a suffering Lavinia, but there is no pictorial reference for Lavinia’s plight only her “lively body” (a “quick image”) on the stage and the affective power of iconographic images is transferred to the theatrical moment.

VII- Gazing Upon Roman Ruins

⁷⁰ In the Croxton play, for example, “when Christ appears the stage direction stipulates that “Here the owyn must ryve asunder and blede owt at the crannys, and an image appear owt with woundys bledyng.” When Jesus first speaks the direction runs “Here shall the image speke to the Juys.” Despite the use of the word “image” [we are dealing here] with an actor painted with wounds and scourge marks , naked to the waist, representing the ‘*Imago pietatis*’, The Image of Pity” (Duffy *Stripping* 107).

⁷¹ The scripture is also dramatized in the N. Town Crucifixion play when Jesus says “All men that walk by way or street, / Take tent ye shall no travail tine; / Behold my head, my hands, my feet” (253-5); and the line appears again in the Chester play *Christ Appears to the Disciples*: “My feet, my handes you may see, / And know the sooth also may yee, / Soothly that I am he / That dead was upon a tree” (Bevington *Medieval Drama* 180-3). In *Titus Andronicus* “behold” appears eight times, and six times the command is used to direct gazes upon the bleeding, suffering or maimed bodies of the Andronici.

Through their maiming and dismemberment Lavinia and Titus become Roman images of dismemberment that, like the monastery in act five, attract eyes to their ruinous state. I'd like to return again to the wayward Goth to consider what was the attraction of Reformation ruins in the early modern imagination? The soldier wishes to *gaze* on the ruins and earnestly fixes his eye on the sight, which implies a meditative relationship to the ruins. Antiquarians of the seventeenth century felt a similar regard for the ruins of religious houses but took pains to describe their attraction in terms untainted by popish nostalgia.⁷² Seeking to explain why people wish to visit ancient monuments, John Weever explains that as

people come daily, to view the lively Statues and stately Monuments in Westminster Abbey [. . .] We desire likewise to behold the mournful ruines of other religious houses, although their goodly fair structures bee altogether destroyed, their tombs battered downe, and the bodies of their dead cast out of their coffins; for that, that very earth which did sometime cover the corps of the defunct, puts us in minde of our mortalitie, and consequently brings us to unfained repentance.

(41)

⁷² Margaret Aston writes that “this kind of meditative delight in ‘mournful ruins’ does not become explicit until the 17th century. Sixteenth-century antiquaries were too obsessed with rage and resentment at the loss and decay to be ready to indulge in the pleasures of meditative melancholy and perhaps the early Elizabethans were too near the actual process of destruction be able to enjoy ruins like later generations. On the other hand it is clear that this sense of melancholy delight was being expressed well before the middle of the 17th century, and the awareness of ruins, and passionate regrets for the process of ruination, began long before” (*Lollards* 331).

By pointing to the tourist trade plied at Westminster Weever is rather subtly noting that there were still “lively” (undamaged) statues and tombs to see at Westminster, burial place of Kings, which was largely untouched by iconoclastic violence, unlike other religious houses.⁷³ Although Weever claims the ruins may be viewed as a kind of *memento mori* his desire to “behold” the “mournful ruines” illustrates regret over their destruction and a mourning of their loss. Similarly, in John Webster’s *The Duchess of Malfi*, (a work which also displays dismembered bodies, a severed hand and is intensely concerned with monuments, tombs and ruins), abbey ruins afford a meditative opportunity. Antonio expresses a sense of melancholy delight when he comes across a fortification that the ruins of an ancient abbey:

I do love these ancient ruins:
We never tread upon them, but we set
Our foot upon some reverend history,
And, questionless, here in this open court,
Which now lies naked to the injuries
Of stormy weather, some men lie interr’d
Lov’d the church so well, and gave so largely to’t,
They though it should have canopi’d their bones
Till doomsday; But all things have their end;
Churches and cities, which have diseases like to men,

⁷³ Philip Morgan writes: “With suitable irony, the grandest chantry of them all, that of the king in St. George’s Chapel, Windsor, survived [the Reformation] and was fattened to become one of the wealthiest foundations in the country, prayers for its dead being said with a carefully reformed liturgy” (“Worms” 142).

Must have like death that we have.

(5.3.9-19)

For both Weever and Antonio the ruins bring to mind the now nameless dead (“dead cast out of their coffins” and “some men lie interr’d”) and by evoking the dead, these meditations point obliquely to the loss of the memorial and intercessory function of the religious houses. Gazing upon ruins evokes the absent and retrieves in the imagination something of what has been lost. John Aubrey describes the effect of imaginative contemplation of ruins this way: “they breed in generous mindes a kind of pittie; and sett the thoughts a-worke to make out their magnificene as they were when in perfection” (qtd. in Aston 333). Gazing on ruins allows an imaginative recreation of the past, a filling in of what has been lost and, in nostalgic terms, a return home.

VIII- Gazing Upon Dismembered Andronici

Gazing on ruins as pitiful images that allow the mind to fill in what is absent is possibly also what is “a-worke,” as Aubrey would have it, in Marcus’ notorious reaction to Lavinia’s mutilation. Critics have long been baffled and even repulsed by Marcus’ long florid oratory over the mangled and bleeding body of Lavinia but I would suggest that Shakespeare is working within the dramatic tradition of staging an Image of Pity that, in this play, is also an image of dismemberment evocative of Reformation violence. Marcus’ long speech works as a meditation on the wounds of Lavinia, a contemplation of the “mournful ruins” of Andronici while Lavinia, standing silent on stage, becomes a *tableaux vivant* of suffering and loss.

Marcus begins by drawing attention to the violent act of dismemberment when he asks what hands “hath lopped and hewed and made thy body bare” (2.4.17). Marcus then sets “the thoughts a-worke to make out their magnificene as they were when in perfection” (Aubrey) as he imaginatively recalls the dismembered body parts, her arms, those “circling shadows” (2.4.19) and he imagines Lavinia’s beauty when she was whole. Marcus does not speak of his niece’s ragged wrists or the torn remainder of her tongue; rather, he fills in and mourns the absent: the “pretty fingers” (2.4.43) of her “lily hands” (2.4.44), and the “sweet tongue” (2.4.49) once capable of “heavenly harmony” (2.4.48). Just as Jesus in the York play disembodies his wounds into “heede, heart, hands and feet” Marcus draws our attention to Lavinia’s dismembered body parts. Marcus also takes pains to draw our attention to the fact that Lavinia is not just wounded but bleeding. From her mouth “a crimson river of warm blood” (2.4.22) runs down and there is all the “loss of blood” (2.4.29) from her “issuing spouts” (2.4.30). It was the sight of flowing blood in the medieval passion scenes that made a long lasting impression for some. The dramatic power of the mystery plays is evidenced by John Shaw’s record of an old man he met in 1644:

I told him yat the way to Salvation was by Iesus Christ God-man, who as he was man shed his blood for us on the crosse etc. Oh, Sir (said he) I think I heard of that man you speake of, once in a play at *Kendall*, called *Corpus-Christi play*, where there was a man on a tree, & blood ran down.

(qtd. in Groves 35)

Forty years after seeing the mystery play the old man remembers the blood running down and it is this kind of powerful spectacle that Shakespeare evokes with Lavinia’s “lively”

bleeding body. In 1631 John Weever records that he had seen Corpus Christi plays “at Preston, and Lancaster, and last of all at Kendall, in the beginning of the raigne of King *James*” (36). As late as the mid 1600 Weever and the old man are still able to recall the mystery plays and their memory of the plays supports the argument that the early modern dramatic imagination was well schooled in the visual imagery of the mystery plays.⁷⁴

Groves argues that in his dramaturgy Shakespeare often utilizes what she calls an “incarnational aesthetic” which borrows from the medieval passion plays.⁷⁵ In this scene Lavinia possibly evokes such an aesthetic on the Elizabethan stage, , with blooding running down, like the God-man on the tree at Kendall.

Act three is wholly occupied with the maimed and dismembered Andronici, which puts their disfigurement at the very centre of the play. Marcus’ lament to Lavinia’s losses implies her staging as an Image of Pity at the end of act two. In the following act she is brought before Titus as “such a sight will blind a father’s eye” (2.4.53), and Lavinia becomes a sight / site of sorrow for the mourning Andronici:

MARCUS

I bring consuming sorrow to thine age.

TITUS

Will it consume me? Let me see it then. [. . .]

LUCIUS: Ay me! This object kills me

⁷⁴ Emrys Jones makes a convincing argument for the influence of the mystery plays on the early modern dramatic imagination (*Origins of Shakespeare* 33-4). Beatrice Groves also makes a compelling case for the longevity of the cycle plays in England, especially in Northern England and notes that the rapidly expanding population of England during the height of the commercial drama constantly brought people into the city from the country, and particularly the North, where the plays were still being staged during the Elizabethan period (*Texts and Traditions* 1-25).

⁷⁵ On Shakespeare’s dramaturgy and the passion plays, see Groves (26-59).

TITUS

Faint-hearted boy, arise, and look upon her.

(3.1.62-5)

Titus instructs the Andronici over and over to look on Lavinia: “Look, Marcus!—Ah son Lucius, look on her!” (3.1.112). Lucius is “with this dear sight / Stuck pale and bloodless (3.1.255-6), Marcus becomes “like a stony image” (3.1.257) and the Andronici begin to mirror the pale, bloodless Lavinia. The Andronici are now all evocative of contemporary “stony images” of dismembered statuary. Building upon the mirroring imagery, Titus suggests that the family circle gather round to “behold” their tears and “gaze” in the water at their grieving faces. Again, in this scene Lavinia functions in much the same way as the “mournful ruins” that allow both an evocation of the past and a mourning of that past. Francis Trigge, a Lincolnshire rector, records, as late as 1589, “the weeping and wailing of the simple sort . . . Who, going into the churches and seeing the bare walls, and lacking their golden images . . . lament in themselves and fetch many deep sighs” (Quoted in *Country Life*). Like the ruinous monastery in act five Lavinia evokes “stony images” dismembered by Reformation violence.

