2020

Shakespeare's Cosmology on the Supernatural: All Is Illusion

Yiju Liao
Claremont Graduate University

Shakespeare's Cosmology on the Supernatural:
All Is Illusion

By

Yiju Liao

Claremont Graduate University

2020

Approval of the Dissertation Committee

This dissertation has been duly read, reviewed, and critiqued by the Committee listed below, which hereby approves the manuscript of Yi-Ju Liao as fulfilling the scope and quality requirements for meriting the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English.

Lori-Anne Ferrell, Chair

Claremont Graduate University

Dean, School of Arts & Humanities

David Luis-Brown

Claremont Graduate University

Associate Professor of Cultural Studies and English

Mark Eaton

Azusa Pacific University

Professor of English

Wendy Martin

Claremont Graduate University

Professor of American Literature and American Studies

Abstract

Shakespeare's Cosmology on the Supernatural:

All Is Illusion

By

Yiju Liao

Claremont Graduate University: 2020

This dissertation examines how Shakespeare approached elements of the supernatural – ghosts, madness, and witchcraft – in his plays. The aftermath of the England's break from the Catholic Church led to societal upheaval in the way early modern England viewed the supernatural. Prior to this break, Europeans interpreted the supernatural through the religious explanations provided by the Church. However, the Reformation opened the gates for scholars, physicians, and theologists to offer up non-religious explanations for supernatural phenomena. In England in particular, tropes and fears towards the supernatural were colored by the foreign threats against Queen Elizabeth I by the Catholic powers of continental Europe. I examine the topics of ghosts, witches, and madness because they represent the three main ways in which the Reformation caused society to reinterpret the supernatural. I am interested in the areas in which Shakespeare's portrayals diverged from the interpretations embraced by those in power. While the state tried to associate the supernatural with the demonic or with Catholic conspiracy, Shakespeare tried to separate religious explanations from the supernatural. Using a New Historicist approach, I look at the religious, political, and cultural background which informed Shakespeare's portrayals. I look particularly at the works of skeptical scholars who challenged the prevailing religious dogma towards supernatural phenomena. By examining at the works, epochs, and attitudes that Shakespeare drew on, we can learn why Shakespeare chose to portray

the supernatural in the way he did. Specifically, in his portrayals, he provided the minority and subalterns of his society a voice on his stage. He also warned his audience of the danger behind a belief in the power of supernatural based on political reasons. Finally, his plays demonstrate he tried to refute the religious explanations for supernatural as dangerous illusion. I believe we can gain a better understanding of the culture and history of early modern England by examining the ways in which Shakespeare interpreted ghosts, witches, and mental illness in his plays.

Dedication

To my parents, Yunyi Liao and Tsaixuan Liang, my husband, Daniel Firpo, and all my other family members, without whom this dissertation would have been completed two years earlier. Still, I love all of them. This hard work is for them as well.

Many thanks to my husband who proofread and corrected my manuscript thousands of times during these years. Without his help and support, I would not be able to complete this work.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professor Lori-Anne Ferrell. Without her expert advice, rigid discipline, and continued support, I would not be able to finish my dissertation. This dissertation is a proof that I have completed one of my goals in my lifetime.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1

Thesis

In this dissertation, I examine how ghosts, witchcraft, and madness are treated in Shakespeare's plays *Richard III*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *The Tempest*. I will discuss how Shakespeare responded to early modern society's understanding regarding the existence of ghosts, the power of witchcraft, the relationship between mental illness and exorcism, and how that understanding was colored by society's changing attitudes towards and definitions of the supernatural due to the religious and political upheaval of Reformation England. I am interested in why he chose to portray exorcism, mental illness, ghosts, and witchcraft in his plays. Was it the simple need for a visceral narrative device? Or did he have a higher motivation or intension: a humane concern for the mad, the marginalized, and the downtrodden?

I examine the belief in ghosts, witchcraft, and exorcism together because they represented the three main ways in which early modern England contemplated the supernatural through religious teachings. The concept of and belief in ghosts persisted in early modern England despite reformed Protestantism's condemnation of the idea.[1] However, the concept of and belief in witches continued to challenge and puzzle the early modern English people because of a

[1] Traditional ways of thinking still lingered in the early modern English people's minds. In Chapter 6 "You shal reade marvelous straunge things'': Ludwig Lavater and the Hauntings of the Reformation" in *Supernatural and Secular Power in Early Modern England*, Catherine Stevens summarized Peter Marshall's *Beliefs and the Dead*: "Alongside (and integrated with) Catholic constructions of the ghost, the secular power of folk beliefs, superstitions and traditions continued to influence popular understandings of the ghost in sixteenth-century England and Europe… their assumptions about apparitions often sharing more in common with 'traditional expectations' about the ghost than with Catholic demonology. Indeed, interpretations of apparitions remained inconsistent even amongst Protestant clergy, who were still in the process of 'working it out for themselves'" (144-145).

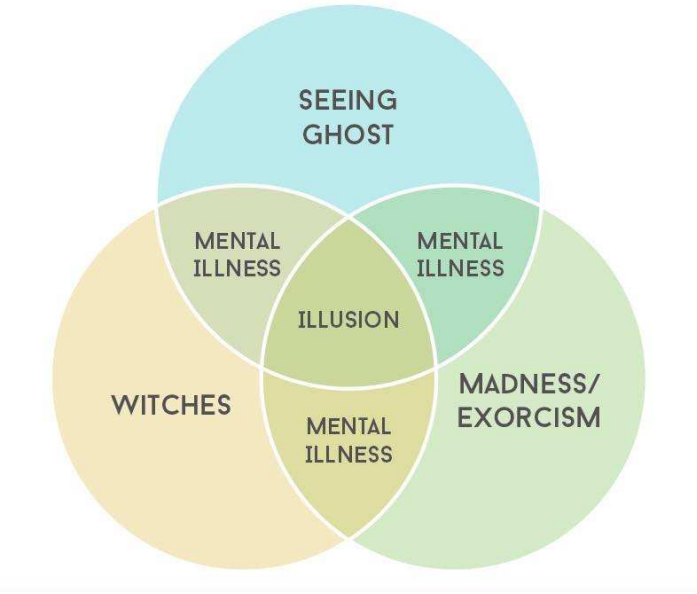
changing religious landscape.[2] Finally, while madness is a more tangible understanding for contemporary audiences, its characteristics were often interpreted by early modern audiences as supernatural (for example, demonic possession). Early modern Europeans had different explanations when they encountered people who suffered from mental illness. The teachings of modern psychology are perhaps anachronistic here, but I will still apply current methods to examine madness in early modern England to see if scholars and writers of that era had depicted conditions that modern psychologists would have diagnoses for but which were unnamed in early modern society.

These three different groupings of the supernatural served to create illusions that altered early modern English society's perceptions and behaviors. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, an illusion is "the action, or an act, of deceiving the bodily eye by false or unreal appearances, or the mental eye by false prospects, statements, etc.; delusion, befooling" (n.2†a). This particular definition of "illusion" fits with early modern England's beliefs regarding witchcraft. Illusion is also defined as "the fact or condition of being deceived or deluded by appearances, or an instance of this; a mental state involving the attribution of reality to what is unreal; a false conception or idea; a deception, delusion, fancy" (n.2b). This particular definition of "illusion" also fits with witchcraft. Finally, an illusion could also be "something that deceives or deludes by producing a false impression; a deceptive or illusive appearance, statement, belief,

[2] In early modern England, magic was utilitarian, with practices derived from folk wisdom. Whereas religion operated for the spiritual benefit of practitioners, magic was a mechanical process to achieve practical ends. Its practice continued because of this perceived practicality. Such magical practices faced increasing religious hostility from authorities because of the changing political and religious landscape. In Chapter 3 "Treasonous Catholic Magic and the 1563 Witchcraft Legislation: The English State's Response to Catholic Conjuring in the Early Years of Elizabeth I's Reign" in *Supernatural and Secular Power*, Michael Devine argues that the 1563 Witchcraft Act was passed in response to various Catholic conjuring plots against the life of Queen Elizabeth I.

etc.; in early use often spec. An unreal visual appearance, an apparition, phantom" (3). The last definition fits the phenomenon of "seeing ghosts."

From the 14th century up until the 19th century, these various definitions started ranging in use. Many early modern commoners embraced the idea of illusion. These illusions were shared, preached, or reinforced by religious or traditional folk ways of thinking – sometimes deliberately, sometimes unconsciously, sometimes politically – for myriad ends and aims, all to alter the perceptions of others or to reinforce one's own beliefs. In his plays, Shakespeare's portrayal of madness, witchcraft, and ghosts revealed to his audiences the similar logic behind how early modern society thought about and dealt with these concepts, along with his interpretations and solutions. The overlap among these three concepts are displayed in the diagram below.



According to the diagram, a person could insist that he or she saw ghosts, but the possibilities could be either that he or she suffered from mental illness or experienced an illusion. If a woman claimed herself a real witch, she could be a fraud who harnessed illusions to trick people for

various reasons, either benign or nefarious. Sometimes people claimed a woman to be a witch when it is more likely she was mentally ill. Many people in that era did not have any understanding of psychology since it did not yet exist as a science, so most commoners would not approach the mentally ill with a clinical explanation for their condition. Thus, they often considered mentally ill people to be possessed by evil spirits due to their religious teachings, and that was one of the ways for them to understand and to explain people's abnormal speech or actions. Occasionally, those in early modern society would seek help for the mentally ill through exorcism. Demonic possession was an illusion that had scriptural warrant and was readily believed to be true by people of the period. What all three concepts share is the way in which they created illusions that altered society's beliefs and behaviors. What they also share is the way society's views about them changed dramatically over the course of Shakespeare's life as part of the great secularization that started with the Protestant Reformation and Henry VIII's break from Rome. Though Shakespeare's contemporary scholars – like Reginald Scot, Timothy Bright, and Samuel Harsnett – often studied the three groupings separately, Shakespeare expertly exploited the shared nature of early modern understandings of these supernatural phenomena, and used his works to reveal the truth behind the illusions while presenting the danger in believing in them.

The act of going to the theater to watch a play brought excitement and entertainment to early modern English audiences. The nature of the theater itself is the representation of illusion. As a playwright, Shakespeare's profession was the conjuror of illusions with which to enchant and entertain his audiences. Most of his audience members who enjoyed these illusions were also enthrall to the illusions because different religious teachings or traditional ways of thinking instilled into the audience' minds the idea that these were dangerous concepts to dwell upon, since the Church of England expected them to enjoy plays through a Protestant lens. While many

early modern people were reluctant to stop believing in Catholic doctrines, societal changes compelled them to accept new concepts from Protestantism and jettison old concepts like Purgatory due to the Reformation in England. Whether the early modern people meant to or not, Protestant religious strictures and shifts furthered the illusions of ghosts, witchcraft, and mad people. Shakespeare did not embrace those illusions entirely but insisted on shining a non-religious light upon them. His works give the impression he was a believer in rationalism or skepticism, who possessed humane concern for those marginalized by such illusions, and who used portrayals of the supernatural to provide his interpretation about the supernatural.

Shakespeare's portrayal of ghosts, witchcraft, and madness was demonstrative of the perils of early modern society's overzealous belief in the supernatural. In *Shakespeare, Medicine and Psychiatry: An Historical Study in Criticism and Interpretation*, Irving Iskowitz Edgar commented that "In Shakespeare's England, along with a beginning science and a few mild dissenting voices, the supernatural still had a dominant place. To doubt supernatural causation was to doubt the Bible, the Church and the best medical authority[3] of the day" (119). It is never stated if the weird sisters of *Macbeth* are witches with real power or they are simply frauds, yet Macbeth fulfills their prophesy because he believes (or prefers to believe) they are: It is Macbeth's enchantment by the illusion of witchcraft that ultimately leads to his death. Furthermore, one could argue the witches purposefully played upon Macbeth's belief to guide him towards his destruction. It is Hamlet's enchantment by the illusion of the ghost and purgatory, despite his uncertainty of their reality and the existence of purgatory, that leads to his demise. In *The Comedy of Errors,* belief in demonic possession and exorcism create an illusion

[3] Edgar also stressed that "Sir Thomas Browne, a Shakespeare contemporary, holder of degree from numerous universities, famous physician author of *The Religio Medici* helped greatly the continued hold of the belief in witchcraft upon the mindof man in Elizabethan England" (119).

that leads to an innocent person being unjustly confined and subjected to the "cures" of a conjurer. In *The Tempest*, Prospero indulged himself in the study of magic; by neglecting his duties as Duke of Milan, he gave his brother an opening to usurp him. Shakespeare created illusions to entertain and please his audience, whereas his plays subtly warned audiences of the perils and consequences of indulging themselves with dangerous illusions; otherwise, they might experience grave consequences or invite injustice upon the marginalized.

Even the portrayal of such ghosts, witches, and madness in that era was itself a subversive act. During the reign of Elizabeth I, after the introduction of the Thirty-Nine Articles removed purgatory from the Church of England's dogma, the mere depiction of ghosts on stage – in the works of Shakespeare and other poets and playwrights such as Robert Garnier's *Cornelie* (1573), Christopher Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* (1592), and Thomas Kyd's *Cornelia* (1594) – could create social anxiety. When Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* was first performed in 1592, some audience members were terrified at the scenes depicting ghosts and demons on stage, believing their mere depiction could summon actual devils. William Prynne, a prominent Puritan, recalled such a dreadful memory and demonstrated such deep-rooted beliefs in his *Histriomastix: The Player's Scourge, or Actor's Tragedy*:

> …together with the visible apparition of the Devil on the Stage at the Belsavage Play-house, in Queene Elizabeth dayes, (to the great amazement both of the Actors and Spectators) whiles they were there prophanely playing the History of Faustus (the truth of which I have heard from many now alive, who well remember it,) there being some distracted with that fearefull sight. (Act 6, Scene 19, p556)

Audiences had such a strong reaction to the representations of devils on stage that stories persisted of actual devils joining the actors depicting them (Chambers 424). They were terrified

by the sight even though they knew it was merely an illusion. They could not desist their anxiety because they believed that mere illusion could conjure reality. The illusion was not real, whereas the audience's real fear and anxiety were part of a subversive dynamic.

This societal anxiety concerning the supernatural was a rich vein for Shakespeare to mine for content with which to shock and captivate his audiences. I am interested in his reasons for using such concepts as a narrative device, and in such a way that highlighted the danger behind belief in the supernatural. Was the portrayal of madness a narrative device to stir the audience' imagination? Was the portrayal of ghosts an acknowledgment of those who didn't lean towards Protestant doctrine? Was the depiction of the supernatural Shakespeare's way of encouraging his audience to think outside their religious apprehensions? Were his depictures motivated by humane concerns for the mad and the marginalized? These are the questions I will explore in this dissertation.

I draw upon the scholarship produced by researchers before me but differ from their works by focusing on ghosts, witches, and madness as three parts of an inter-related whole. Scholars of the 20th and 21st centuries, including Per Sivefors, Martin Puhvel, David Willbern, Miriam Joseph, Lindsey Scott, Henri Bergson, Peter Marshall, Stephen Greenblatt, and Darren Oldridge, focused on the subject of ghosts. Most of them analyzed the formation of believing in or discarding the existence of ghosts through cultural, historical, and religious perspectives from the middle ages till the early modern era in Europe or England. Witchcraft was also a popular topic among contemporary scholars: Keith Thomas, Alan Macfarlane, Marina Favila, Gabriele Bernhard Jackson, Silvia Federici, Pia Brinzeu, Michelle D. Brock, again, Stephen Greenblatt, and Peter Elmer[4]. They provided a great deal of historical background and critical analysis about

[4] Peter Elmer's Witchcraft, *Witch-Hunting, and Politics in Early Modern England.*

this problematic issue from a variety of perspectives (e.g. gender, religion, psychology etc.). Also, many scholars have studied a seemingly newer subject: madness and mental illness. In fact, although mental illness has existed for as long as human beings have existed, humans have labeled it with different terms and concepts throughout the centuries. Not until recently did psychologists' study it as a pathological subject. Scholars explained how a pathological illness was interpreted-in the middle ages and the early modern era-to be mysterious and supernatural. Some of them – including Carol Thomas Neely, Ivo Kamps, Duncan Skalkeld, Elanine Showalter, Alison Findlay, Hilaire Kallendorf, Joost Daalder, Maria Isabel Barbudo, and Will Tosh – tended to link this subject with Shakespeare's plays as well. Most of the above scholars paid attention to one single subject; some of them might have invested a great deal of study on two of them. However, I will approach these three concepts as archetypes of the three ways in which early modern society contemplated the supernatural by examining Shakespeare's portrayal of supernatural concepts that persisted both despite and because of the Church's teaching, and the natural pathologies of mental illness that had been ascribed to supernatural. Whereas other scholars have examined Shakespeare's use of ghosts, witchcraft, and madness individually, my work will be significant to the field of Shakespeare Studies because it examines Shakespeare's use of all three tropes, the connections among the three, and how his use of them elucidates his more humane notions about madness, the marginalized, and the downtrodden, compared to his contemporaries. I argue that Shakespeare tried to give these ignored people a voice, and that Shakespeare used the unique medium of the stage to push the boundaries of thought in his era.

In early modern times, some physicians and other theorists took a secular approach to these supernatural concepts and exhorted people to seek help or assistance through secular means. But their scholarship was aimed almost entirely at fellow scholars and did not have a

large audience outside their specific field. For example, Reginald Scot wrote *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, in which he sharply scolded and refuted superstitious sensationalist works like Jean Bodin's *De la demonomania des sorciers (Of the Demon-mania of the Sorcerers)*. Ludwig Lavater's *Of Ghostes and Spirites Walking by Nyght* sought "to locate the ghost within a Protestant framework that discounts and excludes conflicting accounts or interpretations" (Stevens 141). Timothy Bright's *A Treatise of Melancholie* sought to provide physical cures to ailments that were long thought to be entirely spiritual. Shakespeare used a secular reasoning similar to these skeptical thinkers of his era to explore and portray ghosts, witches, and madness. Through the medium of the stage, he explored the possibility of non-religious solutions to these concepts existing outside the explanations offered by the era's religious dogma, a sort of humane admonishment against uncritical acceptance of certain dangerous illusions.

My dissertation examines the following questions: First, how was Shakespeare able to portray witches, ghosts, and madness in his plays, and push the boundaries of dogmatic thought, and to what extent were these portrayals informed by secular scholars like Bright, Scot, and Lavater? Second, what were his motivations for these portrayals? I want to explore what cultural and historical events motivated him to stage such portrayals of these concepts: Was he just following the popular trends of the time? Was he simply attempting to appeal to a viewing audience that encompassed all classes? Was he simply using a narrative device that would produce a visceral reaction within his audience? Or was he an empathetic writer who consciously used the stage to give a voice to society's outcasts and downtrodden? My concern is to find and highlight major turning points, metaphors, and narrative structures in the portrayal of madness and the supernatural in his works, and his narrative revolt against the dogmatic boundaries of his era.

My hypotheses are that (1) Shakespeare was inspired by secular scholars, and that his plays deliberately presented scientific and pathological explanations for madness and the supernatural. (2) Shakespeare was a humanist who tried to give voice to the subjugated and/or marginalized members of his society. (3) Shakespeare wanted his audience to learn the danger behind some of the illusions of the stage and in their society, and how to avoid that danger. In this dissertation, I will argue that Shakespeare tried to give these people (the mad, the melancholic, and the downtrodden) a voice, using the unique medium of the stage to both push the boundaries of contemporary thought more than like-minded thinkers of his era, and therefore influenced a wider audience. I believe we can gain a better understanding of the culture and history of early modern England by examining the varying interpretations of ghosts, witches, and mental illness in the plays of Shakespeare.

Methodology

I will use a New Historicist and Cultural Materialist approach to test these hypotheses, using close readings of key works by Shakespeare dealing with madness and the supernatural, and close examinations of historical documents and the works of other writers and thinkers (secular and otherwise) that were influential in early modern society, like Reginald Scot and Samuel Harsnett. What the historical record focuses on cannot really explain why Shakespeare wanted to portray marginalized people in his plays. I can neither speculate nor prove his motivations in creating roles for the marginalized, but I will analyze the cultural background and significance of these roles and assess the way they reflected or diverged from the norms and mores of early modern society. By portraying these roles, what dramatic and cultural effects did Shakespeare want to pursue? What were the central motifs he tried to deliver? What do his portrayals say about early modern England? By using a New Historicist methodology to analyze

paradigmatic representations and the narrative functions of madness and the supernatural in Shakespeare's plays, I explore a part of the history of their rhetoric.

By using a New Historicist method, I can find the similarities and overlaps among these different texts to practice Foucault's "discourse formation," by allowing these different writers to engage in cultural conversation. Shakespeare's plays contained many different influences ranging from scientific, pathological, political, and religious texts. Reading the lines in his plays, the reader could see the traces of what Stephen Greenblatt – borrowing a phrase from biology – calls the "circulatory system" of early modern society ("Capitalist Culture" 266). As Shakespeare presented a sort of combination of cultural and political influences, he also revealed the hierarchies of power. Who are the dominants? Who are the marginalized? What factors determine who belongs to the former and who to the latter? By using this method, Shakespeare gave voice to the marginalized and provided a new direction for audiences to see the not-so-smooth, not-so-stable, not-so-pleasant parts of their society on stage. To conduct the close readings necessary for this kind of analysis, the scope of this dissertation is limited to a few key works – as opposed to Shakespeare's entire oeuvre – that demonstrate the trajectory of Shakespeare's thinking over the course of his career. Thus, covering a range of genres and periods, my dissertation devotes chapters to *Richard III*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *The Tempest*.

The Supernatural in Early Modern England

Ghosts

In early modern England, religious power and dogma largely mandated how people interpreted the supernatural phenomena they witnessed. Spiritual mandates from the Church of England regulated how people should contemplate the existence of ghosts, the authenticity of

witchcraft, and the treatment of mad people. Prior to the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, Catholic doctrine - under Queen Mary Tudor's reign - taught that ghosts were the souls of those yet to be delivered from purgatory. However, five years after Elizabeth was crowned, all clergy in the Church of England had to adhere to the Thirty-Nine Articles of 1536.[5] Article 22 of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England harshly criticized the idea of purgatory as a Catholic invention with no grounding in scripture;[6] in this way the Church of England rejected the existence of purgatory as a papist illusion, which led to the disavowal of previously held belief regarding ghosts, thus changing the English people's understanding and beliefs regarding purgatory and ghosts.

Witchcraft

The public and juridical attention witchcraft received in England could be ascribed to different causes from mainland Europe. Before England entered the turbulent Reformation, the *Malleus Maleficarum*, a treatise on witchcraft, was published in the German city of Speyer in 1487. While the publishing of the *Malleus Maleficarum* stirred the witch hunting craze in mainland Europe,[7] early modern English people did not pay close attention at first to concepts like "witch hunting" or the concept of witchcraft as a mortal sin, and witchcraft persecutions in

[5] In *Religion and Society in Early Modern England*, the Ten Article of 1536 were adopted by Convocation during the Henrician reformation "…forasmuch as the place where they be, the name thereof, and kind of pains there, also be to us uncertain by scripture; therefore this with all other things we remit to Almighty God, unto whose mercy it is meet and convenient for us to commend them, trusting that God accepteth our prayers for them [souls], referring the rest wholly to God, to whom is known their estate and condition" (Cressy 25).

[6] "The Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardons, worshipping and adoration as well of images as of relics, and also invocation of saints, is a found thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of scripture, but rather repugnant to the word of God" (Cressy 75).

[7] The *Malleus Maleficarum,* or *Hammer of Witches* published in 1487, is one of the best known and arguably the most important treatise on witchcraft. Due to its publication, "its appearance did much to spur on and sustain some two centuries of witch-hunting hysteria in Europe… The *Malleus* went through 28 editions between 1486 and 1600 and was accepted by Roman Catholics and Protestants alike as an authoritative source of information concerning Satanism and as a guide to Christian defense" ("Malleus").

England were relatively infrequent. They did not recognize the practice of witchcraft as a matter of great concern until early in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The change in societal attitude could be attributed to the Catholic and Spanish plots against the life of Queen Elizabeth, eventually leading to the passing of statutes detailing harsh penalties for crimes related to conjuration, sorcery, and witchcraft. While it had little to no effect on the English commoners' day-to-day life, the motivation behind the enactment of these laws reflected a societal attitude change due to the assassination plots, and these laws themselves further changed the attitudes of the early modern English people: "The 1563 Act against witchcraft…was established during the tense and difficult years when a Catholic regime gave way to a Protestant one, a time when Elizabeth and her supporters were understandably anxious about any signs of conspiracy against her" (Willis 118). Elizabeth and her court were more concerned with her security in general, rather than with witchcraft in particular. Due to political stability and Queen Elizabeth I's safety, English authorities sought to refuse its enemies from potentially using witchcraft as a tool to damage and create political instability. One of her closest advisors, William Cecil, used the illusion of fighting conjurors to enact an anti-Catholic regime**.** However, with these anti-witchcraft treatises coded into law, two of the most powerful authorities -- the Anglican church and the English government -- could judge the authenticity of a witch and then sentence the accused.

Madness

Spiritual mandates from religious authorities also colored how early modern English society contemplated mental illness. Europeans did not consider mental illness pathological; on the contrary, they ascribed the unusual or abnormal behaviors of the mentally infirm to

possession by evil spirits.[8] In "Being Mad in Early Modern England," Aleksandar Dimitrijevic pointed out that "[i]n practically all the earliest documents that have been preserved, mental disorders are described as possession" (1). Therefore, the religious authority would treat the mentally ill by attempting to exorcise the supposed devils from their bodies or confining them when the devils refused to leave. In other words, the spiritual mandates of the church took precedence over any scientific, medical, or diagnostic treatments. Different religious sects might have disagreed on some issues (for example, Roman Catholics believed in ghosts and purgatory, but the Church of England did not), but in all cases, religious teachings overruled medical experts in early modern England.

The Changing Religious Landscape of Shakespeare's England

While the government passed statutes against conjuring, sorcery, and witchcraft, and the religious powers sought to remove the existence of any supernatural phenomena outside divine providence, Shakespeare did not completely follow the edicts of contemporary religious disciplines to create his characters and plots when supernatural themes appeared in his plays. Oftentimes, the readers could hear the voice of the minority, the disempowered, or the marginalized, who were mentally ill or who possessed traits associated with poor and elderly women in his plays. Shakespeare composed his plays during the late Tudor and the early Stuart reigns, a time of tremendous religious upheaval, and in an England still coming to grips with its break from Rome. In the decades before his birth, English monarchs changed the kingdom's official state-sanctioned religious designation three times: from the Church of England to the Roman Catholic Church and back again. Queen Elizabeth was at odds with both the Roman

[8] Gregory Zilboorg and George William Henry's *A History of Medical Psychology* (130-132); Basil Fulford Lowther Clarke's *Mental disorder in earlier Britain: exploratory studies* (270-272); and Faith Wallis's *Medieval Medicine: A Reader. Vol. 15* (57).

Catholic Church, which excommunicated her for heresy, and with Protestants, many of whom sought to reject her authority as head of the Church. The Church of England was the state religion of England throughout, and so the first few decades of Shakespeare's life were marked by numerous Catholic plots to depose Queen Elizabeth I[9] – who as monarch was both head of state, and supreme head of the Church of England – in the cause of the reconversion of England. By the end of her reign, Elizabeth's attitude had become more moderate and pragmatic towards the religious sectarian disputes of the era; therefore, Shakespeare might have had more leeway to openly investigate and present controversial issues on stage for the audience to contemplate.

The last three decades of Shakespeare's life saw the accession of King James I, who was personally obsessed with the threat of witchcraft.[10] King James I raised the awareness of the threat of witchcraft among his new subjects before he ascended to the throne and afterwards enforced this obsession through Act—1604's *An Act against Conjuration, Witchcraft and dealing with evil and wicked spirits* ("The Statutes Project" 1 Ja. I c. 12). Unlike Queen Elizabeth I's pragmatic 1563 Act – *An Act Against Conjurations, Enchantments and Witchcrafts* ("The Statutes Project" 5 Eliz. I c. 16) – which sought to prevent witchcraft from potentially

[9] In 1561, a group of Essex Catholics led by Francis Cox were caught celebrating mass. It was believed they were conspiring against Queen Elizabeth I. In 1571, Roberto Ridolfi plotted to assassinate the Queen and replace her with the Catholic Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots. In 1578, a group of Catholics were suspected to have used several waxen images in a conjuring plot against the Queen. And in October 1583, John Somerville, a Catholic gentleman, plotted to fire a gun at Elizabeth. During Somerville's interrogation, officials found out and arrested Sir Francis Throckmorton in November for conspiring against Queen Elizabeth I's life and trying to put Mary Stuart on the throne. In 1586, Mary Stuart again was involved in a plot against Queen Elizabeth I's life – the Babington Plot – for which she was finally executed.