IX- Images of Pity

Following our long gaze at Lavinia’s mutilated body, the third act opens with a striking display of Andronici defeat as explicitly laid out in the stage directions: “*Titus going before pleading . . . Andronicus lieth down, and the Judges pass by him.*” (3.1.12). The Andronici were brought to their knees more than once in the first act but Titus is here brought to the lowest point of any character in the play as he prostrates himself before the

Romans. The play presents a world devoid of mercy that is most clearly illustrated through the repeated scenes of pleading. The complete lack of mercy in *Titus Andronicus* is also intertwined with a nostalgic relationship to the pre-Reformation past as many felt that Protestantism was not as charitable as the old faith. Kneeling and pleading with hands raised is a visual trope that runs through the play beginning with Tamora pleading for the life of Albarus, as captured in the Peacham drawing. When the characters get down on their knees with their hands raised they echo the traditional gesture of veneration associated with veneration of images, the mass and prayer for the dead. In the old religion, refusal to perform such gestures was a sign of Lollardry (Duffy *Stripping* 103). Such gestures were also read by Reformers as signs of the practice of idolatry, of taking “False shadows for true substances” (*Titus* 3.2.81), and prayer for the dead. In a list of “manifold popish superstition used in the burial of the dead” from the 1580s in Lancashire, kneeling was seen as a demonstration of adherence to the outlawed practice of prayer for the dead. On the way to the funeral, people stop at crosses and “devoutly on their knees make prayer for the dead” and before burial they stay with the corpse “all kneeling round about the corpse neglecting the public service at hand” (qtd. in Cressy 401). In *Titus Andronicus* the connection between kneeling and burial ritual is demonstrated when the brethren all knee for burial of Mutius, probably the only productive kneeling in the play. The trope of kneeling with hands raised was also a ubiquitous image found in stained windows. In the Acts of Mercy window at All Saints in York for example, the donors are all depicted on their knees with hands raised, see figure 3. Directly after his dismemberment Titus kneels to mirrors these images but he has only one hand to lift: “Oh here I lift this one hand up to heaven / And bow this feeble ruin to

the earth” (3.3.210). Lavinia kneels to join her father and they form the lively image of “begging hermits in their holy prayers . . . [holding] . . . their stumps to heaven” (3.2.41-2). Hermits in holy prayer is evocative of the pilgrimage to monastic houses and kneeling with their dismembered limbs, Titus and Lavinia here are Roman ruins that prefigure the monastic ruins that we come across in act five.

The Andronici disfigurement is at the centre of the play and Lavinia is the “heart” of the matter of dismemberment: Lavinia is the cordial to glad her father’s aged heart (1.1.165); she is the deer / hart hunted by Chiron and Demetrius and Marcus finds her like “the deer / That hath received some unrecuring wound” (3.1.89-90).⁷⁶ As a deer that has received some wound Lavinia becomes a wounded deer / hart. Lavinia is also addressed with the rhetoric of mourning and intercession. Marcus ends his meditation on Lavinia’s wounds with “O, could our mourning ease thy misery” (2.4.57) and Titus asks her “how I may do thee ease” (3.1.212). Talk of Lavinia as a wounded hart / heart who seems to solicit her kin to do her ease echoes the play’s earlier concern with proper burial and being kind to dead kin. Lavinia is not dead, but she is a death-in-life figure, haunting the wood with her “silent walks” and consigned to a state of “oblivion and hateful griefs” (3.1.294) by her mutilation. I wish here to draw out the connection between imagery that presents Lavinia as a wounded heart, dismemberment and intercession for the dead to illustrate the way in which the returned Andronici body parts are evocative of intercession for the dead. When Marcus tells Titus to look on the Andronici remains, he

⁷⁶ There is almost as much harping on “hearts” (34 appearances in the play) as hands, most often in reference to Lavinia and Titus’ own heart. Titus’ speaks of his wounded heart almost as often as his loss of hands: the general laments his “heart’s deep languor” (3.1.13); Marcus tells his brother to prepare his “noble heart to break” (3.1.60); Titus to Marcus, “And be my heart an ever burning hell!” (3.1.247).

includes Lavinia in the picture: “See they two sons’ heads, / Thy warlike hand, thy mangled daughter here” (3.1.253-4). In addition to being an image of dismemberment, Lavinia is also a wounded heart and as such she adds an Andronici heart to the collection of dismembered body parts.

The iconography of the Cult of the Wounds suggests a possible contribution to editorial debate over Titus’ address to Lavinia at (3.1.280). The first quarto reads “And, Lavinia, thou shalt be employed in these arms” (Q1 3.1.280) and the Folio replaces “arms” with “things” (F 3.1.280). Eugene Waith explains the editorial dilemma over this line:

The Q1 reading , ‘these Armes’ . . . has seemed wrong to almost all succeeding editors. The F correction, ‘these things’, makes tolerable sense but leaves the line metrically very irregular. Lettsom’s conjecture, adopted by Hudson and later by Dover Wilson, improves the metre. Hudson also dropped “And” from the beginning of the line on the assumption that it ‘crept in by mistake from the line above.

(n.3.1.280)

The 2008 Oxford maintains the line with the “these things” but the more recent Folger edition, edited by Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine, chooses the Q1 “these arms” and glosses the line with “**these arms:** i.e., this violent revenge” (3.1.286n.). I agree with Mowat and Werstine that the Q1 line is correct and would like to suggest that “these arms” can also be read in reference to the way in which the Andronici create, in a way, a set of heraldic arms when the family collect together the dismembered body parts. Titus has the Andronici visually create on stage an inverted, grotesque version of the Arms of

the Passion. Key to interpretation of language in *Titus* is Shakespeare's relentless and often dreadful use of puns, especially on "hands" and "arms." The Andronici have spent their life bearing arms for Rome and as soldiers, in the language of the body politic, the Andronici are "the Arms" of Rome. This moment marks a turning point in the play as Titus swears to take revenge, take up arms as it were, against Rome. The iconography of the five wounds has two feet, two hands and a bleeding heart at the centre of the image. The Andronici "Armes" of passionate hatred and revenge puts heads where there were feet, has only one hand and at the centre—"employed in these armes" (3.1.280)—is Titus' dear / deer heart / hart, Lavinia.

The Andronici "lively image" of arms is also evocative of a different kind of Reformation remains: images of heraldic arms that remained in the stained glass windows of churches. Traditionally, benefactors and noble families buried in churches had their family coat of arms put into the stained glass windows. Iconoclasm wiped out many of the funerary monuments of these families by defacing tombs and the tearing up brasses. What was often left untouched, however, were the images of the coats of arms in the stained glass. In his quest to carefully record the names of those whose tombs and monuments were destroyed, John Stow often looked to the windows to tell him who lay buried in the church:

John Hinde, Draper, Maior, 1405. Newly builded his parish Church of Saint Scithen by London Stone: his monument is defaced, save onely his armes in the glasse windowes [. . .] Sir John Crosby Alderman, as his armes on the south end doth witness [. . .] William Rus was a special benefactor to this Church, his Armes yet remayne in the Windowes [. . .] noblemen and persons of worshippe

have been buried, as appeareth by Armes in the Windowes, the defaced Tombes,
and printe of plates torn up and carried away

(1: 108-229)

The arms in glass are, in a sense, dismembered remains, that bear witness to the memory of the dead after the iconoclastic violence has worked to carry away many of the original markings of memory.

X- Returning to the Troops

To return one last time to the wayward Goth, by the time he comes upon the monastery ruins the soldier has experienced a very recent change of allegiance at the top level of state. The former Queen of the Goths is now Empress of Rome and after spending ten years fighting the Goths, Titus is now raising an army of Goths against Rome. The soldiers' superiors apparently report to Lucius and are now in league with the Andronici, their former enemies. The lusty Goth wanders from his duties to visit the ruins but this does not stop him from immediately getting back to business to capture the Moor, and dutifully report back to his superiors. The soldier recognizes that his side trip to gaze on the ruinous building is a straying from the troops, that he is following a private desire. In this way the Goth here perhaps performs what was for many in the audience was a private relationship to the violence of the Reformation past, one of nostalgic regret. At the same time the soldier demonstrates that his relationship to the ruins does not interfere in his adherence to his public duties and loyalty to the state. Recognition of a private relationship to ruins symbolic of a past form of worship no longer supported by the state, then, seems to work out well for the Goth. In contrast, for Titus there is no

separation of public and private, and it is his blind devotion to state and slavish insistence on performing traditional “roman rites” that leads to the tearing apart of his family. Titus is a conservative supporter of tradition and chooses Saturninus, as the first-born son, to rule Rome, despite his obvious flaws. I’m not suggesting that Shakespeare is setting out to create an allegory; rather, the way in which the anachronistic moment surfaces in the playworld is complicated and may be analogous to an Elizabethan audience’s uneasy relationship to the recent past.

XI- Images of Ruin

Titus Andronicus ends very much the way it begins: with Rome in a volatile political state and burial rites / rights a contentious site of power. Roman burial rites were a point of political tension in the opening of the play, with the sacrifice of Albarus providing a catalyst for the revenge to follow, and the play ends with a similar focus on interment. Lucius is given the final speech:

Some loving friends convey the Emperor hence,
And give him burial in his fathers’ grave.
My father and Lavinia shall forthwith
Be closed in our household’s monument.
As for the ravenous tiger, Tamora,
No funeral rite, nor man in mourning weed;
No mournful bell shall ring her burial;
But throw her forth to beasts and birds to prey.
Her life was beastly and devoid of pity,

And being dead, let birds on her take pity.

(5.3.195-202)

The description of the funeral rites to be denied to the Queen of the Goths has little to do with the ancient Roman burial rites bestowed upon Titus' sons. Mournful bells and mourning weeds are more evocative of Roman Catholic rites for the dead, especially the contentious ringing of bells as a call for prayer for the dead as discussed in chapter two. It was Lucius who Aaron accused of observing popish ceremonies and the burial bells and mourning weeds surface in the final lines of the play as a final anachronistic moment that, like the ruinous monastery, may be read within a Reformation context. The most disturbing punishment is reserved for Aaron who is left buried "breast-deep in earth" (5.3.178). No one is allowed to pity Aaron or Tamora, and the final two lines end on notes of mercy denied, another echo of the opening of the play when Titus is deaf to Tamora's pleas for pity. Marcus instructs the Romans to "behold us pleading, / The poor remainder of Andronici" (5.3.132-3). His words parallel Titus' direction to the people to "behold the poor remains alive and dead" (1.1.82) of Andronici returned for burial. In the final act, then, we are still gazing upon ruins as we behold what remains of the Andronici. The state of Rome at the end of the play is one of tenuous leadership, newly formed, with possibly volatile allegiances between the Goths and Romans. To dismember also means to "divide and partition (a country or empire)" (*OED*) and just as Rome was headless when the play began, it remains in a state of division.

Finally, the play's concern over unfulfilled rites for the dead and the presentation of a disordered world is reflective of Reformation remains. John Weever describes with some dismay the work of iconoclasts:

they crackt a peeces the glaffee-windowes wherein the effigies of our blessed Saviour hanging on the Crosse, or anyone of his saints was depicted; or otherwise turned up their heels into the place where their heads used to be fixt; as I have seen in the windows of some of our countrey Churches.