[10] In "Treasonous Catholic Magic and the 1563 Witchcraft Legislation: The English State's Response to Catholic Conjuring in the Early Years of Elizabeth I's Reign," *Supernatural and Secular Power in Early Modern England*, Michael Devine claimed "In 1604 it was replaced with another much harsher witchcraft act by King James VI of Scotland and I of England, who had his own particular interest in witchcraft and worries about Catholicism" (Devine 91). Meanwhile, in "King James I and the Burning of Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft*: the invention of a Tradition," King James VI and I "intensely disliked Scot's *Discoverie*. In the Preface to the Reader in his *Daemonologie*, first published in Scotland in 1597 and in England in 1603, James singled out Scot along with the German physician Johann Weyer as two of the chief instigators of scepticism about witchcraft" (Almond, *England's First Demonologist* 210).

being used as a treacherous – but political – tool, King James VI of Scotland truly believed the power of witchcraft could be used as an evil means to harm people's lives and/or well-being. Many of King James's future subjects also learned of his beliefs before he became king of England, and his presence and participation in witchcraft trials elevated the impression of the danger of witchcraft's power in people's minds. In 1591, James Carmichael wrote and published a pamphlet titled "News from Scotland-declaring the damnable life and death of Dr. Flan, a notable sorcerer," describing the North Berwick witch trials in Scotland at which King James VI was present (Blakeway 547). In 1597 in Scotland and in 1603 in England, King James VI published *Daemonologie* to condemn witchcraft's wrongdoings and attack skeptical scholars like Scot and Johann Weyer for denying the existence and dangers of witchcraft. As a royal leader, King James VI's active and public participation in the witchcraft trials and his publication of anti-witchcraft scholarship likely enhanced the belief in the power of witchcraft among his subjects during that era.

Radical Thinkers of Early Modern England

Many writers of this era – like Reginald Scot and Samuel Harsnett – explicitly rejected canonical explanations when examining supernatural topics. For example, Reginald Scot, whatever his political intentions, encouraged people in *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* to think that phenomena or spectacles they attributed to witchcraft could simply be mere frauds or gimmicks, easily explained via scientific means. In Book III, chapter XVII of *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, Scot also suggested that certain illusions related to witchcraft were caused by the influence of "melancholie" (which we'd today refer to as "depression"). Scot consulted with two physicians about how these suspected witches suffered from "melancholike humor" and saw illusions due to mental disturbance. Or, Scot supposed witchcraft was just a fraud propagated by charlatans.

Others theorized that so-called witches were just poor mad women who did not actually possess magical power to cast any spells or practice witchcraft[11] (Scot, B III Ch. XI). Samuel Harsnett, who later was ordained to be Archbishop of York in 1629, also presented his skeptical attitude towards demons and witchcraft in *A Discovery of the Fraudulent Practises of John Darrel*. Other thinkers, such as Philip Barrough, Timothy Bright, and Johann Weyer,[12] framed madness as a pathological issue rather than a demonic one. They suggested that those accused of witchcraft were merely mad women acting abnormally. For example, in Timothy Bright's *Treatise on Melancholy* (1586), Bright[13] spent all but one chapter discussing the material self rather than the spiritual self – in effect, he was demystifying madness. Within a Christian dispensation, Bright extended the domain of the material and "refigures spiritual fallenness as a ubiquitous curable bodily disease" (Neely, *Distracted Subjects* 16). Medical writings like Bright's *Treatise on Melancholy* (1586) helped Shakespeare gain a better understanding of other scholarship regarding the causes of melancholy and madness, as well as their treatment.[14] Each of these experts, according to their different professions and training, took differing views from the religious authority to explore topics of witches, ghosts, and madness, and their works influenced

[11] In the chapter "The strange and divers effects of melancholie, and how the same humor abounding in witches, or rather old women, filleth them full or mervellous imaginations, and that their confessions are not to be credited" (Scot, B II, Ch. XI).

[12] Many modern psychiatrists celebrated Weyer's argument and one of the doctors wrote, in "Four Hundred Years Later: An Appreciation of Johann Weyer," that "He [Weyer] saw mental illness [in witches] where the Church and State saw criminality, and he was the first physician boldly to confront the Inquisition and deny its right to carry on in the name of Christianity" (Martin 12).

[13] In "Being Mad in Early Modern England," Dimitrijevic highlighted "Bright (1586) wrote that depression was a physiological disorder caused by bad diet, so that the first step in recovery was to avoid 'beets, cabbage, dates, olives, bread of fine unleavened flour…'" (3). In "On the Causes of Melancholy," "Shakespeare scholars have made convincing arguments about the likelihood that Shakespeare was familiar with Timothy Bright's work, paying particular attention to Hamlet. Whether Shakespeare knew the actual work is subject to surmise, but it seems quite likely that the understanding of melancholy contained in Bright's work soon gave way to an underlying theory about the affliction which is represented in Hamlet" ("On the Causes of Melancholy").

[14] Richard Loening, in *Die Hamlet – Tragödie Shakespeares* (1893) presented evidence that Shakespeare drew direct inspiration from A treatise of melancholie in depicting Hamlet's physiological melancholy (3-142). Will Tosh also examined how "medical writers such as Thomas Bright in his Treatise on Melancholy (1586) helped Shakespeare to understand the causes and treatment of melancholy and madness as his contemporaries understood the conditions" in "Shakespeare and Madness."

and informed Shakespeare's explorations of these subjects.

Shakespeare – inspired by these other radical thinkers[15] – also used skeptical logic to examine these three groupings – altogether or separately – in his plays, using the unique medium of the stage. In his plays, the audience could find all three seemingly unrelated supernatural phenomena treated as symptoms of the same problems in a way that challenged the proclamations of religious teachings. Even though the scientific or pathological studies of the era were not disseminated or advanced enough to assuage English people's concerns and uncertainty regarding "sightings" of supernatural phenomena, Shakespeare was more willing to encourage theater-goers in England to contemplate the secular explanations of such phenomena by thinkers like Timothy Bright and Reginald Scot by incorporating their ideas into his work.

Shakespeare's Audience, and The Veil of Drama

During this time, Shakespeare used the veil of drama to talk about dangerous subjects like ghosts and witchcraft. In other words, the fact that he was creating works of fiction protected him from punishment for contradicting the Church of England's creed; technically, he was not directly criticizing anyone. Indirect criticism was part of the decorum of the political climate. According to Peter Lake, Shakespeare used depictions of monarchs both historical Richard III and legendary Hamlet to stage extremely controversial topics of contemporary discussion and comment upon them (33). Rather than openly rebel against religious dogma, behind the theatrical

[15] Stephen Greenblatt pointed out the textual evidence that Shakespeare had read *Discoverie* and drew from his study of it the inspiration for characters and events in *Macbeth* and *The Comedy of Errors* (1991, "Shakespeare Bewitched"). In a long passage of *Discoverie* in which Reginald Scott listed the powers attributed to witches, he includes: "They can go in and out at awger holes, & saile in an egge shell, a cockle or muscle shell, through and under tempestuous seas." This power is mentioned by Donalbain in *Macbeth*, when he frets:

> What should be spoken here, where our fate,
> Hid in an auger-hole, may rush and seize us? (2.3.121-22)

Meanwhile, in *The Comedy of Errors,* Ephesus is said to be "full of cozenage."

veil he could make subtle, smart, and calculated decisions in his writings that allowed him to speak against social norms without being censored or punished: Shakespeare "deliberately opened these plays up to multiple readings; enabling a range of applications of the events and sentiments being acted out on stage to current concerns and realities" (Lake 58). No matter which religious confession governed the Church of England, however, it seems Shakespeare crafted narratives that challenged the expectations of his audience' religious upbringing and did not conform to decrees put forth by the religious authorities to explain or vilify any supernatural or abnormal phenomenon.

Furthermore, through the unique medium of the stage, Shakespeare not only had more leeway to depict madness and the supernatural than secular influences like Scott and Bright, he also had a wider audience. Illiterate commoners[16] who would never be able to read *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* or *Treatise on Melancholy* could still be exposed to the ideas and concepts of those texts in their seats at the theater. Jean Howard, Walter Cohen, and Andrew Gurr all comment on the societal reach of Shakespeare's works: his audience was constituted of both men and women across diverse social classes, for which theaters were meeting points (Howard 13). His plays were staged in the Theatre, the Curtain, and then the Blackfriars during wintertime and the Globe during summertime for decades. All the four theaters were famous and popular sites for early modern England's entertainment. Not only did the commoners like his plays, but Shakespeare later even became "an unofficial court dramatist" through his role as the principal playwright for the King's Men (McDonald 20). King James I appointed Shakespeare's troupe, originally called 'The Lord Chamberlain's Men,' to be under his own patronage, at which

[16] *In King Lear: Before, During, After*, Ben Crystal stated: "If you're reading the play, it's worth bearing in mind this fact: the plays were not intended to be read. It's said that 80 per cent of Shakespeare's audience couldn't read" (6).

point it was renamed ‘The King’s Men’ in 1603. Many playwrights had written scripts for the nobles or their plays were performed in front of royals, but it was not common for a playwright to be the principal writer under a king’s patronage. These plays influenced audiences, who - from all walks of life - indirectly learned and absorbed Shakespeare’s ideology and values. While the output of Reginald Scot, Timothy Bright, etc. was limited to the educated and the literate, with Shakespeare’s considerable influence and reach, the playwright was able to disseminate the ideas of experts, the scholars, and the physicians to a much larger audience by incorporating them into his plays. If we compare the audience of Shakespeare and the readers of other writers, we could reasonably assume that there was a larger audience receiving these radically skeptical, secular, and humanist messages from Shakespeare than the readers of other writers. Therefore, even though Shakespeare was certainly not the first to favor non-canonical thought over religious dogma, and even though Shakespeare and other writers were promoting a similar and reasonable explanation about madness to the public, the size of Shakespeare’s audience very likely exceeded that of other writers. Studying Shakespeare in this regard is important because few thinkers have had as a lasting and significant influence on our culture. For centuries and generations, his works have provided a common stock of references, idioms, and allusions that have become ingrained in the English cultural lexicon.

The strictures and mores of early modern society diagnosed many patients of mental illness and victims of witchhunts and exorcism through a religious lens. The marginalized suffered the consequences of the societal and religious changes brought about by the political disputes of the dominants, but Shakespeare tried to echo the feasible solutions of skeptical scholars and give the downtrodden poetic justice through the assorted representations of the downtrodden on stage to avenge the injustices of their society. Shakespeare's implicit humanist

concerns for the downtrodden: mad people who were ignored or confined by society, Catholics who still clung to the purgatorial narratives that were being erased by the Church of England, so-called witches who faced punishment for using supernatural power, or the marginalized who were denied justice in life for the misfortunes they suffered at the hands of the dominants. While Shakespeare kept his religious thoughts and views ambiguous (to this day, scholars have not succeeded in making the case for either Shakespeare's Catholicism or his Protestantism), he crafted secular, human explanations for these unusual or supernatural sightings, allowing his plays to challenge the views and judgment of the era's religious authorities.

As time went on, Shakespeare grew bolder in his depiction of these controversial concepts – ghosts, witchcraft, and madness – in *Richard III* (1592-1593), *The Comedy of Errors* (1594), *Hamlet* (1599-1601), *Macbeth* (1606), and *The Tempest* (1611). In *Richard III*, Shakespeare had apparitions appear in Richard's dream only for one short scene. The ghosts appear in Richard's dream one after the other with order of justice. Even though Shakespeare seemed to devote little time exploring the significance of the ghosts' existence, he still prepared a stage for them parading with awe, allowing the marginalized to be witnessed by the dominant; in *The Comedy of Errors*, however, Antipholus of Ephesus was arrested for demonic possession, and then an Abbess, relying upon pathological – rather than religious – logic, openly suggested the treatment of madness and forsook the practice of exorcism. In *Hamlet*, Hamlet saw and conversed with his father's apparition continuously throughout the play. *Hamlet* also probes the topic of madness as well. *Macbeth* contained all three concepts under critical consideration – witchcraft, madness, and ghosts – in the same play. *The Tempest* explores the sorcery practiced by Prospero and features a "tricksy spirit," Ariel. I will demonstrate that by depicting and exploring these contentious topics, Shakespeare invited his audience to take an empathetic

viewpoint with a concern for the downtrodden as well as a scientific or pathological judgment regarding these supernatural issues.

New Historicism

My analysis builds on the previous analyses of New Historicist scholars. Generations ago, scholars like E. M. W. Tillyard (1889-1962) and John Dover Wilson (1881-1969) studied early modern society by using the historical texts produced and disseminated during that era (Shaughnessy 308).[17] These "old historicists" assumed that Shakespeare and other writers of his era simply accepted the ideals of Tudor England. But through more recent scholarship by the pioneering work of Michel Foucault, a considerable new understanding has been gleamed by examining a society's literature and art, making observations, and drawing conclusions about the society and culture that produced such works (Shaughnessy 315). Stephen Greenblatt, Louis Adrian Montrose, Jonathan Dollimore, and others have used this methodology to dramatically improve our understanding of early modern English society. Per Stephen Greenblatt, one of the most prominent New Historicists, this earlier historicism tended to be "concerned with discovering a single political vision, usually identical to that said to be held by the entire literate class or indeed the entire population" (*The Power of Forms* 5). Greenblatt analyzed several societies and eras by extrapolating general conclusions from texts which he believed have the power change culture, people, and ultimately, history. In Greenblatt's analysis, Shakespeare's

[17] "If [Tillyard's] version of historicism encourages us to read Shakespeare's texts as transparent articulations of the 'rulling ideas' of his age, it not only presumes a stable and ordered relationship between literary language, theatrical representation and orthodox thought, but also, in keeping with his theme, tames the texts' incipient unruliness and multiplicity" (Shaughnessy 308). In his reading, Shakespeare's work is contextualized by "the Golden Age brought in by the Tudors," and is mindful of "the principle of order behind all the terrible manifestations of disorder" that predated Tudor reign (Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* 25). New Historicists and Cultural Materialists claimed the old historicists' error was to falsely "unify history and social process in the name of 'the collective mind of the people.' And such a perspective would construe the 'didactic passages' referred to by Tillyard in quite different terms: … The didactic stress on order was in part an anxious reaction to emergent and (in)-subordinate social forces which were perceived as threatening" (Dollimore, *Political Shakespeare* 4-5).

plays were an influential and educational instrument in his society and culture because they influenced his audience, who indirectly learned and absorbed Shakespeare's ideology and values (Greenblatt, *The Greenblatt Reader* 122-123). This influential and educational instrument might have been overlooked by the historical record left by the dominants of early modern England.

The central idea behind New Historicism is that the literature and art of an era can reveal as much or more about the society that produced it as the historical texts produced by the society's dominant powers. Usually the dominant figures in society owned the power to edit history. In "The Subject and Power," Foucault claimed social structures distributed power by dictating what kinds of knowledge were acceptable to have (781). By controlling how knowledge was distributed, the dominants controlled who was empowered or disempowered in society. For instance, the Church of England removed power from Catholics by abolishing purgatory and its related rituals. New historicists like Greenblatt and Carol Thomas Neely, however, believed that these elites could have neglected or dismissed the acts and words of the subjugated, powerless, or marginalized groups. New historicist scholars wanted instead to reveal the untold or lost parts of history by understanding the literary and cultural context of otherwise-marginalized narratives in art and literature. As power necessitates and actively produces subversion, art and literature are more apt to give voice to the powerless than the historical record produced by the societal elites (Stephen Greenblatt, *The Greenblatt Reader* 127). The New Historicists started their quest by challenging and resisting the theory of traditional historicism.

Central to the idea of New Historicism is the reciprocal discourse of history and literature. Such discourses determine the pervasiveness of a certain kind of thinking, how certain strains of thought come to exist, and which types of knowledge are forbidden. History conditions what literature can say. By that same token, discourse and art maintain an agency and a capacity

to circulate knowledge, and thus, power. Rather than seeing history as a series of objective and verifiable facts, New Historicists see history also as a form of discourse, "written as a narrative and as such, already an interpretation of so-called facts" (Krieger 16). These interpretations have their own narrative structures and reasons for being written the way they are. Thus, to analyze a text then, it is no longer enough to reduce it to its historical (and thus, ideological) inputs; one must seek out various contemporary texts and relate them to each other through common metaphors and narrative structures. This is what Foucault refers to by "discourse formations." Having determined the historical and cultural context of a text to identify a common discourse formation, one must also uncover the social, political, and religious forces that created such formations in that era, revealing "certain hierarchies of power within the social fabric of that moment, hierarchies … that create its discourse" (Krieger 18). Discourse is constituted of multiple, variable perspectives in the same society, and its reciprocity creates a flow of power throughout that society, like blood circulating in a human being.

In "Two Faces of an Old Argument: Historicism vs. Formalism in American Criticism," Murray Krieger pointed out the interrelationship between Foucault and Greenblatt, noting how discourse formed what Greenblatt called a 'circulatory system' (18). The New Historicist movement allows these domains – history, literature and art – to read each other, with discourse flowing from one to the other and back, in what Stephen Greenblatt called "circulation" ("Towards" 9). New Historicism seeks to remove the distinction between the political and the poetic – between the cultural texts that are historical, political, or social, from those that are not. Discourse flows between the aesthetic and the real, where the aesthetic is not an alternative realm, "but a way of intensifying the single realm we all inhabit" ("Capitalist" 264). Artistic and

literary products, flowing across all levels of society, circulate the narratives of a society's culture, politics, and history through time and space.

Shakespeare demonstrated the fluidity of power relations in his plays. For example, in early modern England, especially in the Elizabethan era, England grew and accumulated much power between 1592 (*Richard III*) and 1611 (*The Tempest*). At the same time, Shakespeare often portrayed and depicted the dynamics between the powerful and the deposed/marginalized in his plays. In *Richard III*, Richard was at first considered to be marginalized due to his physical deformity. His ambition drove him to usurp the throne through violent, brutal conspiracy; however, he attained the throne by murdering those with prior claims. The rise and decline of power are fluid in the play, with Richard – at various times – both marginalized and marginalizing. In reality, Richard's victims stayed dead. However, on stage, as Richard faced a battle he would lose, all that were murdered by or because of him returned and appeared to him as ghosts. The marginalized ones, the ghosts, received a chance from Shakespeare to have their voices heard and be a part of the culture of early modern England.

In the decades since Stephen Greenblatt introduced New Historicism in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* in 1980, other literary historicists have followed his footsteps, such as Jonathan Goldberg with *James I and the Politics of Literature* in 1983 and Leonard Tennenhouse with *Power on Display* in 1986. Around this time, a similar form of literary criticism – cultural materialism – was introduced by Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield in *Radical Tragedy* (1984) and *Political Shakespeare* (1985). Cultural materialism is similar to new historicism in that both approaches assume "we cannot separate literature and art from other kinds of social practice" and seek a radical contextualizing of literature (Williams, *Problems* 44). Cultural materialism however, differs from New Historicism in that it places a greater focus on how

dominant powers use cultural artifacts, such as art, plays, or literature, to reinforce certain values and propagate ideology, focusing on the ideological means through which dominant powers self-perpetuate, the subversion of that order, and the containment of those subversive pressures (Dollimore, *Political Shakespeare* 10). While the dominants tried to perpetuate their power and status in their society, the marginalized ones resort to subversion to try and topple the institutions. Indeed, subversion and containment coexisted in Shakespeare's plays. In *Richard III*, the play's first subversive act occurs when Richard murders other heirs ahead of his lineage to become the dominant one; the appearance of the ghosts in his dream is the play's second subversive act. In *Hamlet*, the first subversive act occurs when Claudius murders Old Hamlet; Hamlet's hesitant revenge toward Claudius is the second subversion. Shakespeare resolved all the subversive actions in his plays by arranging for ideal containment. Duncan versus Macbeth, and Macbeth versus Malcolm; Antonio versus Prospero, and Prospero versus Caliban. Shakespeare's containment did not take the dominants' perspective because it seems he cared more about the majority, i.e. the common theater-going folks who made up his audience. Despite whatever misfortune befell the nobles or dominants in his plays, most common characters on stage experienced a peaceful ending. The commoners in the audience would see common characters like themselves benefit from a peaceful resolution. Apparently, Shakespeare used containment to bring about a peaceful resolution to the audience, choosing to instead contain the subversive acts of the dominants. Furthermore, by associating the containment with the supernatural – for example, Richard's downfall fulfilled Queen Margaret's premonitions; or the way in which the ghosts of Richard's victims crying out for vengeance and justice denied in life – Shakespeare gave the containment an air of providential endorsement (Lake 157). Cultural materialism follows the tradition of thinkers like Antonio Gramsci, who believed that the

dominants in society propagate their norms and values through religion, popular culture, and folklore, to such an extent that the rest of society comes to identify those norms and values as their very own. Those values would become normal, natural, or common sense.

New historicism and cultural materialism eventually became dominant forms of literary criticism in Shakespeare studies.[18] They would in turn, however, be subjected to criticism and scrutiny. Scholars like Graham Bradshaw and Richard Levin criticized new historicists of homogenizing "the thought, and hence the literature, of what was really a very heterogeneous society" (Levin 82). Others criticized new historicists for seeing literary works not as the autonomous creation of an individual author, but as the social product of the larger culture the author belonged to: "the freely self-creating and world-creating Individual of so-called bourgeois humanism has, for quite some time, been defunct in the texts of academic theory" (Montrose 13). In the decades since their introduction, new historicists and cultural materialists like Greenblatt, Sinfield, and Catherine Belsey updated and refined their analyses in response to these criticisms. For my study, I use this updated methodology, examining Shakespeare's portrayals of ghosts, witchcraft, and madness as the product of his individual beliefs and accrued knowledge, as well as of the cultural and political contexts in which he lived.

In general, portrayals of ghosts, witches, and madness do not merely denote the supernatural. Instead, as New Historicists and Cultural Materialists insist, these concepts also served as a rhetorical device, a persistent stand-in for other social and political concerns and conflicts. Fictions of madness and the supernatural belong with the allegorical master narratives

[18] In *Shakespeare and Contemporary Theory: New Historicism and Cultural Materialism*, Neema Parvini stressed that "new historicists and cultural materialists who once wrote from a marginalized position against the formalist and liberal humanist centre – and were, in turn, attacked from this centre – now find themselves in the seats of power" (82).

that reflect a "fundamental dimension about our collective thinking and our collective fantasies about history and reality" (Jameson 34). Talk of madness and the supernatural has its history, ideology, and dominant narratives that are culturally specific, even if they rely on textual predecessors and patterns.

To analyze paradigmatic representations and the narrative functions of madness and the supernatural in Shakespeare's plays, I explore a part of the history of their rhetoric. Therefore, I will attempt to illuminate the context behind his texts, as our sense of madness and the supernatural is inextricable from their cultural representations. These representations were themselves driven by the scriptures and dogmas of their culture and their era. I aim to examine the ways and contexts in which early modern culture viewed ghosts, witches, and madness, what cultural affect that rhetoric had during Shakespeare's life, why certain narratives and views remain persistent, and why ghosts, witchcraft, and madness had such prominence as symbolic representations of religious dogma and power relations in early modern England. Since literary texts mean just as much by what they leave unsaid, I will also examine Shakespeare's depictions of madness and the supernatural for what he chose to remain silent on, or what he could only speak of in euphemism.

The new historicist method works by an inductive method of taking small details found in literary text and extrapolating conclusions about the society and culture that produced that text. I will use such an inductive method. My main method will rely on close readings of Shakespeare's plays in context to his own time, as well as comparative readings to map the literary and political landscape of Shakespeare's England. This will include close readings of the literary and non-literary texts pertaining to madness and the supernatural that circulated in this era. I will situate my readings in the cultural history of these concepts and examine the cultural and religious

context in which Shakespeare and his contemporary thinkers worked. A comparative literary analysis will be done to discern how Shakespeare was interpreted in his own time, and what conversations of his era he successfully intervened in.

Shakespeare and the Subaltern

In "Can the Subaltern Speak?", Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak argued that the least powerful groups – the subaltern – were robbed of the power to speak for themselves by those with power in society. For example, male dominants[19], looking at the subaltern from the outside, portray the subaltern within the language of the dominants to collect evidence and prove their pre-existing notions, without actually experiencing the real lived-in existence of the subalterns. Without hesitation, Spivak pointed out:

> Indeed, the concrete experience that is the guarantor of the political appeal of prisoners, soldiers and schoolchildren is disclosed through the concrete experience of the intellectual, the one who diagnoses the episteme. Neither Deleuze nor Foucault seems aware that the intellectual within socialized capital, brandishing concrete experience, can help consolidate the international division of labor. (69)

Therefore, it is impossible for the subalterns to recover their own voice through the intellectual class. Moreover, as the dominants or the intellectuals could not understand the subalterns' language fully, how could they really provide voice for the subalterns? The experience presented by the intellectuals was not the legitimate evidence. Meanwhile, the intellectuals were not part of

[19] Spivak chose "Intellectuals and power: a conversation between Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze" in her article "Can the Subaltern Speak?" to prove her major argument how the dominants categorized the marginalized ones to be others in their world.

the subalterns; therefore, rather than give them voice, the intellectuals implicitly reinforced the subaltern's status as "others".

Shakespeare seemed to fall into Spivak's theory that "the others" have no voice because the dominant ones speak for them. Indeed, Shakespeare fits the category of those that Spivak considered as having no rights to speak for the subalterns because he was from the intellectual class and his country was the colonizer. This is a long-standing problem in the representation of "otherness." Spivak held high standards – the real experience and language – as limits to restrain people for having the ability to speak for the subalterns (Spivak, "Three Women's" 253). She believed people cannot speak for the subalterns if they were not part of their group or they did not know how to speak the same language.

Providing voice for the marginalized could be part of social responsibility. In reality, Spivak eliminated many paths or venues in which the subalterns could be seen, heard, and/or understood because of such high standards. This world has been hegemonic since the dawn of human history. It is true that colonial history was extremely cruel and inhuman, and many of us understand it or study it as such now because of the contributions done by previous inexperienced intellectuals. Throughout the centuries, there were many dominants who abused the subalterns; but there were also some from the dominant or intellectual class who tried to give voice for the marginalized ones. For example, in *The Tempest*, Shakespeare exposed through Prospero the ugliness of the previous dominant-turned-horrible-marginalized, who still refuses to face his own failures on the island of Caliban, the owner of the island and the son of a witch. On the contrary, Prospero calls Caliban savage or beast[20] and tends to torture the island's original

[20] In the play, Prospero, Miranda, and other characters from Milan have ever referred Caliban by using savage, monster, devil, moon-calf, beast, etc. to maliciously or unconsciously degrade him because he looks different from them. When Prospero or Miranda calls Caliban savage or beast, he or she says it with hatred because Caliban once

dominant to gain back a weak semblance of his status and self-esteem. Prospero exists to satirize the dominant power whenever it gets defeated. Shakespeare exposed this issue and he did not paint rose colors over Prospero for his class or origin. Through Caliban's crude words, the audience learns the ugliness of the colonizer who share their skin color and the same European identity.