(50)

Stained glass windows with images turned upside down, heads where heels should be present a disturbing picture and perhaps demonstrate how even good Protestants like Weever felt about the remains of Reformation violence. The images in *Titus Andronicus* that echo familiar medieval images in glass—kneeling figures with hands raised, the Arms of the Passion, the coats of Arms in windows—are presented in the play very much like these windows that Weever finds so upsetting. Margaret Aston offers a useful reading of the relationship between literature and history at this time: “losses of the past reached out beyond the work of Antiquarians and historical researchers into more indefinable areas of literary consciousness” (*Lollards* 336). The unfixed world of *Titus Andronicus*, with its fluctuating time line between Ancient Rome and Shakespeare’s England, wanders into such an indefinable area of consciousness to present a composite picture of evocative images all “crackt a pieces” by violent maiming and dismemberment.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Sleeping, the Dead, and the Damned

Present death in *Macbeth*

I- The Hell Porter

Does *Macbeth* take place in Hell? The play is certainly hellish and the porter scene has come to be viewed as the moment when the world of *Macbeth* becomes a hell on earth.⁷⁷ In the same scene, however, Shakespeare also makes references to contemporary events:

Enter a Porter

Knocking within.

PORTER

Here's a knocking indeed! If a man were porter of hell gate, he should have old turning the key.

Knock.

Knock, Knock, Knock. Who's therei'th' name of *Belzebub*? Here's a Farmer, that hang'd himself on the 'expectation of Plentie: Come in time, have Napkins enough about you, here you'll sweat for't.

Knock.

Knock, knock. Who's there in th' other Devils Name? Faith, Here's an equivocator, that could swear in both the scales against either

⁷⁷ See Glynne Wickham, "Hell-Castle and its Door-Keeper."

scale, who committed treason enough for God's sake, yet could not equivocate to heaven. O come in equivocator.

(2.3.1-10)

The "Farmer that hanged himself" is a possible allusion to the Jesuit Father Henry Garnet.⁷⁸ Garnet went by the alias of Farmer and attracted much attention for his defence of the Jesuit practice of equivocation while on trial for his role in the gunpowder plot. When the porter heeds to the knocking at the castle gate he cites lines from the medieval *Harrowing of Hell* play and Glynne Wickham argues this has the effect of immersing the audience into "two worlds at once; that of Macbeth's castle and that of another scene from another play" (72). Kenneth Muir suggests Shakespeare's reason for recalling "the miracle plays was that it enabled him to cut the cable that moored his tragedy to a particular spot in space and time" (xxvii). I agree that the scene shifts perceptions of time and the porter speech has much the same effect on Shakespeare's audience as Macbeth's letter has on his wife; they are transported "beyond / This ignorant present [to feel now]" to feel the future in the instant" (1.5.56-7). The instant is the moment in the theatre and we become, like the Macbeths, damned and in Hell. The talk of the hell-porter puts the audience into a medieval play but the allusions to the gunpowder plot intrude to bring the audience back to the future. Thomas Cartelli articulates the way in which the world of *Macbeth* sometimes extends into the world of the audience: "what happens *dramatically* to the characters onstage happens *theatrically* to the audience-at-large" (97). In *Titus*

⁷⁸ Editors do not all agree that "a farmer" is a reference to Garnet though most agree that the speech alludes to Garnet's trial and the Jesuit practice of equivocation. See Muir (xx-xxi) and Brooke (59-60). I am reading the allusion to equivocation here as a reference to both the events of the gunpowder plot and controversy over English Jesuits.

Andronicus the monastic ruins shift the play's setting from ancient Rome to Shakespeare's England. Similarly, when Father Garnet (the farmer) wanders into the porter's Hell he brings contemporary time with him.

The porter scene, then, operates as a portal and when the porter opens the gate he literally lets in time ("Come in time") as a kind of allegorical character.⁷⁹ Jonathan Gill Harris' thesis on untimely matter in Shakespeare is useful to a reading of how the scene operates to mix matters from different time periods creating what Harris calls "time pleats" (4). Gill Harris writes, "*Macbeth* is a play that repeatedly smudges the boundaries dividing the present "moment" from other times [and] this is the play in which Shakespeare most dabbles in the untimely" (123-4). The porter scene performs such a folding together, or pleating, of time periods with its mix of untimely matter: the recollection of players from the recent gunpowder plot within a scene from a medieval play set in Hell, all appear within *Macbeth* and the chronological confusion operates to shake up and disorient time and place.

⁷⁹ The temporal confusion in *Macbeth* has attracted much critical attention see, for example, Tom F. Driver, "The Uses of Time."; Kiichiroh Nakatani, "Expressions of Time in *Macbeth*."; Donald W. Foster, "Macbeth's War on Time" and Luisa Guj, "*Macbeth* and the seeds of time." For works that attempt a broader analysis of Shakespearean conceptions of time see Ricardo J. Quinones, *The Renaissance Discovery of Time*; Gary F. Waller, *The Strong Necessity of Time*; Wylie Sypher, *The Ethic of Time: Structures of Experience in Shakespeare*; and Angus Fletcher, *Time, Space and Motion in the Age of Shakespeare*.

Much work has been done to illuminate the connections between the Porter at Hell gate and the way in which the play as a whole presents a portrait of Hell; and the themes of equivocation and treason have been shown to resonate throughout *Macbeth*. What I think needs to be further explored is some kind of link between the medieval *Harrowing of Hell* play and the allusions to the gunpowder plot; and I believe the link may be found by recognizing that the hell-on-earth created by the Macbeths is informed by contemporary theological and cultural debates over the nature of Hell, the state of the soul between death and the last judgment, and the doctrine of eternal torment. In this chapter I examine how the afterlife of the play-world of *Macbeth* operates within theatrical space and time and makes use of the medieval Harrowing of Hell legend of Christ's descent into Hell. The doctrine of Christ's descent into Hell and the execution of Catholic martyrs were both highly topical during the early Jacobean period and both issues are formative to the way that eschatological space is imagined in *Macbeth*. My argument is that *Macbeth* participates in early seventeenth century discussions of eschatology and that it is through a particularly theatrical imagining of a state of damnation that Shakespeare is able to create such a powerful impression of evil as something horrible yet compelling and ultimately, present.

II- Jesuits, Relics and the Miraculous

Within the Porter's little Harrowing of Hell play, then, we have the entrance of a treasonous Jesuit who brings with him, as it were, contemporary religious controversy. Henry Garnet was put to death for his alleged involvement in the Gunpowder Plot and the Porter's jests therefore gesture towards contemporary events. The Porter's equivocation jokes are not a general evocation of the political events of 1605, or even of Jesuits and

equivocation. Rather, Shakespeare makes reference to Garnet's execution and the highly contested Catholic practice of gathering relics at such executions. The work of critics such as Garry Wills and Richard Wilson have made a very convincing case that when the Porter says "have napkins enough about you" (2.3.4) he alludes to relic-gathering Catholics who attended executions of Catholic martyrs, such as Garnet, supplied with handkerchiefs to dip in the blood of the executed man. Garry Wills explains the practice of napkin dipping:

Handkerchiefs were associated with the public execution of Jesuits, since the emptying of all a man's blood in the savage disembowelling, castrating, and quartering of the hanged bodies of these [declared] traitors prompted pious Catholics to dip handkerchiefs and other bits of cloth in the martyr's saving blood.

(99)

Robert Miola also writes of the continuing popularity of relics and notes that "handkerchief-dipping was widespread" (36) and dipping of kerchiefs in bloody wounds also appeared more than once on the London stage.

Thomas Kyd utilized the social currency of bloody napkins in *The Spanish Tragedy*. Horatio is, in a sense, martyred, or at least wrongly killed and hung. When Hieronimo finds his murdered son he makes a great show to the audience of a bloody handkerchief:

HIERONIMO

See'st thou this handkercher besmeared with blood?

It shall not from me till I take revenge.

See'st thou those wounds that yet are bleeding fresh?

I'll not entomb them till I have revenged.

(2.5.51-4)

Originally given to Andrea by Belleimperia and taken as a token of remembrance from Andrea's body by Horatio, the bloody napkin is also a bloody relic. Hieronimo not only keeps the bloody napkin, he keeps the body. In light of the practice of bloody tokens and body parts kept as relics, Hieronimo rather grotesquely keeps the whole body of his son in his possession and makes a great show at the end of the play. He displays Horatio's body to the Spanish court as evidence of his injustice and once the revenge is done he makes sure to again brandish the handkerchief:

HIERONIMO

And here behold this bloody handkercher,
Which at Hortio's death I weeping dipped
Within the river of his bleeding wounds:
It is as propitious, see I have reserved,
And never hath it left my bloody heart,
Soliciting remembrance of my vow

(4.4.122-6)

Andrew Hadfield reads Kyd's bloody napkin as an anti-Catholic reference and argues that "Hieronimo's dipping his handkerchief in his son's blood and promising grim revenge traps him within a pagan world, as the framing chorus of the play demonstrates. It also suggests that he is a superstitious Catholic, unable to trust in the secular authorities or God" (197). As discussed in chapter two, the framing chorus also sets Andrea in a liminal space because he can find no place in the afterlife. Horatio, followed by

Hieronimo, works to right wrongs against the dead and in this way “intercede” on behalf of Andrea who is trapped between death and his final resting place. Hieronimo makes a point of telling the court that he “dipped” the kerchief in his son’s wounds as the audience looks on the body of Horatio. The scene can be read as a grotesque parody of the martyr / relic making process.

Since the late 1570s executions of Catholics saw “spectators scramble to dip handkerchiefs and gloves in blood, rescue scraps of bone, muscle, and flesh, and gather up the discarded clothes and possessions of their heroes” (Walsham 794). Shakespeare makes a direct reference to this practice in *Julius Caesar* when Antony mocks the plebeians who “would go and kiss dead Caesar’s wounds, / And dip their napkins in his sacred blood” (3.2.132-3).⁸⁰ Father Garnet was executed on May 3, 1606, but Catholics were thwarted in their attempts at handkerchief dipping, and the failure to gather sufficient relics of this famous Jesuit is lamented to this day:

The execution [of Garnet] was watched so closely that very few relics of the martyrdom were secured by Catholics, but a head of straw stained with his blood fell into the hands of a young Catholic, John Wilkerson. Some months later he showed it to a Catholic gentleman who noticed that the blood had congealed upon one of the husks in the form of a minute face, resembling, as they thought, Garnet's own portrait.

(Catholic Encyclopedia)

⁸⁰The rest of the passage continues to mock the veneration of relics: Yea, beg a hair of him for memory, / And dying mention it within their wills, / Bequeathing it as a rich legacy / Unto their issue” (*Julius Caesar* 3.2.132-7).