The carnivalesque nature of the stage allowed the subalterns to gain a voice in Shakespeare's plays. In fact, not only did the subalterns – but all classes – gained space on his stage for all different types of representations. In *Rabelais and His World*, Mikhail Bakhtin identified the *carnival* as an important subtext in fiction. He defined "carnival" as a literary mode that subverts the assumptions of a society's dominants through humor, chaos, and absurdity. With the label of 'Carnivalesque,' Bakhtin compared this literary mode with pre-Lent carnivals in which people would gather in the town square and be able to say or do just about whatever they wanted without fear of being punished: "[A]ll were considered equal during carnival. Here, in the town square, a special form of free and familiar contact reigned among people who were usually divided by the barriers of caste, property, profession, and age" (Bakhtin 10). Bakhtin associated the carnival with the collectivity; attendees and participants did not just constitute a crowd but were organized in such a way that defied political or hierarchical organization: "This is why festive folk laughter presents an element of victory not only over supernatural awe, over the sacred, over death; it also means the defeat of power, of earthly kings, of the earthly upper classes, of all that oppresses and restricts" (Bakhtin 92). Because of the carnivalesque nature of the stage, the audience could exchange bodies with the subaltern and gain a glimpse into their

wants to rape Miranda. However, other characters use the derogated term to refer him that could be cultural influence during the period. In 2.2.141-144, when Trinculo sees Caliban, he mocks Caliban: "By this good light, this is a very shallow monster. I afeard of him? A very weak monster. The man I'th' moon? A most poor credulous monster! Well drawn, monster in good sooth."

lived experience. From this, characters can express their thoughts and feelings without the author interjecting his or her own personal views. Thus, Caliban could endlessly jape and snipe at Prospero. Shakespeare's stage allowed both the existence of Caliban's curses and the inadequateness of Miranda. In Act 1, Scene 2 many editors had reassigned Miranda's angry speech[21] (according to the Folio) to Prospero for two and half centuries since the *The Tempest* first debuted on stage because "it seemed to them [the editors] indecorous for a young lady to speak so frankly" ("Introduction" 135). Shakespeare's depiction of his lady character, from the upper class, speaking such indecorous words was another way to present the nature of carnivalesque. All people/characters cross the boundaries of classes or castes and express themselves. Even though at that time, many editors still wanted to cling to their own values to edit and reassign the play's speech according to traditional gender roles, Shakespeare's original Folio did not obey it. As entertainment, the early modern audience could have a chance to witness the carnivalesque in *The Tempest*, to empathize with the subaltern, and to laugh at the dominant's expense.

Organization

I will conduct a new historicist analysis of Shakespeare's portrayal of ghosts in *Richard III, Hamlet, and Macbeth*, situating my study in close readings of the texts that informed his portrayals. These included ghost stories widely told during and before his time, like Jean Gobi's *The Gast of Gy* and William of Newburgh's *Historia rerum Anglicarum*, which are representative of the pre-Reformation system of beliefs surrounding g hosts, purgatory, and the

[21] In 1.2.352-363, Miranda yells at Caliban: "Abhorred slave, / Which any print of goodness wilt not take, / Being capable of all ill; I pitied thee, / Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour / One thing or other. When thou didst not, savage, / Know thine own meaning, but wouldst gabble like / A thing most brutish, I endowed thy purposes / With words that made them known. But they vile race (Though thou didst learn) had that in't which good natures / Could not abide to be with; therefore wast thou / Deservedly confined into this rock."

purchase of suffrages and indulgences to sooth the souls of loved ones suffering in purgatorial fire. I will also situate my study in the ghost sightings described in Ludwig Lavater's *Of Ghostes and Spirites Walking by Nyght* (1569). Translated to English in 1572 (trans. Robert Harrison), *Of Ghosts and Spirites* was an attempt by the Protestant Lavater to create a definitive Protestant explanation of ghosts. There is evidence that Shakespeare's portrayal of Hamlet's ghost was informed by Lavater. In his introduction to *Of Ghosts and Spirites*, J. Dover Wilson claimed "the whole book is so germane to the ghost-scenes in Shakespeare's tragedy that there seems to me a high probability that the dramatist had read it. In any case Hamlet himself is clearly steeped in the opinions which Lavater expounded, and his attitude towards his father's spirit cannot be comprehended without taking these views into account" (p.xvii). These texts reveal how daring an act it was for Shakespeare to steep the ghost in such Catholic purgatorial imagery.

I will also apply a new historicist methodology through close readings of the texts that informed witch-hunts and skepticism towards witchcraft while I examine *Macbeth* and *Tempes*t. The early modern era saw a back-and-forth between witchhunters and skeptics. Johannes Nider's *Formicarius*, written 1436/7 and published 1475, endorsed the idea that witches and witchcraft were a danger to be taken seriously (Goodare 48). Furthermore, Heinrick Kramer's *Malleus Maleifcarium* in 1486 endorsed witch-hunting. However, Johann Weyer's *De praestigiis daemonum* in 1563 was a refutation of Kramer. Jean Bodin wrote *De la Démonomie des Sorciers* in 1580 to refute Weyer and was in turn refuted by the skeptical Reginald Scot with *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* in 1584. Subsequently, the future King James VI and I of England would in turn condemn *Discoverie* with *Daemonologie* in 1597. I will especially examine Johann Weyer's *De praestigiis daemonum* in 1563 because it was one of the principal sources for Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft*. There were some skeptical texts by thinkers like

Erasmus, Andrew Alciati, Pietro Pompanazzi, Cornelius Agrippa, and Johann Weyer, published in the period of limited witchcraft prosecutions between 1520 and 1560. In "Witchcraft and Gender in Early Modern Europe," Alison Rowlands noted an interruption in the publication of anti-witchcraft treatises and manuals during this period, in which Renaissance humanism was spread throughout Europe (450-452). Between 1520 and 1576, the *Malleus Maleficarum* was not published at all, and after the publication of Grillandus's *Tractatus de hereticis et sortilegiis* (1524), there were few anti-witchcraft treatises or manuals published until the 1570s. Levack suggested one of the reasons for this lull to be the conflict between Catholics and Protestants consumed society's attention away from large-scale witch-hunts, or that Protestant reformers needed to develop their own theories of witchcraft that did not rely on the magical or superstitious thought of Catholic demonologists. While only the literate early modern English people could bear witness to this great debate on the subject of witchhunts, the general theater-going populace could see the distillation of the skeptical viewpoint through Shakespeare's plays, and through them come to doubt the reality or peril of the three witches or the tricksy spirit, Ariel.

I will also examine how Shakespeare's depiction of madness in *Richard III*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth* was informed, implied, or portrayed by contemporary accounts and explorations of madness. In both *The Comedy of Errors* and *Hamlet*, the characters discussed the topic of madness directly. Even though Shakespeare did not outright associate mental illness with Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, according to the plot, Macbeth could have suffered from hallucinations when he believed he saw the three witches and Banquo's ghost. Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* presented meticulous methods to examine whether or not his contemporaries suffered from melancholy. In "Melancholy, Ecstasy, Phantasma: The Pathologies

of *Macbeth*," Suparna Roychoudhury tried to prove that Macbeth's discourse belonged to pathological imagination, which can be found in Richard III as well (219-220). In the last act, the doctor diagnosed Lady Macbeth as suffering from sleepwalking and announced that he possessed no cure for her. Christine Couche claimed Lady Macbeth suffered from postnatal psychosis. In "A Mind Diseased: Reading Lady Macbeth's Madness," Couche listed several clinical descriptions of madness – specifically postnatal psychosis – and how they align with Lady Macbeth's behavior (135-137). It is impossible to know if Shakespeare came across such people over the course of his life and career, but evidence suggested that postnatal psychosis effected people then at the same rate as today, across all geographical and chronological boundaries (Couche 138-139). She suggested that it is possible that even without being aware of or using the same diagnosis that we would apply to such cases today, the constant prevalence of postnatal psychosis across time and space suggests that it is possible Shakespeare had awareness from firsthand encounters with such cases, and that even if he had not, its prevalence suggests that he was likely to at least be aware of its existence (and its association with recently delivered women), influencing his depictions of madness. The way how Shakespeare presented the possible presumption of both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's unusual actions and discourse were not new or strange to early modern English audiences because they might have seen such cases of mental illness in their own daily life.

My dissertation is organized as follows: First, I discuss the religious context of early modern England, how the changing religious landscape shaped people's thoughts on ghosts. Next, I discuss the widespread society interest in madness among the early modern English populace, and the various ways in which different religious confessions approached the mad. Finally, I discuss how various Catholic plots against the life of Queen Elizabeth I and the

countermeasures against these plots shaped people's attitudes towards witchcraft. For each topic, I will examine how this religious and socio-political context – as well as the scholarly discourse surrounding this topics – informed Shakespeare's unique portrayal of madness, ghosts, and witches in his plays—specifically *Richard III*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *The Tempest*.

Chapter 2

In *Richard III* Act 5, Scene 3, several ghost characters appear in Richard's nightmare to accuse him of murder. The first ghost to enter the stage is the ghost of young Prince Edward, son to Henry VI. As he appears on stage, Early Modern England's audience would have acknowledged that he was a physical ghost character directly speaking to a human character

Ghost (*To* Richard) Let me sit heavy on thy soul tomorrow.

Think how thou stabb'st me in my prime of youth

At Tewksbury. Despair, therefore, and die! (117-119)

After the Ghost of young Prince Edward appears, the Ghosts of Henry VI, Clarence, Rivers, Grey, Vaughan, Hastings, two young princes, Lady Anne, and Buckingham appear as well. They all talk to Richard in his nightmare. This is a significant moment because Shakespeare had the ghost characters appear visibly on stage. In "Shakespeare's Ghosts," F.W. Moorman asserted that "Shakespeare goes beyond the author of the *True Tragedie*[22] [a prior Richard III drama] and substitutes dramatic action for narrative. He makes the ghosts actually appear, and places words on their lips" (193). The anonymous author of original *Richard III* presented the ghost characters through narration, which the audience would learn of through Richard's own account of the plot. By putting the ghosts on stage, making them visible, and allowing them to directly accost the man who had committed injustice against them, Shakespeare made the horrific moment more tangible and arresting to his audience. He sought not just a dramatic effect to entertain his audience, but also used the mechanism behind the ghost characters to seize their awe and attention. These ghost characters demonstrate Shakespeare's belief in seeking justice, presenting social and political tension during the Reformation, questioning the existence of purgatory, and

[22] Barron Field edited *The True Tragedie of Richard III*, published by Shakespeare Society Publications in 2007.

finally, using the appearance of ghosts to reveal the illusionary moment. The audience can choose to temporarily believe, doubt, or even mock the illusion - or discount it as a hallucination (an anachronistic examination) - but after all, an illusion is just an illusion. The ghost characters are mostly illusions - a tool to reveal and reflect on the humanity of his human characters. In this chapter, I will argue that Shakespeare provided a wide range of possibilities for his audience to interpret his ghost characters by using religious, political, or a skeptical perspective.

First, the concept of ghosts in English society continuously evolved up until and throughout the early modern era, including its appropriation by the Church in their eschatology of purgatory, the rituals and beliefs concerning ghosts and purgatory, and how the Reformation threw these rituals and beliefs into turmoil. Next, the ghost stories influenced early modern playwrights, including the purgatorial narratives that survived past the Reformation, the depictions of ghosts in the plays of Seneca, and the folkloric ghost stories of the English laity. Finally, Shakespeare used the ghost tropes from these influences, and he innovated or diverged from his predecessors and compatriots. His works represent a significant step in the evolution of early modern theater, and his depictions reveal his empathies or attitudes towards the supernatural.

The societal context that informed Shakespeare's works was an England still contending with a tremendous shift in the religious landscape. England had been part of the Catholic Church before Henry VIII announced the separation from Rome, and it became a Protestant country in 1534. Prior to this split, the Catholic Church nurtured the lives, beliefs, and mental states of the English citizenry due to its omnipresence in early modern society. The Church held primacy in everyday life: For example, young boys went to grammar schools to receive their education from the "teachers—mostly priests…and unbeneficed scholars called clerks …" (Olsen 218). The grammar schools focused on religion, logic, rhetoric, letter-writing, Latin, and foreign languages:

"Greek was considered a laudable language to study, as was Hebrew, both because they could shed light on early Christian and Jewish texts" (Olsen 219). Education and Christianity were inseparable in early modern England. While the priests were responsible for educating laypeople, predictably the instructors would use a religious perspective to explain supernatural occurrences or beliefs regarding, ghosts, exorcism, madness, and witches.

Prior to the Reformation, purgatory was a means to preserve a connection between the living and the dead. The dead in purgatory could still communicate with the living, and the living could give alms, pay suffrages, or offer prayers on their behalf. After the abolition of purgatory, the reigning confession taught that upon death, the souls of the deceased immediately entered its final destination – heaven or hell – from which there was no communication with the living. Thus, the Reformation represented a forever lost connection between the living and the dead. Shakespeare's innovations with his ghost characters were important because his depictions represented a return of this connection. Other playwrights of early modern theater relied on tropes from the plays of Seneca, in which the ghosts were merely disembodied spirits, who comment on the main action without the agency to intervene in the plot. Their ghosts didn't appear onstage as physical characters, but rather those parts were incorporated in the form of off-stage narration. The importance of Shakespeare using visible ghost characters in his work – characters with agency to affect the outcome of the plot – was how it revived the idea that ghosts are people, too. By reconnecting the participants on-stage – as well as the audience – with his ghosts, he re-established the connection between the living and the dead that had been broken by the loss of purgatory. Shakespeare did not endorse either the Catholic confession that believed in purgatory nor the Protestant one that rejected it. But by allowing such a strong connection between the living and the dead on stage, Shakespeare demonstrated a sympathy for those who

clung to the hope that the dead still desired from the living the same thing that Old Hamlet desired from Prince Hamlet, and that Prince Hamlet finally desired from Horatio: To be remembered.

Ghosts and Purgatory

Hundreds of years before Shakespeare's time, Catholicism recognized and admitted the existence of ghosts who should temporarily stay in purgatory. This belief was passed down to early modern English people under Henry VIII's reign as well. The divide between Catholics and Protestants in England—in particular, their differing attitudes towards purgatory, ghosts, and demons—is dramatically evident when analyzing the role of the supernatural in Shakespeare's plays. *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the word "ghost" as having been recorded in written language to describe "an incorporeal being, a spirit[23], a good spirit[24], an evil spirit[25], the soul of a deceased person[26]"; the first definition can be traced back to approximately 800 A.D. The origins of the concept of a ghost becoming directly associated with Catholicism is not clear. In *The Birth of Purgatory*, Jacques Le Goff, a French historian, named the idea of purgatory, as a noun, to be "the birth of purgatory" because it was the time, roughly between 1160 and 1180, when Catholics started associating a transitional place for the ghosts or souls of deceased people (362-366). The *OED* defines purgatory – for those who believed in it – as "Also with capital initial. A condition or place of spiritual cleansing and purification; (*R.C. Church*) a place or state where the souls of those who die in a state of grace undergo such punishment as is still due to forgiven sins, and expiate their unforgiven venial sins" (n.1a). In short, purgatory was a buffer for people who were acknowledged to have committed "venial sins." The unpurified souls or ghosts needed

[23] *OED*, n.†5.a.
[24] *OED*, n.†5†b.
[25] *OED*, n.†5†c.
[26] *OED*, n.†7.

to cleanse their souls in purgatory before they could go to heaven. To early modern English people, purgatory represented a more symbolic significance: a merciful pardon.