Relic hunters were not able to “come in time” to dip their napkins in Garnet’s blood. But the literal grasping of straws to get any blood soaked remains demonstrates the concern, fanaticism even, of belief in the efficacy of the blood of martyrs. By the time *Macbeth* was staged it appears that it was necessary to closely guard executions of Catholics to prevent the “securing” of relics, but the Porter’s call for napkins is not the first reference to relics in the play.

One of the most notorious instances of the gathering of bloody Jesuit relics dates from the sensational public execution of Edmund Campion and a relic from this infamous Catholic martyr possibly makes a brief appearance in *Macbeth*. There was mass hysteria at Campion’s execution as the crowds rushed forward to dip their handkerchiefs in his blood and scramble to snatch up pieces of the Jesuit martyr. A number of relics were secured, including Campion’s thumb; a great prize as “hands and fingers were thought to have special powers” (Miola 36), and portions of this thumb remain enshrined today in Rome and Roehampton. And when the witches cast their first spell against Macbeth, they make use of a severed thumb:

FIRST WITCH

Look what I have.

SECOND WITCH Show me, show me.

FIRST WITCH

Here I have a pilot’s thumb,

Wrecked as homeward he did come.

Drum within

THIRD WITCH

A drum, drum!

Macbeth doth come.

(1.3.26-31)

The display of the Pilot's thumb switches the witches' focus from their trivial plot of revenge against the sailor's wife to the coming of Macbeth. It is possible to read the pilot's thumb as having to do with the sailor but as the second and third witch have already promised winds to add to their sisters power to blow the ports, they seem content he "shall be tempest-tossed" (1.3.25). The interjection of "Look what I have" (1.3.26) and "Show me, show me" (1.3.26) breaks the rhythm of the previous rhyming couplets and makes sure our attention is drawn to the displayed object. The pilot's thumb begins another rhyming scheme ending with "Macbeth doth come" which leads us into the casting of the spell with the winding up of the charm and there seems to be no other reason for the first witch to draw our attention to the thumb unless it becomes part of the spell.

The witches use of the thumb to aid in winding up a charm is very much in keeping with how relics were used. Priests said prayers when they applied relics to wounds or other afflictions but Protestants derogatively referred to such prayers as spells and charms. As late as 1628, Sir Benjamin Rudyard reported to the House of Commons that "the prayers of the common people are more like spells and charms than devotions" (qtd. in Thomas 73).⁸¹ Moreover, Richard Wilson makes a compelling case that this is not just any human body part but that the "pilot's thumb" brandished here,

⁸¹ On prayers and spells, see Duffy, *Stripping* (207-98) and Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (25-50).

seems to be nothing less than a relic of ‘The pilot of the Galilean lake’, and keeper of the keys of heaven, St Peter: or rather, the hallowed thumb of his representative and the Pied Piper of his mission, notoriously *racked* in the Tower of London to confess treason, on returning in 1580 from Prague: that of Campion himself . . . by far the most celebrated relic of the Catholic martyrs, it [the thumb] had been hacked from one of the quarters of Campion’s body in the melee at Tyburn, when the crowd rushed to dip handkerchiefs in his blood

(Wilson 191)

Campion’s thumb became famous for its reported role in a notorious exorcism, as recorded by Samuel Harsnett. Catholic priests used relics, like Campion’s thumb, to influence the driving out of devils and the witches similarly use the pilot’s thumb to assist in directing demonic forces.⁸² That the pilot’s thumb possibly conjures up allusions to Edmund Campion brings contemporary controversy over relics and Catholic martyrs into the first act of the play. It has been suggested that Shakespeare here aligns witches and their use of body parts with Jesuits and their use of relics, thus supporting contemporary Protestant derision of such papist practices as demonic.

III- The Counter-Reformation and Thamaturgical Wonders

A consideration of contemporary controversy over relics and an inquiry into how miraculous tokens surface and resurface in the play will help to shed light on how

⁸² See Keith Thomas *Religion and the Decline of Magic* on the use of relics: Holy relics became “wonder working fetishes . . . Basic to the whole procedure was the idea of exorcism, the formal conjuring of the devil out of some material object by the pronounciation of prayers” (26-9).

Garnet's napkins and Campion's thumb participate in the play's presentation of the supernatural. At the time *Macbeth* was staged, wonder-working relics were enjoying something of a revival in England. Henrican iconoclasm had destroyed many of the venerated remains of medieval saints but Alexandra Walsham notes that the "mortal remains of the martyrs quickly compensated for the loss of the sacred body parts of medieval saints like Thomas Becket" (794); and Keith Thomas agrees that "Catholic martyrs swelled the number of holy objects and places" (73). To collect such relics was to participate in the counter-Reformation and Richard Wilson argues that "Ever since the regime had obliterated each remnant after the beheading of Mary Queen of Scots, salvage of these grisly remains had become an act of collective resistance" (114). Moreover, Alexandra Walsham argues that the use of relics as wonder-working devices were part of a broad Counter-Reformation strategy to promote the magical aspect of the traditional religion to "reconcile" the people back to their traditional faith. Post-Reformation wonder-working became a characteristic of the Catholic revival on the continent and performance of "miracles" provided "positive proof that the Church of Rome was a designated channel of supernatural power" (794); such displays of thamaturgical wonders also became the particular *modus operandi* of the Society of Jesus and their English missionaries. It is stories of these miraculous happenings that are mocked by the likes of John Gee in *The Foot out of the Snare* and Samuel Harsnet in *A declaration of Egregious Popish Practices*. According to English Jesuit reports sent back to continental authorities, demonstrations of thaumaturgic wonders proved wildly successful at bringing the lost flock back into the fold, and fantastic and strange occurrences associated with Catholic martyrs were especially effective. It was said that the day Edmund Campion

was executed the Thames stood still, that horses refused to drag Edward Waterson to his execution in 1593, and that the sea near Penzance turned blood red the day two priests were tortured in 1612 (Walsham “Miracles” 794-5). To return to the context of Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, these tales of “hours dreadful and things strange” (2.4.3) are beginning to sound familiar. The play has horses “contending ‘gainst obedience” (2.4.17), “confused events” (2.3.51) of nature, and bloody “seas incarnadine” (2.3.66). The Jesuits presented tales of strange events as evidence that God was sympathetic to their cause and in *Macbeth* the same kind of supernatural pathetic fallacy occurs. These frighteningly unnatural and “wondrous” events coincide with Macbeth’s regicide but not all tales of the miraculous in *Macbeth* are associated with the demonic.

IV – The Miraculous, Edward the Confessor and The Gunpowder Plot

In opposition to the demonic imagery surrounding Macbeth and his court are the angelic English forces protecting Malcolm in the court of the saintly King of England. Patron saint of Kings, Edward the Confessor remains one of England’s most well-known saints and was certainly recognized as such in Shakespeare’s day. Henry VIII dissolved the Westminster abbey in 1540 and Edward’s tomb was despoiled and his body moved to an obscure spot. In 1557 Mary I restored the coffin to its original resting place and restored the tomb. Central to the Cult of the Saints in late medieval Catholicism was the power to intercede for the living on behalf of the dead in purgatory and this power was often channelled through saintly relics. Edward’s original tomb at Westminster bears the scars of medieval pilgrims picking away bits of the once beautiful inlaid mosaic to take away tokens of the great patron saint. Notably, a “Confessor” is a particular type of saint;

the term applies to those who suffered for their faith but were not martyrs. It is important, I think, that Edward is raised above the ranks of both those more common English heroes chronicled by Stowe and the swelling ranks of Catholic martyrs and that he is *the* patron saint of Kings. As we have seen, with the Jesuit's use of bloody relics and the witches' use of severed body parts, such claims of objects invested with power to work miracles, for good or evil, were considered papist and demonic. Protestants derided Catholic belief in the power of ecclesiastical talismans as demonstrated by this derisive verse,

About these Catholics' necks and hands are always hanging charms
that serve against all miseries and all unhappy harms

(qtd. in Thomas 30)

But central to the turn toward the downfall of Macbeth is a scene that describes the “healing benediction” (4.3.156) of the good English monarch. Now, it is noteworthy that the description of the “miraculous work” (4.3.147) of King Edward closely echoes the mocking lines above:

The mere despair of surgery, he cures
Hanging a golden stamp about their necks
Put on with holy prayers

(4.3.154-5)

Hanging a golden stamp about his people's neck, King Edward performs a kind of exorcism. When he uses the golden coin “put on with prayers” to cure the disease he ministers to the “crew of wretched souls / That stay his cure” (4.3.155). Like Lady Macbeth—her illness is pronounced beyond the power of the doctor and more the providence of “the divine than the physician” (5.1.61)—Edward's flock has a disease that

is the “despair of surgery” (4.3-152). The sick the King cures are “strangely-visited people / All swollen and ulcerous” (4.3-150-1) and this rhetoric of the unnatural “strangely-visited” state of the afflicted suggests possible possession. King Edward “solicits heaven” (4.3.150), with the power that “hath Heaven given his hand” (4.3.143) and the soon-to-be sainted Edward supplies the divine physic. The English monarch here demonstrates that he is also “a designated channel of supernatural power” (Walsham 794) who operates in opposition to the forces of supernatural evil in the play.

The reference to Father Garnet and the napkins, evocative of the controversy over relics and Catholic martyrs, occurs directly after Duncan’s murder, a deed spurred on by the witches’ prophecy that Macbeth will be King. The Porter’s diatribe over the equivocator and hell-gate takes place while the Macbeths remove their bloodstained clothes and wash their bloody hands. Duncan’s blood, however, is not so easily removed and the king’s blood later returns as the infamous “damned spot” on Lady Macbeth’s hand. When Simon Forman visited the Globe in 1611 to see *Macbeth*, he was very much struck by the Macbeth’s reaction to their bloody hands. He writes: “And when Macbeth had murdered the King, the blood on his hands could not be washed off by any means, nor from his wife’s hands, which handled the bloody daggers in hiding them, by which means they became much amazed and affronted” (qtd. in Carroll 154). Forman’s version of the scene is somewhat embellished. Macbeth is clearly distressed by his “hangman’s hands” (2.3.31), but everything Lady Macbeth says is an attempt to calm her husband’s “foolish thought[s]” (2.3.26) and deny that there is anything unnatural about the state of their hands. Macbeth seems to imagine that Duncan’s blood has mystical powers:

What hands are here? Ha! They pluck out mine eyes.

Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clear from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red.

(2.3.62-8)

The image of vast bloody seas is extraordinary but the mind of Lady Macbeth does not possess her husband's imaginative range and she quickly counters with "A little water clears us of this deed" (2.3.71). Contrary to Forman's account that the blood "could not be washed off by any means" there is no on-stage washing off of blood, which does not mean, of course, that it was not at some time staged as Forman claims. What is more important, I think, is how Forman remembers the scene and the language he uses to describe it: that the Macbeths were "amazed and affrighted" at the unnatural, irremovable blood. And Forman sees this bloody business return later in the play and takes pains to note the connection: "Observe also how Macbeth's queen did rise in the night in her sleep, and walk, and talked and confessed all, and the doctor noted her words" (qtd. in Carroll 155). Forman interprets the way the King's blood operates in the play as thaumaturgical. Duncan's blood, the "filthy witness" (2.3.51) of the regicide reappears, and in a punitive act of justice, it drives Lady Macbeth to confess her treason.

King Duncan's sacred blood returns, in a way, to wreak revenge against Lady Macbeth by driving her mad, and similarly, stories circulated by counter-Reformers of wonder-working relics and strange tales of unnatural occurrences, especially those associated with Catholic, were often reported as punitive miracles. Alexander Walsham writes,

Providential judgements visited upon persecutors [of Catholics] were another aspect of the miraculous which the missionaries pressed into the service of casuistical instruction and confessional propaganda. Part of a tradition stretching from Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical history* to Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, such anecdotes graphically illustrated divine anger at those who imbued their hands in the blood of the martyrs.

(791)

When Macbeth holds up his “hangman’s hands” (2.3.31) he aligns himself with the executioners who drew and quartered the bodies of convicted traitors, an early modern, rather than medieval, method of execution. But in *Macbeth* Shakespeare has reversed the story and the blood spilled is that of the rightful King. The blood of a king is sacred, as duly noted in *Julius Caesar* where the plebeians will rush to “dip their napkins in his *sacred* blood” (3.2.132-3 Emphasis added), and James, who changed his title from “your royal sovereign” to “your sacred majesty” would certainly agree. The title of a story of James’ role in the discovery of the Gunpowder plot reads: *Mischeefes Myseries: or, Treasons Master-peece, the Powder-plot. Invented by hellish Malice, prevented by heavenly mercy: truly related.* According to Nicolo Molin’s account of the story of the mysterious anonymous letter, received in the dead of night, which lead to “Treasons discovery,” it was only through James’ piercing insight that the barrels of powder were discovered. Lord Monteaule had read the letter and ordered a search turning up nothing but “the King read the letter, and in *terrified amaze* he said, ‘I remember my father died by gunpowder. I see the letter says the blow is to be struck on a sudden. Search the basements of the meeting place.’ (Molin qtd. in Carroll 257; Emphasis added). The

description of the “terrified amaze” of the King and Forman’s description of the “amazed and affronted” Macbeths demonstrates that both descriptions can be read as participating in the rhetoric of the punitively miraculous. The author ends his account of King James’ discovery of the gunpowder with “it was certain that God would not for long endure such injustice and iniquity”. In a similar fashion, the plot against Duncan was spurred on by the “*hellish malice*” of the demonic witches and order is ultimately restored to Scotland by the “*heavenly mercy*” of the wonder working “holy king” (3.6.30) of England.

Edward will leave his gift of healing to “the succeeding royalty” (4.3.155) and likewise, the power of the sacred blood of Kings and runs in the veins of James I. Like the napkins dipped in the sacred blood of Catholic martyrs, Lady Macbeth’s blood stained hand eventually works to drive out the demonic. Duncan’s “sacred blood” sits like a scorpion in her mind, haunts her sleep and reappears on her hand as blood she can still smell, just like the bloody handkerchiefs and other grisly relics and the power of holy relics is channelled through the sacred blood of Kings.

V – The Family of Love, James I and Present Death

Father Garnet, the “farmer that hang’d himself” (2.3.5), bloody napkins, and the recent events of the gunpowder plot, then, are evoked within the midst of the Porter scene. Another public political controversy timely with *Macbeth* involved skirmishes between the King and a small fellowship of Protestants known as the Family of Love. The theological beliefs of this sect seem to surface in the ways in which eschatological space in *Macbeth* is imagined. When James I was called to account for his portrait of English Puritans as “very pestes in the Church and common wealth” he claimed that by Puritan he meant “that vile sect amongst the Anabaptists, called the Familie of Love,”

(qtd. in Marsh 54). Despite the fact that it was obvious to most that this was not the case, the Familists and their beliefs fell under close scrutiny and The Family of Love was held up as an example of the need for further reform (Marsh 198-231).⁸³ The beliefs of this “vile sect” are difficult to pin point but perhaps more important is what reformers believed the Familists believed. Based on the writings of the Dutch mystic H.N. Familists sought a union with God in this life and held rather oblique notions of the death and resurrection of Christ occurring “presentlie in this same Daye” (H.N. qtd. in Marsh 24). What their detractors understood, however, was that the Family of Love had no belief in Christ beyond the allegorical and that Heaven, Hell and the Last Day were not “last things” but “present things” (Burns 54). *Macbeth* dramatizes the Familist understanding of eschatological concerns traditionally associated with “last things” as “present things,” and in particular the play displaces eschatological space and time with “the instant” (*Macbeth* 1.5.58). For the length of the Macbeth’s reign of terror damnation takes place “presentlie in this same Day” (H.N.)—“here, upon this bank and shoal of time”(1.7.6)—in the world of *Macbeth* and extends outward to envelop the playhouse within this theatrical state of “present death.”

Some extended inquiry into cultural and theological understandings of Hell will demonstrate that there is a connection between unorthodox Protestant understandings of the afterlife, such as those reportedly held by the Family of Love, the recalling of the medieval “Porter of Hell Gate” (2.3.1), and the murky ways in which Shakespeare dramatizes the state of damnation in *Macbeth*. The Family of Love’s unorthodox

⁸³ On the persecution of Familists in Shakespearean England, see Marsh *The Family of Love in English Society* (54-60). The sect was notorious enough to become the title subject of the play *The Family of Love*. This play has been attributed to Middleton but authorship is now a matter of debate.

understanding of eschatological matters may seem obscure but they share something in common with more mainstream Protestant debates over the afterlife, and Hell in particular, that surface in the play. The Porter scene is often recognized as the moment Scotland is transformed into a kind of Hell when the Hell-Porter attends to the knocking at the castle gate and Glynne Wickham has shown how the evocation of the ribald Porter and his role in the medieval cycle play, *The Harrowing of Hell*, works within the pattern of the struggle between the demonic Macbeths and the angelic English forces. Wickham presents a convincing case to support his claim that Shakespeare makes a “conscious attempt” (70) to remind his audience of the Harrowing legend. What has not been recognized to my knowledge, however, is that by recalling the Harrowing of Hell story of Christ’s descent to the nether world Shakespeare also introduces long standing theological controversy over the state of damnation and the place of Hell.

The Family of Love’s oblique notions of the afterlife may be traced to broader theological disagreement over how to understand scriptural references to the location of Hell. For some the idea that Hell was under the earth was becoming too vulgar an understanding of the doctrine of eternal torment. Thomas Browne writes “Surely though wee place Hell under the earth, the Devils walke and purlue is about it; men speake too popularly who place it in those flaming mountains, which to grosser apprehensions represent Hell” (125). Based on the story of Christ’s descent into Hell as related in the Gospel of Nicodemus, the belief that Christ died, was buried and then descended into Hell is authorized by the Apostles’ Creed. While some of Shakespeare’s audience might only have a vague recollection of the staging of the Harrowing of Hell play, they were intimately familiar with the doctrine of the descent into Hell. The Apostles’ Creed is

recognized in Article three of the Thirty Nine Articles of Religion and the Creed is recited to this day in the orders for morning and evening pray as prescribed by *The Book of Common Prayer*. Each time Jacobean congregations said their morning and evening prayers, they affirmed their belief that Christ “Was crucified, dead, and buried: He descended into hell; The third day he rose again from the dead” (*BCP*).

Protestants, however, rejected the Harrowing of Hell legend as dramatized in the old cycle plays as a misunderstanding of scripture. Theologians quibbled over the translation of the Hebrew word *sheol* arguing that the descent was only to the grave.⁸⁴ Calvin agreed and in the *Institutes of Christian Religion* he addresses the question of “Christ in the Nether world?” and assures his readers that Christ’s going down into Hell was nothing but a childish story. How the phrase “he descended into Hell” was to be understood developed into what is now known as the Jacobean “Descensus Controversy” (Marshall 116), a long-running theological debate timely with early stagings of *Macbeth*. The question of Christ’s descent entered into debates over the state of the soul directly after death and the very construction of the phrase “he descended into Hell” raised questions about the location of Hell (Marshall 116-22). The denial of the Catholic Doctrine of Purgatory had led to a radical remapping of the afterlife. The once vividly imagined medieval conception of the hereafter as a fully spatialized place where Hell, Heaven, and various limbos were placed in relationship to this world was rejected. Not only was the afterlife reduced to the binary system of heaven and Hell, but intense scrutiny of conflicting scriptural support for the place of Hell in relation to heaven and

⁸⁴ In the King James Bible the Hebrew *sheol* is rendered variously as “Hell”, “the grave”, and “the pit” in the O.T., and in the N.T. Hell is translated from the Greek *Hades* and *Gehenna* (*OED* hell n.). The Geneva Bible differs, sometimes using “grave” where the KJV uses “hell,” for example in Psalms 16:10.

this world led to reticence on the part of Protestant theologians to pronounce definitely on the location of Hell. This made some theologians nervous as reformers had pounced on Catholic inability to agree on the location of Purgatory as proof that the third state did not exist. As early as 1536 Thomas Starkey feared that “With the despising of Purgatory [the people] began little to regard Hell, Heaven, or any other felicity hereafter to be had in another life” (Quoted in Marshall 129).

The idea that to be damned in Hell was a state, “A dagger of the mind” (2.1.39), rather than a place, however, was still an unorthodox belief bordering on heresy in the early seventeenth century and any suggestion that a *place* called Hell did not exist led to accusations of incipient atheism (Marshall 117-18); Catholics quipped that Protestants believed “Hell is nothing but a tormenting and desperate conscience” (Burns 59). So when Kenneth Muir cites Mephistophiles’ famous description of Hell as “where we are is hell, / And where hell is, there must we ever be.” (*Doctor Faustus* 2.1.117-8) to illustrate that in *Macbeth* “hell is a state, not a place” (Muir xxvi) it should be noted that the daemon is responding to the Wittenberg-trained Doctor Faustus’ insistent inquiry into the place of hell: “Tell me, where is the place that men call hell? . . . ay, but whereabouts?” (2.1.111-13). It is also significant that Faustus dismisses Mephistopheles’ esoteric description of damnation with “Come, I think Hell’s a fable” (1.2.122) and the Doctor’s response suggests that inability to pronounce definitely on the place of Hell leads to a realization of Starkey’s fears that close inquiry into the geography of the afterlife will result in disbelief in Hell and any kind of an afterlife. Thus the evocation of Christ’s descent into Hell by the Hell-Porter, which occurs directly following the bloody

deed that damns the Macbeths, introduces contemporary Protestant concerns over what it means to be damned and in Hell.