Purgatory allowed the Catholic Church to appropriate ghost-lore and folk ghost narratives into its own dogma. According to Catholics, after people passed away, there was eternal salvation in heaven, eternal damnation in Hell, and a temporal third state before heaven: purgatory. It was a place for spirits to cleanse and prepare for heaven, where the punishment for unremitted venial sins might be expiated (Stevens 144). In *Hamlet in Purgatory*, Stephen Greenblatt explained that purgatory also came to occupy an important place in Catholic dogma: Catholic teachings on purgatory created a society in which fear became a "gift to be assiduously cultivated. The discourse of Purgatory was meant not only to manage, contain, and ultimately relieve anxiety; it was explicitly meant to arouse it, to sharpen its intensity, to provide it with hideous imagery" (Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory* 71). Ghost stories exist across nearly all cultures. The concept of ghosts is a universal pairing of superstition and denial in the face of tragic loss, as if it is human nature to experience not just a sense of loss when a friend or close relative dies, but also an irrational feeling that the deceased's presence still lingers in the mortal world, and that one could even interact with; a feeling or longing to know that the deceased still cared for the living, or otherwise needed their love and remembrance[27]. Whether accidentally or by design (or a combination of both), the concept of purgatory enabled the Catholic Church to appease these irrational feelings, to deal with the reports of hauntings, and to distinguish between which of these experiences "could be absorbed into the moral order (encounters with 'good'

[27] In *All Things about Shakespeare Volume 1*, one relevant explanation about ghosts being seen indicates that "Suicides were, in fact, buried with a stake through the heart in the belief that this would keep the ghost from walking at night. Apparitions, such as that of Herne the Hunter in The Merry Wives of Windsor (IV.iv.27-42), were said to show themselves most often at night (*2H6* I.iv.20; H5 IV.Cho.28), and especially at midnight (*MND* V.i.378-381). They were sometimes said to groan or to speak (*TA* I.i.126; JCIV.iii.271 s.d.-83, V.v.17)" (Olsen 320-321).

ghosts) and those that had to be consigned to the sphere of the demonic" (Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory* 102). Catholic teaching on purgatory offered the idea for its followers to consider that they and their loved ones could have a second chance at salvation and the cleansing of their sins, so they could still be able to reach Heaven afterwards.

The separation of England from Roman Catholic Church and the following Reformation offered many reformists the chance to start criticizing the corruption of Catholicism and reform the idea of the afterlife. This Reformation started from Europe. Many theologists harbored deep thoughts and doubts about their previous learnings on things they could never prove nor eventually possess the actual answers to, such as saving a soul from purgatory. While the theologists still searched for the right answers to ease their doubts, in "Defense and Explanation" in 1520, Martin Luther grappled with the notion of Purgatory and stated of the possibility of loved ones suffering in purgatory that "For us it is enough to know that they suffer great and unbearable pain and crave your help" (Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory* 34). Luther did not want people to take the further unprovable actions. This was in line with other Reformist beliefs. In 1581, Thomas Wilcox[28] extended this line of thought. If people dwelled on their fates, it was a dangerous curiosity that led to an "uncontrolled proliferation of fantasies" (Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory* 35). Greenblatt noted that throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Reformists criticized the concept of purgatory not only for its lack of any scriptural grounding, but for the way they believed it allowed papists to wring wealth from gullible parishioners. Simon Fish criticized the Pope in his *Supplication for the Beggars* for claiming the ability to save souls but choosing to instead to extort money from the vulnerable[29]. As the parishioners believed

[28] a British Puritan clergyman.

[29] In Charles Dodd's *The church history of England, from the year 1500, to the year 1688. Chiefly with regard to Catholicks: ... In eight parts. ... Volume 2 of 3*, Fish stated "the pope, with his pardons for money, may deliver one foul thence, he may deliver him as well without money; if he may deliver one, he may deliver a thoufand; he may

the priests could save their beloved deceased from purgatory, the parishioners were willing to agree the priests' demands. The danger behind the concept of purgatory was real because the parishioners could not predict what the priests wanted from them.

Another disagreement between Catholics and Protestants was their conflicting definitions and views in terms of ghosts. While Catholics deemed ghosts to be spirits, Protestants saw them as demons since Purgatory did not exist in Protestantism. For Catholics, providing suffrages or alms for the dead suffering in purgatory reinforced the idea of salvation through good works – charity for the dead. However, this idea was anathema to Protestants, who believed that salvation was achieved by faith alone. Ulrich Zwingli said of the concept, "if Heaven could be scaled by our merits, there would have been no need for Christ's coming down. Likewise, if our sins must be cleansed by the fire of Purgatory, of what profit is Christ?" (289). People who sought salvation through Jesus could go to heaven, and those who sought salvation through their own means went to hell. In other words, souls or ghosts should not and could not stay on Earth. Protestants challenged the existence of ghosts: If ghosts appeared in front of living beings, then Protestants believed the ghosts were demons, appearing before them to tempt them into sin. Miles Coverdale[30] wrote: "If the devil can disguise himself in the form of a dead man, seeing he can [also] transfigure himself into an angel of light" (Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory* 145*).* Therefore, Protestants should not have believed in the existence of ghosts.

However, despite the Reformation, belief in ghosts and purgatory still lingered in the laity's psyche, and one of the reasons such beliefs were able to persist long after the reformation was the lack of consensus among Protestant elites on the fate of the dead. There were several

deliver them all, and fo deftroy Purgatory; and then he is a cruel tyrant, without all charity, if he keep them there in prifon and pain, till men will give him money" (308).

[30] An English ecclesiastical reformer.

competing schools of thought on the fate of the soul after death. As opposed to Catholics, Protestant creed taught that upon death, the soul immediately and permanently entered either Heaven or Hell. This was complicated by several passages in the Bible in which the deceased still returns to life, such as Samuel and the Witch of Endor[31], the raising of Lazarus[32], and the deceased of Jerusalem who rise from the dead after the Resurrection[33]. This led to competing explanations within the Reformists as to the fate of the soul after death that still fell within the parameters of Protestantism. Martin Luther and Anabaptists both endorsed the idea of Soul Sleep, in which after death the soul sleeps until the time of the Final Judgement[34]. Some Anabaptists, however, believed in a variant of soul sleep called Thnetopsychism, in which the soul died with the body, only to regain life on Judgement Day. According to Thnetopsychism, the soul "perishes along with the body, and vanishes away and becomes evanescent till the period when the whole man shall be raised again" (Calvin 383). However, John Calvin[35] refuted the idea of soul sleep in *Psychopannichia*. Calvin instead believed that souls resided in Abaham's Bosom, aware and conscious, until the time of Final Judgement. This lack of consensus allowed the laity to substitute the new dogma with the previous, or with ideas borrowed from old Catholic dogma or folk superstition. In other words, the lack of an agreed-upon Protestant explanation for the fate of souls post-mortem left a vacuum to be filled with speculation and superstition.

[31] 1 Samuel 28.
[32] John 11:42 and 43.
[33] Matthew 27:51-53.
[34] As soon as thy eyes have closed shalt thou be woken, a thousand years shall be as if thou hadst slept but a little half hour. Just as at night we hear the clock strike and know not how long we have slept, so too, and how much more, are in death a thousand years soon past. Before a man should turn round, he is already a fair angel (Luther, Martin, WA, 37.191.).
[35] A French theologian.

Skeptical Scholarship on Ghosts

The Protestant Reformation was in part a movement to purge official dogma of magical practices and rituals that Protestants saw as illegitimate, asserting instead that visions of the supernatural were illusional. Refutations of the magical and superstitious were expressed in anti-papist terms. In the "Introduction," *Lewes Lavater: Of Ghosts and Spirits Walking by Night, 1572*, May Yardly and J. Dover Wilson described how both Reginald Scot[36] and Ludwig Lavater[37] refuted the Catholic eschatology concerning ghosts. Scot had aligned himself with Protestantism. In *The supernatural in Tudor and Stuart England*, Darren Oldridge pointed out Scot, using anti-papist language, named numerous spirits and "'bugs' [that] were remnants of an ignorant past. They had infested the long 'night of superstition' encouraged by the unreformed church" (Oldridge 11). Yardly and Wilson stated that Scot's beliefs and attitude were that "apparitions are either the illusion of melancholic minds or flat knavery on the part of some rogue" (Lavater xvii). By severely attacking the Catholic Church, Scot clearly took his stance alongside other Reformists. In *Of Ghosts and Spirits Walking by Night, 1572*, Lavater also used anti-papist terms to derogate the Catholic Church's stance on ghosts: "bicause in time past men haue bin so often deceiued w apparitios, visions and false miracles done by Monkes and Priests, that nowe they take things that are true, to bee as vtterly false" (9). He also took similar approach, like Scot, categorizing the possibility of seeing a ghost because of "melancholie, madnesse, weaknesse of he senses, feare, or of some other perturbation" (Lavater 9). Both Lavater and Scot shared two different approaches – psychology and subterfuge – to analyze the possibilities of ghosts' images. Even though the early modern era did not have the concept of

[36] An Englishman and Member of Parliament.
[37] A Swiss Reformed theologian (1527-1586).

psychology, these thinkers presented very similar interpretations, very much ahead of their time, just by using different syntax. Later in 1603, Samuel Harsnett (1561-1631), an English writer on religion and Archbishop of York, wrote *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* where he "repeated Scot's list of spirits" and "placed them in the 'popish mist' that 'had befogged the eyes of our poor people'" (Oldridge 11). Through their publications, all three thinkers shared similar explanations with the same logic and wanted to use the power of their words to expediate the spread of their religious conviction that ghosts were illusions.

On the other hand, Lavater did not entirely discount the existence of the supernatural. He stated that "all those things which appeare vnto men are not alwayes naturall things … but that spirits do often appeare, & many straunge and maruellous things do sundry times chaunce [,]" but asserted that these are not the purgatorial ghosts of Catholic dogma, but more likely demons sent to trick man into sin (Lavater 53). An apparition of a ghost might well be an illusion: a false image created by Satan. He referenced the biblical story of the Witch of Endor in which Saul, King of Israel[38] to support his argument that what Saul saw was merely a counterfeit of Samuel's image created by the Devil: "whether the Divell can represente the lykenesse of some faithfull man deceased? Hereof we neede not doubt at all ... Neyther is it a harde matter for him to bleare and beguyle the outward eyes, who can easily darken and dazell the inwarde sight of the mynde" (140-141). Thus, while Lavater believed the weak and the melancholic were susceptible to "ghost" sightings, the Devil could use the illusion of ghosts to fool not just the marginalized, but even society's dominants, even a King. Lavater held two different explanations of apparitions:

[38] In the biblical story of the Witch of Endor in which Saul, King of Israel, attempts to summon the spirit of the Prophet Samuel to help advise him on the eve of his army's battle with the Philistines. Saul finds a witch who claims she can see the ghost of Samuel. When Samuel's spirit appears to Saul, he berates him and predicts his army's complete annihilation by the Philistines (1 Samuel 28).

that they could be the illusions caused by melancholy, madness, or deception, or that they could be demonic illusions to mislead us to sin.

England's break from Rome made a marginalized population out of not just Catholics, but those who still clung to old beliefs now tainted by papist association. There was an air of elite condescension by Lavater for those who he felt needed to be delivered from superstition. Lavatar wrote *De Spectris* first in the vernacular before producing a Latin translation for the more learned elite, stating that "Ministers of God's Church can take nothing more profitable in hande, than to instruct the people of God purely and plainly" and "deliuer them from all error and superstition" (Lavater vii). That Lavater, a generation removed from the Reformation, still felt it necessary to instruct the Ministers on how to deliver their flock from superstition speaks to the persistence and resilience of belief in ghosts and purgatory even despite their erasure by religious elites. In *The Fate of the Dead*, Theo Brown argued that purgatory was able to persist after its abolishment due to the two levels of belief in early modern society: "the official, and the other not publicly acknowledged but actually relied upon in private" (8). The sense of loss experienced after the death of a loved one proved too strong, and the strong denials from the reformists that the dead can still communicate with the living, left a vacuum too powerful to keep the laity from seeking an explanation for ghostly apparitions. The elites had trouble eradicating lay belief in ghosts and purgatory because the laity wanted to continue believing in such things. Brown, citing the disparity between the edicts of the elite and the beliefs of those below, asserted that the deliberate lack of any official widely agreed-upon Protestant consensus from above concerning explanations for ghostly apparitions left it to the laity to fill in the blanks (19). The laity and the marginalized were left to again synthesize elements of the old faith and the new. Fittingly, since most of the doctrine concerning ghosts and purgatory were the result of

folk myth appropriated by the Catholic Church, folk wisdom would in turn fill in the void left after the Reformation as well.

Without surprise, resistance to elites is one explanation for the persistence of lay folk superstition. This idea was described by Robert Scribner, who explained that despite the attempts in which elites "offered their ideas to the people at large for acceptance[,]" they were generally resisted, and acceptance was never guaranteed because "popular belief always has the potential to subvert, to supplement and even replace the 'official' with the 'unofficial'" (242). Scribner referred to the resistance by those of low social status – aka the subaltern – to the idea that their loved ones could not communicate with them, or that they could not pray on their behalf. In describing the persistence of supernatural sightings, he cited the status conferred upon those who claim to have come in contact with ghosts. Therefore, many encounters occurred amongst the subaltern (Scribner 249). Those who were able to contact the dead, or at least convinced others that they are able to, were conferred an elevated status amongst their peers. The ones who owned supernatural power were the conduits between the dead and their beloved ones. This intangible power bestowed hope and comfort to the living ones.

Purgatory and Anti-Catholic Fervor

Abolishing the concept of purgatory seemed cruel for the commoners to accept because it was a political move, not a spiritual one, which might have been more difficult for English Catholics to accept. Elizabeth and her Parliament decided to move forward with abolishment, in part because of the political intensity between the Roman Catholic Church and Elizabeth's government and because of the continuous threats from a segment of recusant Catholics. The Catholic issues were often a priority of Elizabeth's government. Norman Jones[39], Pierre

[39] Norman Jones's "Defining Superstitions: Treasonous Catholics and the Act against Witchcraft of

Kapitaniak, and other contemporary scholars all agree that the Catholic recusants' conjuring conspiracy against Elizabeth's safety that inspired the 1563 Witchcraft Act[40] frightened Elizabeth and her councils. Meanwhile, "the climate of distrust towards Catholics increased after 1570 when Elizabeth was excommunicated by Pope Pius V" (Kapitaniak 50). Even though the separation from Rome and the abolishment of the concept of purgatory were not accepted by all the English commoners, they still had great concerns about the safety of their country. As the conspiracies against Elizabeth, her excommunication, and the 1563 Witchcraft Act were all exposed to the public, many early modern English people were aware of and grew distrustful towards Catholics because such intermittent Catholic plots fomented turmoil and uncertainty in England.

The distrust towards Catholics and the perils to Elizabeth sustained a self-worsening spiral, leading Elizabeth's Privy Council to openly associate Catholicism with treason. In the autumn of 1569, the earl of Northumberland led a rebellion of Northern Catholic nobles for the purpose of deposing the Queen in favor of Mary, Queen of Scots, "for the setting forth of his true and Catholic religion" (Key 77). In *Sources and Debates in English history 1485-1714*, Elizabeth proclaimed:

> '[to do] certain high treasons against the queen's majesty's person and the realm…: hath thought good that all her good loving subjects should speedily understand, how in this sort the said two earls, contrary to the natural property of nobility …, have thus openly and traitorously entered into the first rebellion and breach of the public blessed peace of this realm that hath happened…during her majesty's reign…, an act horrible against God… (77)

1563."

[40] See Chapter 1, page 13.

Elizabeth's proclamation harshly scolded the rebels in public. By doing so, Elizabeth could arouse the sense of crisis in her subjects that Catholic rebels were endangering the tranquility of the state and the head. Sentencing the rebels could demonstrate her power and authority and further establish her status as a queen who could not be violated by anyone. The punishment and the proclamation asserted her divine authority over her subjects' discontent with her handling of England's religions affairs.

Folk Ghostlore

Even though the authority tried to interfere the supernatural business, it would not stop the lay people from appreciating the love and hope in ghost stories. There were several ghost stories[41] circulating throughout Europe, starting with the tales of Greek and Roman mythology retold throughout the centuries until the Early Modern era in Europe, some of which focused the topic of purgatory[42]. One story – *The Gast of Gy* written by Jean Gobi[43] – stands apart from other purgatory tales in that it is relatively less terrifying or gloomy than other ghost stories. The important distinction between *The Gast of Gy* and other purgatory narratives of the era is that *The Gast of Gy* is a story of hope, not despair. Whereas the series of mysterious hauntings witnessed by Gy's widow at first seem terrifying, they are later revealed to be the visitations of her departed husband, who had returned out of love to admonish her to repent and pray, in order

[41] In *Historia rerum Anglicarum*, William of Newburgh, a twelfth-century English historian, composed four narratives of "prodigies" who die but arise from the earth to interact with the living. The first of these narratives is most similar to the narratives of purgatory, involving a deceased man who returns from the grave to visit his wife and brothers. His visitations cease only after a reverend bishop opens his grave and places a hand-written letter of absolution upon his breast (Book 5, Chapter 22-24).

[42] Early tales like *Visio Tnugdali* ("Vision of Tnugdalus"), written by Brother Marcus, an Irish monk,in the middle 12th century, and *Tractatus de Purgatorio Sancti Patricii* ("Tractatus de Purgatorio Sancti Patricii"), written by H. of Saltrey in the late 12th century, provided widely popular accounts of the afterlife, both of which influenced the purgatory of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. "The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyne," written anonymously in late 14th or early 15th century, was an early example of the Church's use of ghostlore to support the doctrine of purgatory.

[43] Jean Gobi (* 1300; † 1350) was a Dominican friar.

to spare herself the pain of purification in purgatory. In *Hamlet in Purgatory*, Greenblatt pointed out "The ghost's response is the clearest, most powerful statement in the poem of the primacy of the personal and the intimate: 'The voice answered then unto this / And said: "I loved more my wife / Than any other man alive, / And therefore first to her I went" (130). In "*The Gast of Gy*: The Introduction," the editor Edward E. Foster wrote that "This is highly speculative but fits the love and mutuality the poem implies." Gy's exhortations to give alms and suffrages for the dead, to think on, and to remember them as they do so, are cast not as a dire warning, but as an act of love. This optimistic outlook may be one of the reasons for the poem's enduring popularity through the Middle Ages. It gave voice to the hope that the dead still remember and care for them after their passing. This popular story connected with love, romance, and purgatory where Gobi particularly presented the belief in hope. The living ones should retain optimism in their minds as they prayed.

In addition to ghost tales of purgatory, there still existed a widespread tradition of popular folk ghost lore that the Reformation couldn't suppress. In "Shakespeare's Sad Tale for Winter: *Hamlet* and the Tradition of Fireside Ghost Stories," Catherine Belsey showed that in addition to purgatory, Shakespeare's portrayal of ghosts was informed by fireside ghost stories, old wives' tales, and the winter's tales of the laypeople (4). Ghost lore was prevalent in Europe long before the Church even thought to appropriate folk superstitions regarding the afterlife into the concept of purgatory. These were folk tales that were passed on from previous generations, derived neither from Catholic tropes of purgatory nor from Protestant explanations of the supernatural, yet continued to be retold throughout the Reformation. The fireside ghost tales that survived long enough to be recorded by history were in many ways incompatible with church theology. As these were folk tales the laity told each other by verbal tradition, there was little record of their

content, but such tales were common enough that written and performative works of the era made frequent reference to them. In *Hamlet*, the guards speak of the ghost as if they are retelling a fireside ghost story or a winter's tale: Barnardo opens his ghost story to gather his audience by saying "Side down awhile, / And let us once again assail your ears / That are so fortified against our story, / What we have two nights seen (1.1.33-36). In *Macbeth*, Lady Macbeth directly references these fireside ghost stories in when she dismisses Macbeth's reaction when he sees the ghost of Banquo by saying "A woman's story at a winter's fire, / Authoris'd by her grandam" (3.4.64-5). Both characters refer to ghost stories, but the tones of voice and the motivations are very different. In *Hamlet*, Shakespeare established a familiar scene and had Barnardo say similar lines from fireside ghost stories to inform the audience of the setting of the play itself. This play is about a ghost story with a straightforward tone. At the same time, since this is just an imitation of a fireside ghost story, then it would not conflict directly with Protestant or the Church of England's official viewpoint. On the other hand, Lady Macbeth uses "[a] woman's story at a winter's fire" to mock Macbeth, which also demonstrates her belief in that his vision is merely a hallucination, just like an unreliable winter's story. Shakespeare utilized these common ghost stories in his plays to enhance the elements of entertainment and suspense for his audience.

Senecan Tragedy

Finally, before I analyze ghost characters in Shakespeare's plays, I will discuss Senecan Tragedy, a set of ancient Roman tragedies primarily created by Lucius Annaeus Seneca[44]. During the Renaissance, Italian humanists rediscovered these works and used them as original sources for the dramatic works of the Renaissance Revival. Seneca usually focused on supernatural elements in his tragedies, which drew the attention and favor of Elizabethan

[44] Seneca the Younger (c. 4 BC – AD 65).

playwrights. In "Seneca in Early Elizabethan England," Jessica Winston examined how Thomas Sackville, Thomas Norton[45], Thomas Kyd, Christopher Marlowe, and Shakespeare borrowed the elements of bloodthirsty revenge tragedy from Seneca as they developed their own plays (29-30). She quoted Thomas Nashe's critical words to emphasize Seneca's influence upon early modern English playwrights: "Writing in the late 1580s, Thomas Nashe famously accused contemporary dramatists of a lack of originality, describing them as 'triviall translators' who did little more than copy the 'good sentences' and 'tragicall speeches' out of Seneca" (Winston 29). Nashe did not explain the reason for his contempt, but his open criticism reflects how heavily Senecan trends[46] influenced the plays of early modern English dramatists in terms of lines, scenes, and plot elements. Several scholars[47] commented on how Shakespeare borrowed tropes of ghosts or bloodthirsty revenge in the model of Senecan tragedies to compose *Titus Andronicus* and *Hamlet*. By adding more Senecan elements into his plays, Shakespeare attracted audience members walking into theaters to immerse in the gruesome and horrifying spectacle and to witness the ambiguous supernatural. It is easy to see how this subject matter experienced a popular revival in an era in which the issue of the reigning monarch's succession was a paramount crisis-in-waiting.

Prior to *Hamlet*, English playwrights relied on the ghost tropes of Antiquity seen in Seneca. In this tradition, ghosts are unmysterious, commenting on the action from the Chorus without intervening. If they do appear, they do so in dreams as avatars of the character's guilty

[45] "At the same time, many authors wrote original plays, such as Thomas Sackville (ca. 1536–1608) and Norton's (1530/32–85) Gorboduc (performed 1562) or the multiauthored Gismond of Salerne (performed 1567–68), which imitated more thoroughly than later Elizabethan tragedies the form of Seneca" (Winston 31).
[46] Seneca was a As counselor to several Emperors, including Nero; the popularity of Seneca's plays in early modern England could have been because they were classical versions of "advice-to-princes poetry," which encouraged virtue in monarchs and their counsel by recounting the consequences of tyranny, pride, and ambition (Winston 41).
[47] Catherine Belsey's "Beyond Reason: Hamlet and Early Modern Stage Ghosts" and "Shakespeare's Sad Tale for Winter: Hamlet and the Tradition of Fireside Ghost Stories"; Brian Arkins' "Heavy Seneca His Influence on Shakespeare's Tragedies"; Curtis Perry's "Seneca and the Modernity of Hamlet."

conscience (a la *Richard III*) (Belsey 34). For example, in Seneca's *Agamemnon*, the spirit of Thyestes introduces the audience to the play, explaining in detail the injustice carried out against him in life, the suffers he endures in the underworld, and whets the audience expectations for the appalling events to be staged. Afterwards, he disappears back to the underworld for the remainder of the play. Similarly, in Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*, the ghost of Don Andrea and the avatar of Revenge serve as Chorus for the play, never involving themselves in the actual plot. By delegating ghosts to the Chorus and depriving them of the means to affect the course of action on stage, Senecan ghosts were mere disembodied spirits deprived of their humanity, existing only to lament their plight.

Ghosts in Shakespeare

The use of ghost characters in *Richard III*, *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth* served not to prove the existence of ghosts or apparitions, but to ruminate on the significance of the motif behind the creation of ghost characters. The designation of the ghost characters reflects on the humanity of the protagonists - Richard, Hamlet, and Macbeth - and the consequences of their actions. In Moorman's "Shakespeare's Ghosts", his argument focused on how Shakespeare bestowed human qualities upon his ghosts: "In making the ghost more human, Shakespeare, at the same time, gave to it a spiritual significance of which his predecessors had but a very faint conception. The Shakespearean ghost is at once the embodiment of remorseful presentiment and the instrument of divine justice" (192). It is true that his ghost characters have significant human qualities and carry out divine justice, but they represent more than that. His ghost characters evolved over time that their evolution follows the path of early modern England's politics, society, and culture. The ghost characters in *Richard III* are simple and straightforward. Their appearance is to accuse Richard's sinful crimes and to seek for justice. The ghost of Old Hamlet

contains more complex elements, such as political implications, religious tension, and mental illness. The ghost of Banquo in *Macbeth* witnessed the change in the English throne. Its appearance also reveals the change of Macbeth's mental state. All the ghosts reflect the humanity of the three protagonists and the political environments they inhabit.

Richard III

At the beginning of *Richard III*, Queen Margret, widow of King Henry VI, has summarized Act V and the ending of Richard's destiny. In history, Queen Margaret passed away in 1482, but this scene took place with a still-breathing Margaret in 1483. In a small historical embellishment, Shakespeare inserted her into this scene for a specific purpose. Richard receives a prophecy from a dead person transformed into a still-living character on stage, implying not only verbal curses but also bad omens. All of Queen Margaret's supernatural prophecies, and the appearance of ghosts, lead to the containment of Richard's subversions. In Act I, Scene III, Queen Margaret furiously curses all the nobles at court and shouts out at Richard a premonitory vision of how Richard's life will end on stage:

> If heaven have any grievous plague in store
> Exceeding those that I can wish upon thee,
> O, let them keep it till thy sins be ripe,
> And then hurl down their indignation
> On thee, the troubler of the poor world's peace.
> The worm of conscience still begnaw thy soul;
> Thy friends suspect for traitors while thou liv'st,
> And take deep traitors for thy dearest friends;
> No sleep close up that deadly eye of thine,

Unless it be while some tormenting dream

Affrights thee with a hell of ugly devils. (217-227)

By associating Richard's downfall with the supernatural – Margaret's premonitions and the trope of ghosts crying out from the grave for vengeance and justice denied in life – Shakespeare gave Richard's containment an air of providential endorsement (Lake 153). According to Peter Lake, Shakespeare took great "care with which the play enlists" supernatural phenomena "to confirm its essentially providential reading of the events it is staging" (157). Staged this way, Richard's fall is portrayed less as the result of a political process than as the result of a grand moral design (Jones, *The Origin* 205). Shakespeare gave Richard a supernatural comeuppance that would have been seen as his just fate through the moral standards of his audience. Through Margaret's curse, the audience can clearly see how the supernatural elements - "heaven" and "grievous plague" - take charge of Richard's destiny. The punishment comes after Richard's unforgivable sins. Here, Shakespeare also revealed two ambiguous aspects for the audience to ruminate upon. Is "the worm of conscience" or "a hell of ugly devils" the avenger in this play? The audience will need to reach the end of the play and figure the answer out on his or her own. The only certain thing at this moment is that Richard will receive his punishment sooner or later.

One of the ghosts' functions was the representation of what may have been Richard's long-suppressed sense of conscience and guilt. Richard murdered or had others murder many people who could have posed a threat to the royal line of succession throughout the entire play. In "'What do I fear?': nightmares, conscience and the 'Gothic' self in *Richard III*," Per Sivefors confirmed two historians' suggestion: "conscience may have been seen by Protestant theologians as a faculty that operated 'as both the guide and the judge of moral actions'" (60). Sivefors also believed Richard's dream is not about predicting the future, but the past. The past arouses a

universe of guilt inside of Richard: “The worm of conscience still begnaw thy soul” (1.3.222). The use of the metaphor “the worm” carries Richard’s awareness of his own crimes as it crawls through his conscience. By depicting Richard’s dream, Shakespeare filled the gap: Besides the victim, the murderer is the only one who knows the truth. In the play, the sight of the ghosts stirs the conscience of the murderer, and the self-scrutiny it summons from within tortures Richard deeply at the end.