Moreover, I want argue that the Porter scene does not so much “transport” us from Inverness to Hell as it is one of several instances in the play that work to call up eschatological space only to displace the hereafter with the present. Thomas Cartelli argues that in *Macbeth* “what happens *dramatically* to the characters onstage happens *theatrically* to the audience-at-large...the ‘first world’ from which the play is viewed becomes displaced and enveloped by the prevailing atmosphere of the drama” (97). Cartelli sees the appearance of Banquo as the key moment when the audience is brought into the world of *Macbeth*. I believe, however, that what Cartelli describes is a process that begins with the opening scene and culminates with the knocking at the gate. Indeed, the line between “last things” and “present things” begins to shift in the very opening scene. Jonathan Gil Harris points out that when first staged “the play most likely began not just with a bang but with a stink” (120). “*Thunder and Lightning*” (1.1.0) reads the famous opening stage directions and the fireworks (squibs) set off by the players to create the thunderous effects left a smokey, smelly combination of sulphur and brimstone hovering in the theatre. The appearance of the witches in the midst of sulphurous smoke would certainly suggest an association between the filthy air and the demonic; and as the witches exit into the “fog and filthy air” (1.1.10) the audience is left behind in the foul, smokey air of the theatre. When Macbeth comes on stage and says “So foul and fair a day I have not seen” (1.3.38) it could be a comment on the atmosphere of the playhouse. The association between smoke and Hell is made explicit when Lady Macbeth summons “the dunnest smoke of Hell” (1.5.47) at a time when the audience’s nostrils would very

likely still be stinging with the sulphurous smoke of the squibs. Just as the witches “make themselves air” (1.5.5) and “create new space that they can step into” (Poole 145), the play raises up eschatological space, the sulphurous smoke of Hell. By the time the Hell-porter makes his entrance, then, the audience has been introduced to the smoke of Hell and the evil of the surely damned Macbeths, now off stage removing the filthy witness of Duncan’s blood from their hands.

VI- The Sleeping, the dead, and Present Death

The sensation of the emergence of eschatological space and time into the present escalates once the castle gate is opened and we are inundated with doomsday imagery. The sleepers of the house are called to rise from their beds “as from your grave rise up, and walk like sprites ” and look upon “great doom’s image” (2.3.66-71). We are now in the eschatological realm of “last things” but they have become “present things.” There has been dissolution of eschatological space into secular space and where we are now “grace is dead” (2.3.88) and the scene closes with the recognition that in Scotland “there’s no mercy left” (2.3.139). Doomsday has arrived but the world has not ended; rather, in *Macbeth* “last things” occur “presentlie in this same Daye” as imagined by the Familist mystic H.N. when the sleeping / dead rise from their graves. Macbeth calls our attention to this transformative moment by crying out that “From *this instant* / There’s nothing serious in mortality” (2.3.85-6 Emphasis added) and it is as if he has cast a spell and a sea-change has taken place. Sleepers rise from their beds / graves “grace is dead” the last day has come and the hereafter is “*here* –upon this bank and shoal of time.” The old Thane of Cawdor became a dead-man-walking the moment Duncan pronounced his

“present death” (1.2.67) and all of Scotland now enters a similar life-in-death state because the hereafter is here and there is nothing else. Thus the play dramatizes what Thomas Starkey feared almost a hundred years earlier—that there would be no “hereafter to be had in another life.”

There is no doubt that Macbeth suffers a personal Hell akin to the *poena damna* expressed by Marlowe’s Mephistopheles; the King of Scotland is tormented by a mind “full of scorpions” (3.2.39) but this tortured state of damnation is not confined to the King. The many pains of hell are numbered “as great as have the human souls of men” (*Doctor Faustus* 2.1.43) and even stone-hearted Lady Macbeth cannot escape her very own little Hell that haunts her in the form of that damned spot of Duncan’s blood. This damnation is not confined to the devilish Macbeths; the state of their infected minds extends outward to engulf the entire state of Scotland. Ross reports the news of his homeland:

Alas, poor country

Almost afraid to know itself. It cannot

Be called our mother, but *our grave*; where nothing

But who knows nothing is once seen to smile;

Where *sighs and groans and shrieks* that rend the air

Are made, not marked; where violent sorrow seems

A modern ecstasy.

(4.3.165-71; Emphasis added)

It is noteworthy that when Ross describes his country’s hellish state he calls Scotland “our grave” to evoke a state of damnation. As discussed, theological debates over

Christ's descent raised disagreements over translation of the Hebrew word *sheol* as both "grave" and "hell". Those who denied Christ's descent was to Hell argued the creedal phrase should be rendered as "he descended to the grave" and Shakespeare's use here of "grave" to describe what is clearly "hell" participates in cultural uncertainty on what it means to be damned and in Hell.⁸⁵ Scotland has become a land of the dead a "grave" and the "sighs and groans and shrieks" clearly echo biblical scripture on the weeping and wailing to be expected in Hell. We see a demonstration of what it meant to exist in such a place when we witness Macbeth's reaction to an air-rending shriek:

"A cry within of women" (SD 5.5.5).

MACBETH What is that noise?

SEYTON It is the cry of women, my good lord.

MACBETH I have almost forgot the taste of fears.

 The time has been my senses would have cooled

 To hear a night-shriek, and my fell of hair

 Would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir

 As life were in't. I have supped full of horrors:

 Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts,

 Cannot once state me.

(5.6.9-14)

⁸⁵ Mortalism, a cousin of soul-sleep, is the belief that the soul dies with the body and the body and soul are resurrected together on the last day. John Milton was reportedly a mortalist and in *Paradise Lost* Milton, the Father will not leave the son "in the loathsome grave" (3.247), a reference to Psalms 16:10; The King James Bible reads, "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," but Milton chooses the Geneva translation: "For thou wilt not leave my soul in the grave," thus siding with those who claimed the descent was to the grave and supporting the idea of the sleep or death of the soul.

Shrieks that would have once horrified the King are now “not marked” and cannot stir a man to whom violence has become so familiar and Macbeth’s sickness of heart—
“Seyton!—I am sick at heart ” (5.3.19)—is reflected in the “state” in both senses of the word, of the state of Scotland. It is fitting that Macbeth’s attending officer is named Seyton, surely audible as Satan, and in Ross’ Scotland no one asks for whom the bells tolls:

The dead man’s knell
Is there scarce asked for who, and good men’s lives
Expire before the flowers in their caps,
Dying or ere they sicken.

(4.3.171-73)

Lack of proper remembrance of the dead is here, as in *Hamlet*, another sign that there is something rotten in the state of Scotland. A sign that grace and mercy will soon be restored near the end of the play is signalled by a pause to remember the dead:

SIWARD Had I as many sons as I have hairs
I would not wish them to a fairer death.
And so, his knell is knolled.

(5.8.47-9)

The forces of good have effected the “country’s purge” (5.3.28) and young Siward is memorialized directly after the Hell-hound is killed and this looks forward to the restoration of grace and mercy.

The understanding of the descent as to the grave raised another long-standing contentious issue that beset early reformers, the so-called sleep of the soul. Soul sleep is

the belief that the soul “sleeps” between death and the resurrection which raised the question, where was the soul during this sleep? Some learned to ignore this question and Thomas Browne determined to believe “that Lazarus was raised from the dead, yet not demand where in the interim his soule awaited” (70). Confusion, or perhaps anxiety, over the location of the soul directly after death is raised over the death of Falstaff in *Henry V* “surely he’s not in Hell, he’s in Arthur’s bosom” (2.3.10) and as discussed in chapter two, the ghost of Old Hamlet is markedly secretive about his otherworld abode. While I do not mean to suggest that Shakespeare intends to make direct allusions to theological debates over the state of the soul after death and the geography of the afterlife, what I do wish to assert is that these are very real cultural concerns that seem to form part of the poet’s matter for “making”. And I believe it is possible to see, “in a glass, even in a dark speaking” (1 Cor 13) as Tyndale might put it, that the imaginative hellish landscape of *Macbeth* is informed by the “mingle-mangle” of Protestant and cultural uncertainties over what it means to be eternally damned.

While Shakespeare’s audience may not be acutely aware of theological debates over the sleep of the soul, there is a noticeable slippage in the play between sleep and death. As Macbeth contemplates the regicide “Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse / The curtained sleep” (2.1.51-2); the murder will be done “when Duncan is asleep”; blame will be put upon the servants “when in a swinish sleep / Their dreaded natures lies as in a death” (1.7.62-9) and Lady Macbeth chides her husband’s refusal to the chamber with “The sleeping and the dead / Are but as pictures.” (2.2.57-8). Sleep is the “death of each day’s life” (2.2.42) but once the deed is done Macbeth hears a voice cry “Sleep no more! Macbeth doth murder sleep” (2.2.39-40). The word sleep occurs 24

times in the play and one half of these are in this scene. While it is clear that the old adage no rest for the wicked applies here, given the constant conflation of sleep and death in the talk of the murders leading up to this scene it is possible to read Macbeth's fears of the killing of sleep as a kind murder of death, or at least rest for the dead. We are now in Hell, or are we becoming aware that damnation, in this play, is to be stuck in a mortal state. No more sleep / death now only waking / mortality – and no afterlife. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth both later suffer from lack of sleep but here the deed transforms the very “state of man” and Scotland is now eschatological space. According to the doctrine of the sleep of the soul, one rises on the Last Day both body and soul. But in *Macbeth* sleep and death have become conflated since Macbeth performed the deed that, along with the devil-Porter, ushered in a state of the damnation. The Porter is awoken from sleep to attend to the knocking at Hell-castle gate directly after Macbeth has murdered sleep. Sleep has been murdered because there is now no place after death and the murder of sleep / death has resulted in a Hell that is here and now. In *Macbeth* to be in Hell is to remain “here, / But here, upon this bank and shoal of time” (1.4.5-6) rooted in mortality.

Macbeth, however, was not the first to murder sleep. The association between the annihilation of sleep and the demonic is ushered into the play by the witches:

Sleep shall neither night nor day
Hang upon his penthouse lid.
He shall live a man forbid.
Weary sev'n nights nine times nine
Shall he dwindle, peak and pine.

(1.3.19-23)

These lines are often cut in production but the witches curse against sleep along with the show of the Pilot's thumb is important to what follows.⁸⁶ It is not surprising, then, that the second time sleep is raised as an opportunity for performing evil deeds is by Lady Macbeth. The witches will do and do and do against the wench's husband; Lady Macbeth and her husband will "perform upon / Th'unguarded Duncan" (1.7.70-1) while he is asleep. The evil will of course backfire and Macbeth will come to "live a man forbid" and Lady Macbeth will finally "dwindle peak and pine" (1.3.20-23). The sleepwalking scene suggests that she was already in some sort of post-mortem state. Her "slumberry agitation" is a "great perturbation in nature" (5.1.7-8). The Doctor's first words are: "How came she by that light?" (5.1.20), drawing our attention to the taper she holds. Lady Macbeth keeps a lit candle "by her continually" (5.1.21), which adds to the impression her sleep is close to death as by evoking the practice of keeping lit candles by a corpse awaiting burial.⁸⁷ Lady Macbeth has become vulnerable like Duncan's hapless guards and is now in a sleep where "death and nature do contend" (2.2.7). For Lady Macbeth "Hell is murky" (5.1.29) and she curses the "damned spot!" which is a reflection of the state of her own stained and spotted soul; and it is fitting that her death is announced by Seyton, her husband's fellow officer and hellhound. The last time we see

⁸⁶ In Rupert Goold's 2009 film adaptation of *Macbeth* starring Sir Patrick Stewart, for example, the witches begin with "a drum a drum Macbeth doth come" cutting the entire story of the wench and the curse against her husband.

⁸⁷ Clare Gittings explains provisions made in wills for candles made in preparation for burial: "One was the provision of numerous candles to burn round the corpse, the burning of a candle being a form of intercession in late medieval England" (*Death, Burial and the Individual* 29). On candles at deathbeds, funerals and graves, see Duffy, *Stripping* (330, 360-1). Ralph Houlebrouke documents the importance of candles in medieval funerary customs, and notes that provisions for candles were second only to requests for intercessory prayer, see *Death, Religion and the Family*, (261-4).

Lady Macbeth she exists in a kind of hellish limbo between sleeping and waking, death and life, and the next we hear of her we learn that she has sealed her eternal damnation by taking her own life.

The hellish disruption of sleep experienced by the Macbeths – their nightmarish nights and slumbry agitation—spreads outward to the state of Scotland. Macbeth laments he and his wife must “eat our meals in fear and sleep / In the affliction of these terrible dreams” (3.3.18-20); the Scottish Lord wishes for the help of “Him above [to] Give to our tables meat, sleep to our nights” (3.6.31). Importantly, to effect an intervention they must “wake Northumberland and warlike Siward” (3.3.32) from the prevailing static death-in-life state in which all in the play seem to be immersed. The Scots wish to effect “our country’s purge” (5.3.38), with the word “purge” adding to the sense of intercession. Key to freeing Scotland from “Devilish Macbeth” (4.3.118) is the aid and intervention of “the most pious Edward [the] holy King” (4.1.27-30) who has such grace that he may, like a supplicating saint, cleanse or “purge” “suffering country” of Scotland of demonic Macbeth. Scotland is “possessed” by Macbeth in two senses of the word: first that as King he owns the land, and second that as the country is in the control of a usurping devilish hell-hound King and his fiend-like Queen, Scotland is possessed by devils. The English monarch here operates in the realm of the miraculous and is able to perform a kind of exorcism to drive out devils: the hellhound Macbeth and his “fiendlike queen.” The driving out of the demonic was precisely how relics operated. Of course Edward the Confessor *is* a saint and, importantly, the patron saint of Kings. Edward and the angelic forces that come to free Scotland operate as an intercessory force to free the Scottish souls trapped in their waking grave / hell. Edward has acted in an

intercessory fashion earlier in the play when we hear how he intervenes with his prayers and laying on of charms to cure the sick of “the evil” and he now does this on a national scale. It is in the heavenly intervention of the English King that it is possible to see most clearly the connection in the play between the cult of bloody napkins, those thaumaturgical wonders, and the ability of monarchs to perform miracles. Just as the blood of Catholic martyrs is held up by counter-reformers as proof of their communion with God, Edward’s ability to “solicit heaven” (4.3.150) is staged in the play as a virtue that is more aligned with the monarch than the church, either Catholic or Protestant. We can also see the slippage, or borrowing, of the kind of thaumaturgical rhetoric utilized by reports of James’ “heavenly” and “miraculous” intervention in the discovery of the gunpowder plot. Edward is said to have a “heavenly gift of prophecy” (4.3.158)—surely the opposite of the “juggling fiends” (5.8.19) ability to see the coming on of time—and the power of relics, prophecy, laying on of tokens with holy prayers and ability to solicit “Him above” (3.6.32) all operate under the blessing of rightful monarch. In *Macbeth* the sacred blood of the monarch operates as thaumaturgical wonder and Edward the Confessor’s power to effect miracles is heralded as having much more to do with his status as a monarch, that he passes down the to succeeding royalty. King Edwards’ healing touch is not channelled through the Church but passed down through the King’s sacred blood. Edwards’ miracles are removed from the medieval Catholic tradition of healing with prayers and tokens and aligned with another doctrine held dear by James I, the divine right of Kings.

VII- Banquo

The miraculous power of Kings, the supernatural, the heavenly gift of prophecy, and the return of sacred blood all converge when Banquo comes back from the grave. It is fitting that Banquo is preceded by a spot of his blood. Macbeth is seeped in blood by the end of the play but the blood on the face of Banquo's murderer marks the turn toward Macbeth's downfall and looks forward to the damned spot that will haunt Lady Macbeth. Macbeth is about to "sit in the midst" (3.4.10) of the banquet when he notices the Murder:

MACBETH There's blood upon thy face.

MURDERER 'Tis Banquo's, then.

MACBETH 'Tis better thee without than he within.

(3.4.12-14)

Banquo's blood is sacred because it "shall get Kings" (1.3.67) and it is Banquo's blood that runs in the veins of that long line of Kings stretching all the way to James I, and like Duncan's blood, the blood of Banquo is not easily removed. As the ghost of Banquo makes his entrance unseen by Macbeth, "*Enter the ghost, and sits in Macbeth's place.*" (SD 3.4.38), and symbolically takes the place of the King at the table, the audience hears Macbeth's ironic toast: "Sweet remembrancer!" (3.4.38). A "remembrancer" was the title of certain officials of the court who were collectors of the sovereign's debts.⁸⁸ Banquo returns as a "remembrancer" to claim the debt Macbeth owes to the rightful sovereign and push him from his stool and Macbeth acknowledges that "blood will have blood" (3.5.124). The blood on the murder's faces operates as a kind of charm to bring

⁸⁸ Elizabeth I had a "Treasurerers Remembrancer" and James I had such an official called the "Kings remembrancer" (*OED*).

Banquo from the dead and Banquo's return marks the beginning of the balancing of the bloody business.

Banquo's return from the grave fits within the play's dissolution of eschatological space and the dramatization of a world where last things are now present things. Like the haunting of King Hamlet who appears to his son as a "dead corpse" (*Hamlet* 1.4.47-52) burst out of his cerements, Banquo returns to Macbeth as a material presence. Macbeth's reaction to the appearance of his murdered friend is horror over graves that "send / Those that we bury back" (3.4.71) and being stuck in a time when the dead "rise again" (3.4.81). It is the vision of Banquo as an unburied corpse, rather than an apparition of guilt, that seems most terrifying to Macbeth:

Let the earth hide thee!

Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold;

Thou hast no speculation in those eyes

Which thou dost glare with!

(3.4.94-7)

Thus, ironically, it is indeed "the graced *person* of our Banquo [who is] *present*" (3.4.42; Emphasis added) at the banquet, just as Macbeth wished. The first thing Macbeth says when he sees Banquo at the table is "which of you has done this?" (3.4.48). Macbeth asks this question because he thinks his guests, who have been bidding him sit when there is clearly no place at the table, have played a macabre joke. It seems momentarily to Macbeth that they have discovered the murder, brought the body of Banquo to the gathering, and grotesquely propped his corpse upon the stool. And it is the notion of Banquo's returning corpse that haunts Lady Macbeth: "I tell you yet again, Banquo's

buried. He cannot come out on 's grave" (5.1.50). When Macbeth murdered sleep, he also effected the dissolution of the state of sleep of the soul following death. As Ross told us, Scotland is now "our grave" and the living and the dead await a release from this form of living death, there is no release until grace is restored to the land. Macbeth acknowledges his damned state; he has given up his soul: "my eternal jewel / Given to the common enemy of man" (3.1.60-70). Just as the Old Thane of Cawdor was sentenced to "present death" Macbeth also comes to exist as a dead-man-walking. There is an exception to this suspended state of living death: "Duncan is in his grave; / After life's fitful fever he sleeps well" (3.3.35-6). Duncan sleeps well because in life and death he remains in a state of grace and, importantly, he rests not in Scotland; his body was carried to Colmekill and he is safe within "the sacred storehouse of his predecessors" (2.4.34). It is fitting that on the night of the regicide Banquo cannot sleep: "A heavy summons lies like lead upon me, / And yet I would not sleep" (2.1.6-7). Banquo, however, is now like all the other Scottish souls waiting release from the state of Scotland, which has become a literal "state" of damnation where the hereafter is here.

Ghosts typically represent unfinished business with the past but Banquo is not like the ghost of Old Hamlet, an apparition that appears to stake the claims of the past on the present. Banquo is summoned as the King's Remembrancer for a debt that must be paid but he not a figure rooted in the past; rather, he is a "root," an origin, "the father / Of many Kings" (3.1. 5-6) and he belongs to the hereafter in the sense of what is to come. The term hereafter was most commonly used at this time to indicate the future; it is only after 1600 that it is used in reference to the next life (*OED*). Banquo returns because the world he inhabits after his death is the "hereafter" that will come when Macbeth dies.

The return of Banquo in the flesh is an embodiment of what Macbeth fears most, the coming on of time, because Macbeth is haunted by the future—“Tomorrow, and tomorrow and tomorrow” (5.5.19). Gene Fendt makes the wonderful observation that “nearly every time he comes on stage Shakespeare’s words direct the actor playing Banquo to be looking either upward or out beyond the world of the stage. He lives in a world that is bigger than merely what we see” (390). Banquo is not a part of the darkness of the damned world created by the Macbeths who repeatedly call for night and darkness: “Stars hide your fires; / Let not light see my black and deep desires” (1.4.50-1); “Come, thick night” (1.5.46); “Come, sealing night” (3.3.52). Banquo is a “borrower of the night” (3.1.37); he stands in “the great hand of God” (2.3.123) and in two of the darkest moments, the night of Duncan’s murder and evening that he himself is killed, Banquo walks on stage bearing light: “*Enter Banquo, and Fleance, with a torch before him.*” (SD 2.1.0) “*Enter Banquo and Fleance, with a torch*” (SD 3.4.18). The murders make explicit the connection between Banquo and light: “a light a light [. . .] ‘tis he” (3.4.19) and they “strike out the light” (3.4.24) when they take his life. Like the Duchess of Malfi, Banquo “staines the times past / lights the times to come” (*Duchess of Malfi* 1.1.203-4), and light heralds the appearance of Banquo during these dark times because Banquo belongs to tomorrow.

Time in the play, however, keeps bringing us back to the “present” reminding us that we exist in theatrical time. When the Ghost of Banquo appears time begins to accelerate. Banquo was set upon by the murderers at sunset, (“the west yet glimmers with some streaks of day” (3.3.5)), and the Banquet began at seven. But directly after the guests depart Macbeth asks, “what is the night?” and Lady Macbeth tells him it is

“Almost at odds with morning, which is which” (3.4.125-6). Somehow it has gone from early evening to not long before sunrise. This is a reminder that not only does time constantly accelerate in the play, but that we are for the present instant existing in theatrical time.

It is rather striking that, for Macbeth, Banquo’s return from the grave seems to signal a larger problem with the dead:

Why what care I, if thou canst nod, speak too.
If charnel houses and our graves must send
Those that we bury back, our monuments
Shall be the maws of kites.

(3.4.70-73)

Editorial debate over the meaning of monuments as “maws of kites” suggests that the idea expressed here is that bodies will need to be fed to the ravens to prevent their return, as was the fate of Tamora in *Titus*.⁸⁹ The talk of charnel houses and monuments, however, might also evoke their defacement and destruction as discussed in chapter two. Macbeth then waxes nostalgic about “i’th’olden time” when,

The time has been
That, when the brains were out, the man would die,
And there an end; but now they rise again
With twenty mortal murders on their crowns,
And push us from our stools. This is more strange
Than such a murder is.

⁸⁹ See Muir, Arden (3.4.n.71-2).

(3.4.79-83)

I think the key here to Macbeth's articulation over the strange relations between the living and the dead has to do with the overall concern with time in the play. The time was when "the man would die" but with the dissolution of "last things" into "present things" Macbeth is trapped in the present.

Macbeth's recollection of "th'olden time" when the dead stayed quietly in their graves is in direct opposition to contemporary Protestant rhetoric on the appearance of spirits and animated corpses. It was in fact, according to Protestants, in "th'olde time" when all were caught up in a "popish mist," that people walked in fear of spirits; and reformers claimed that "there were farre more of these kindes of appartions and miracles seen amongst us, at such tyme as we were given unto blindness and superstition" (Archbishop Sandys qtd. in Marshall 245-6). In Protestant theology, returning spirits or animated corpses, as discussed in chapter two, were made possible by demonic interference. That the ghost in *Hamlet* may be a devil, a temptation to suicide and evil deeds is a real concern of Hamlet and his friends but Banquo's ghost is not demonic. He appears once more in the witches' pageant of Kings, but the weird sisters have nothing to do with Banquo's appearance to Macbeth. But I do not believe that we are to understand Banquo as "an air-drawn dagger" (3.4.61). When the ghost of Old Hamlet appears to Hamlet in her closet Gertrude sees "nothing at all, yet all that is I see" (*Hamlet* 3.4.133), and in *Macbeth* the guests cannot see Banquo because "nothing is but what is not" (1.3.143); what is in Macbeth's mind's eye, fears and horrible imaginings—Banquo's gory locks—are *present*. Contrary to readings of the supernatural in Shakespeare as

either Protestant or Catholic, not all perceived occurrences of the supernatural were understood in theological terms. Ludwig Lavatar explains that,

in times past men have been so often deceived with apparitions, visions and false miracles done by monks and priest, that now they take things that are true to be as utterly false. Whatsoever the cause is, it may be proved, by witness of many writers and by daily experience also, that spirits and strange sight do sometime appear, and that in very deed many strange and marvelous things do happen.

(qtd. in Jordan 161)

Lavatar's conviction that the strange and marvellous do in fact occur and that such beliefs have nothing to do with superstitious papists is in keeping with the ways in which the non-demonic supernatural, or miraculous, occurs in the play. Lady Macbeth will not accept a Banquo back from the grave because, like Gertrude, she cannot imagine a world beyond what she sees. As demonstrated by King Edward's miraculous cures and the return of Duncan's "golden blood," in the world of *Macbeth* the benevolent supernatural is aligned with the monarchy, and Banquo belongs to the succeeding royalty. Banquo returns to claim the future that is rightfully his through his sacred blood. There is a seat reserved at the table for the King and to reserve something is have it held for future use. Thus Banquo takes the "place reserved" at the table for the King because there is no hereafter for Macbeth there. As Thomas Cartelli has noted, the trope of fair and foul is central to the play and the return of Banquo and his gory locks is an instance of when what may seem foul may be read as a barometer of what is fair, and like Banquo himself, greater than Macbeth.

VIII- Present Death in the Playhouse

What is most hellish about the state of damnation created by Shakespeare in *Macbeth* is that for the length of the play—or at least once the deed is done and Duncan is murdered—the audience becomes, like Macbeth, “cabined, cribbed, confined, bound” (3.4.24) in this theatrical Hell. *Macbeth* is a world where dark imaginings are made real and it is a world where theatrical illusion takes over reality. Macbeth tells the theatrical truth of his existence when he says:

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

(5.5.24-8)

The ways in which Shakespeare imagines a state of damnation in *Macbeth* is a kind of creative collage made up of long running theological debates and cultural concerns and fears over what it means to be damned and in Hell. It is especially fitting that the displacement of eschatological space in *Macbeth* is performed within the bounds on an early modern playhouse. The term “secularization” was first coined to describe the Henrican dissolution of the monastic houses as “the conversion of an ecclesiastical or religious institution or its property to secular possession and use” (*OED*). The dissolution of the monasteries, argues John C. Sommerville, was one of the first steps towards the secularization of space in early modern England. The dissolution availed vast amounts of

land in and around London for secular use.⁹⁰ As the theatres were all built in either “the liberties” outside of London or operated within old monastic houses such as Blackfriars and Whitefriars within the city walls, the theatres were both secular and secularizing institutions. By staging plays the theatres not only secularized former religious space, they participated in the secularization of religious time. The more hysterical opponents of the playhouses were not only disgusted by the nature of the performances, they were outraged over the *time* of playing. Staged sometime between 2:00 – 5:00 in the afternoons, the plays were put on during the “tyme alsoe most usuall for Christeninges and burialls and afternoones service” (qtd. in Gurr 39). Philip Stubbs preached the theatres “doo draw the people from hearing the word of God” (qtd. in Chambers 223) and John Field exclaimed “Is it not a lamentable thing [. . .] that theaters should be full and churches be emptie?” (219). What these hotter Protestants are really objecting to is how the theatres are secularizing time: people are standing in playhouses hearing a play during the time traditionally reserved for attending church services and important religious ceremonies. In *Macbeth*, we also see a secularization of space and time when eschatological concerns associated with the afterlife and “last things” become “present things” as the play effects dissolution of eschatological time and space. Divine order in *Macbeth* is ultimately restored at the end of the play by the “grace of Grace” (5.9.38) and the intervention of the heavenly English monarch. But during the reign of Macbeth Scotland is a place of no grace, no mercy and no hereafter because the hereafter is simply here.

⁹⁰ For an account of the dissolution, secularization, and conversion of the religious houses and lands in and around London see Peter Whitfield, *London: A Life in Maps* (22-7).

CONCLUSION

“Twixt these two ways”

The goal of my doctoral research has been to show that by focussing on relationships between the living and the dead within the context of England’s long Reformation, it is possible to open up areas of these works in new and rewarding ways. I have argued that the *Henry VI* plays are a project of recovery in the way that they “exhume,” as it were, medieval war dead so that they are “present” on the early modern stage to live again in memory. Living in memory is also a concern of the ghost in *Hamlet* who, for a certain term, seems resolutely determined to remain in the playhouse, catching at consciences by making his troublesome requests for remembrance. In *Titus Andronicus*, the lusty Goth, a kind of proleptic early modern Antiquarian, indulges in a fondness for gazing on Reformation ruins, a mournful meditative process that sets the mind to imagine the dismembered ruins whole again. And in *Macbeth*, Shakespeare’s most complete portrait of evil, the dark world of the damned Macbeths extends, like Lady’s Macbeth’s dunnest smoke of Hell, outward to envelope the theatre audience as they feel the present in the instant, and the here of the theatre becomes Hell. I believe that these plays can be read as literary evidence of a wider cultural concern over relations with the dead and by extension, anxieties over how to relate to the medieval pre-Reformation past at a time when such relations were vexed. And the Shakespearean stage, with its implicit ties to the late medieval religious drama coupled with the role of re-enactment in Roman Catholic commemorative ceremonies, becomes especially

evocative of the social memory of a long established relationship between the living and the dead disrupted by religious reforms.

Areas of my doctoral research that I would especially like to continue and expand upon are traces of cartographical connections between performance, space, and time in the early modern theatre. I have suggested that, through performance, the plays sometimes create a space inhabited by the living and dead on the stage and in the playhouse that is evocative of eschatological space. My research into the broad social effects of the Protestant denial of Purgatory has touched briefly on ways in which a re-mapping of the afterlife coincides in early modern culture with an expansion of the geography of this world. This intersection of cartographical concerns over this world and the next is evident in both *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* and may be found in other dramatic works of the period. For example, Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* is explicitly concerned with mapping and in *Doctor Faustus* the main character traverses both this world and the next. I would like to research further into early modern conceptions of space at this particular cultural moment and consider the role of the relatively new space of the London playhouses in imagining geographical space. Beginning, as always, with the playworlds, I want to analyse how the plays negotiate, "plot" or map, both the space of the playhouse and the imaginations of the playgoers.

Finally, to return to the dead on the Shakespearean stage one last time, the dead return amongst the living in these plays because the return of the dead made for good theatre. *Hamlet* is revered as one of the greatest works of literature in the English language and the entire first act is dominated by a ghost. The ghost of Old Hamlet is not a stock dramatic device; he is a richly imagined, enigmatic and profoundly unsettling

figure that cannot easily be placed within this world or the next. This apparition, this thing, this dreaded sight is dead kin come to call on the living to be kind, to remember. The ghost is also, as ghosts often are, the past intruding on the present. Marching back and forth across the stage the perturbed spirit of the last King of Denmark is, like the Ghost of Andrea, “twixt two ways,” and Shakespeare, tradition has it, played the ghost.

Exit [bearing off the dead]

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journey a Talmudist, as the Gospell would terme, a going vp to Paradise: but
heathen Greek, a going downe to Hades, and Latin, descendere ad inferos.
Wherein the unlearned barbarous anger God and man, saying, that Iesus
descended to hell. and yeelde vnto ihe [sic] blasphemous Iewes by sure*

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