Going further, one of the functions of representing the train of apparitions on stage is to give voice for the dead who sought justice that could not be obtained through legal or secular means. These victims/ghosts could not even take revenge for themselves. Shakespeare provided a space on his stage for the dead and the injustices they suffered. It was not a trope that originated from him, but he highlighted the existence of the ghost characters who were denied vengeance in life and allowed them to passively narrate the cause of their death and the ways in which they were murdered. In Act V, Scene III, the ghosts, victims of Richard’s evil ambition, appear in his dream, lining up to denounce his crimes and seek justice for their ill-fated deaths. Among the procession are the two ghosts of Prince Edward and the Duke of York, the sons of King Edward IV. In the play, when the two young princes were murdered in the tower, they did not know Richard was the one responsible for their deaths. In Act IV, Scene III, Tyrrel narrates the manner in which the young princes got murdered:

> Albeit they [two murderers] were flesh’d villains, bloody dogs—
> Melted with tenderness and mild compassion,
> Wept like two children, in their deaths’ sad story.
> ‘O thous’, quoth Dighton, ‘lay the gentle babes’;
> ‘Thus, thus’, quoth Forrest, ‘girdling one another

Within their alabaster innocent arms;

……. ‘We smothered

The most replenished sweet work of Nature (6-18)

The two murderers smother the two young princes in their sleep; the two young princes did not know Richard was the mastermind behind the conspiracy and crimes at the time of their deaths. However, as they appear in Richard’s dream, they denounce Richard like the other ghosts. The presence the ghosts of the two young princes demonstrates the direct nature of the accusation. Other adult ghosts knew or somewhat knew that Richard is the one who killed them or caused their deaths. Even the two princes, young and innocent as they are, know whom to accuse of murder and from whom justice must be sought. In one aspect, Shakespeare emphasized that seeking justice is the victims’ right no matter their gender, age, or status. All of them can wait in line, get their allotted time, and execute their rights on Shakespeare’s stage.

Shakespeare created a catch-phrase for the supernatural parade on his stage to emphasize via repetition the dramatic effect of the consistency and agreement against the shared injustice among the ghosts. While all the ghost characters accuse Richard of his sin, they also utter the phrase “despair and die” (5.3). This phrase is repeated out loud in front of the audience nine times. Obviously, they share the same goal in that they all want Richard to be “despair and [to] die.” More interestingly, Shakespeare forms this ghost procession like a parade with a complete beginning and a strong finish. The first ghost character, the Ghost of Prince of Edward, says this phrase as a matter of course: “Think how thou stab’st me in my prime of youth / At Tewkesbury; despair therefore, and die” (5.3.120-121). The other ghost characters simply repeat the words “despair and [to] die” along with their specific indictment. The last ghost character, the Ghost of Buckingham, ends Richard’s nightmare by saying “Dream on, dream on of bloody deeds and

death; / Fainting, despair: despairing, yield thy breath" to close this ghastly parade (5.3.172-173). The Ghost of Buckingham's lines provide a vivid verbal picture that they are all waiting for the moment when Richard loses his breath, just like them. When all the ghosts say their piece, they seem to come to the agreement that they are witnesses at the court of supernatural justice to call out their testimony and indict Richard for his sinful crimes. Richard deserves the verdict of guilt.

Besides seeking justice, power relations are significant and tremendous in *Richard III*. In early modern England, especially in the Elizabethan era, England grew and accumulated much power between 1592 (*Richard III*) and 1611 (*The Tempest*). At the same time, Shakespeare often portrayed and depicted the dynamics between the powerful and the deposed/marginalized in his plays. Richard was at first considered to be marginalized due to his physical deformity. His ambition drives him to usurp the throne through violent, brutal conspiracy, and he attains the throne by murdering those with prior claims. The rise and decline of power are fluid in the play, with Richard being both marginalized and powerful representation. In reality, Richard's victims stayed dead. However, on stage, as Richard faces a battle he would lose, all that were murdered by or because of him return and appear to him as ghosts. Shakespeare exposed the vulnerability of the marginalized ones, the ghosts, who received a chance from Shakespeare to have their voices heard. As Richard dreams about the ghosts, he starts feeling scared due to his conscience; therefore, their power relations switch. Richard, as a king, reveals his vulnerability, which confirms the ghosts' retaliation had struck him. Both the powerful and deposed shared the stage in early modern England.

Hamlet

The ghosts in *Richard III* represent the tropes of more traditional ghost-lore, but the ghost in *Hamlet* is a breakthrough among all of Shakespeare previous ghosts and the ghosts of his

colleagues' dramatic work. In "Ghost Technique in Shakespeare," one of the authors from *Folger Shakespeare Library* noted the Senecan influences of the ghosts in *Richard III*, but they depart from the Senecan tradition in that they make no mention to the torments of "the underworld of classic mythology" (159). Except for Old Hamlet, Shakespeare's ghosts provide no hint as to their origins. The Ghost of Old Hamlet has his distinctive armor and the will power to communicate solely with Hamlet in the play: "Shakespeare created personality for the ghost of Hamlet… He [Ghost of Old Hamlet] differs from the other ghosts in that he appears to the revenger and not to the murderer" ("Ghost Technique" 161). As the ghosts appear before Richard, the murderer, they are accusing Richard for his cruel acts of crime. As the Ghost appears before Hamlet, the revenger, the Ghost chooses Hamlet to be the instrument to execute the plan to avenge him. Through Shakespeare's vivid depiction, the Ghost demonstrates sterner words, stronger will power, and a more aggressive personality than Hamlet. This depiction sets the tone to establish the credibility of the Ghost at the beginning of the play.

Shakespeare's portrayal of Hamlet's ghost was the representation of revenge and was informed by Lavater's *De spectris, lemuribus et magnis atque insolitis fragoribus* [*Of Ghosts and Spirits Walking by Night*] as well: "Indeed, the whole book is so germane to the ghost-scenes in Shakespeare's tragedy that there seems to me a high probability that the dramatist had read it. In any case Hamlet himself is clearly steeped in the opinions which Lavater expounded, and his attitude towards his father's spirit cannot be comprehended without taking these views into account" (Lavater xvii). Through the ghost of Old Hamlet, the previous king, Hamlet learns the ghost claiming to be his dead father was poisoned by his younger brother, Claudius, Hamlet's uncle and current king. In Act 1, Scene 5, the Ghost makes a request of Hamlet: "Revenge his [Old Hamlet's] foul and most unnatural murder" (25). The audience could receive such direct

message with the purpose of revenge, which was also a traditional and folkloric way of thinking. Oftentimes, stories of ghost hauntings involved the dead seeking out the living to carry out some sort of unfinished business, vengeance, or justice remaining in the world of the living. The presence of ghosts simply narrates one purpose: the desire for justice, so they could rest in peace.[48] Lavater also cited tales of spirits "of suche as haue been slayne, doo oftentimes cruelly molest and trouble the soules of those whiche slewe them" (Lavater 80). Lavater additionally said of apparitions: "vnto the reprobate they appeare as a punishmente" (Lavater 175). These short ghost tales did not just feed a desire to see justice delivered to those who were denied it while living, but also provided an element of divine sanction to such justice in early modern England.

With *Hamlet*, Shakespeare shifted his focus on the nature of ghosts from a merely vengeful level to a more religiously complex level. In the play, Shakespeare explored differing interpretations of the supernatural, based on religious background, that were popular in the 16th century. The tension between Protestant and Catholic theology was comparable with the tension between reality and the supernatural to explore flux in the social and religious order. Ghost characters in both *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* are either one of two things, depending on one's theology: If one were Protestant, the ghost had to be a demon, while if one were Catholic, the ghost had to be a spirit stuck in purgatory[49]. In Act 1, Scene 4, as Hamlet believes he sees an apparition in front of him, he talks to it:

---

[48] Lavater described the spirit of an old man in *De Spectris*: A house in Athens was haunted by "an image or shape, as it were an olde man, leane and loathsome to beholde, with a long beard and staring haire : on his legs he had fetters, and in his hands caryed chaines which he always ratled together." A man renting the house despite its haunted nature encounters the ghost, and – hardening his heart – allows the spirit to guide him to a site where he uncovers "boanes wrapped and tyed in chaynes." After the remains are gathered and "buryed solemnely," the house "was ever after cleare of all suche ghostes." (Lavater 58-9)

[49] In "Discerning the Ghost in *Hamlet*," Sister Miriam Joseph divided the four living characters in *Hamlet*'s first act as representative of the three most common points of view concerning apparitions, expressed in the theological controversies in early modern England: "Marcellus and Barnardo exhibit the traditional Catholic view expounded by

Angels and ministers of grace defend us!

Be thou a spirit of health or goblin [demon] damned,

Bring wit thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,

Be thy intents wicked or charitable,

Thou com'st in such a questionable shape

That I will speak to thee. I'll call thee Hamlet (20-25).

While Hamlet doubts the apparition is a demon from, he also reveals his ambiguous stance that it might be "charitable." It was an odd moment for Shakespearean audiences to speculate. The divide is complicated when considering that the Elizabethan government was a Protestant government. If the Protestants in the audience considered Old Hamlet to be a ghost or the spirit of the good old King, then those Protestants had diverged from mainstream Protestant theology, which meant they were tacitly accepting parts of Catholic dogma in interpreting the embodiment of the Old Hamlet as a ghost instead of a demon. Because of the religious upheaval in Tudor England, laymen's views on these issues had been changed back and forth without a fixed standard to follow during their lifetime. The descriptions of characters as well as the audience's religious judgment were inconsistent. When the audience looked at the Ghost, they could resonate from the heart because these perspectives reflected the reality of contemporary thought, and not of any authoritative preference. However, this raises the issue of how and why Shakespeare staged the religious conflict and presented it in front of his audience so as to place

---

Pierre Le Loyer (1586) that a soul might come to earth from purgatory; Horatio displays the skeptical attitude of Reginald Scot (1584), who flatly denies that spirits can assume material form and thereby appear to men; Hamlet expresses the Protestant view of Ludwig Lavater (1570) and King James I (1597) that ghosts, though they might be angels, are generally devils who assume the appearance of the departed" (493). Therefore, the three different points of view were reflections of Shakespeare's contemporary society. Joseph confirmed that the ghost in Hamlet was Hamlet's father, coming from purgatory: "the abode of the ghost and his character fit descriptions of a purgatorial spirit in both doctrine and popular legend" (502). She was asserting that if a Protestant audience could see a Catholic ghost on stage, then they were not good Protestants—at least not while viewing the play.

them in this uncomfortable and potentially dangerous state, given the preferences of the Protestant government. The religious views on ghosts are significant because they were also a politically sensitive topic.

Shakespeare exploited ambiguity with the supernatural in order to make a social and political statement about the nature of power and how power related to belief. In both *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, Shakespeare used the ambiguity of his characters' sanity to have the audience question the social order regarding the supernatural and its influence on people. Ambiguity works against both a right/wrong and good/evil binary. In *All Things Shakespeare: An Encyclopedia of Shakespeare's World vol.1*, "Shakespeare's ghosts tend to haunt their killers or to seek justice for their killers, as in *Hamlet*, but not all Renaissance ghosts were so logical" (Olsen 321). This quote shows not all Early Modern ghosts[50] sought justice; rather, they might have undertaken the same mission as their writers. On the contrary, as compared to the ghost characters of other writers, Shakespeare's ghosts rationally undertook the mission of seeking justice to retrieve what they could not have obtained while they were alive. Shakespeare was seeking justice through the representation of politically and religiously ambiguous ghosts, who sought their own justice with logical intention, on stage. The audience might feel the pressure of religious uncertainty, but they meanwhile knew that the appearance of ghosts became a device for revenge in Shakespeare's plays as well. While they watched the play, they must have felt

[50] In *Doctor Faustus*, Christopher Marlowe had ghost characters as devices: one represented a demon based on conformists' belief; the other one represented Catholicism's hierarchical mechanism. In act III scene II, Pope was annoyed for the loss of his wine, so his Archbishop tried to appease his anger by saying: "Please it your Holiness, I think it be some ghost crept out of purgatory, and now is come unto your Holiness for his pardon." Then, Pope replied: "It may be so: / Go then, command our priests to sing a dirge / To lay the fury of this same troublesome ghost" (79-84). The former one showed Marlowe's religious interpretation that throughout the entire play. The purpose of the latter device is to mock at Catholic decadence. The ghost is not relevant with any theological explanation; on the contrary, the concept of purgatory has been abused in this conversation to deride Pope's craving for food and drinks, which represents Gluttony, one of the Seven Deadly Sins.

complicated feelings towards the presence of ghosts throughout the ethical dilemma of supernatural revenge.

While the ghost in *Hamlet* is an explicitly Catholic ghost, in that he embodies every trope associated with ghosts and purgatory by Catholic dogma, the outcome of the play is in line with Protestant teachings regarding ghosts. *Hamlet*'s first act after he accepts the veracity of the ghost's message – when his "mousetrap" confirms Claudius indeed murdered his father – is to murder Polonius, albeit accidentally. If every Protestant in the audience was at first made uncomfortable by the depiction of an outwardly Catholic ghost, and if they believed ghosts were an illusion sent by the Devil to lead men into sin, the play ultimately confirms what their upbringing had taught them regarding the apparition's origins. In *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, Keith Thomas argued the inevitable tragedy that occurred during the plot and the denouement of *Hamlet* happened because he was tempted to sin by the apparition that appeared before him: "in view of the ultimately catastrophic results of his appearance, we might add that this could have been Shakespeare's own view…. If the ghost had never appeared, or if Hamlet had refused to listen to his promptings, these events, and their terrible consequences to soul and boy, would never have occurred" (590). Thomas further pointed out that once Hamlet allows himself to be seduced by the apparition, he sets forth a sequence events that lead several characters to commit the sin of murder and leads Ophelia to commit the ultimate sin of suicide. Shakespeare's audience directly confronted with the danger associated with Catholic illusions: The Catholic Ghost compels the Protestant Hamlet to commit violence against the Head of State. The use of *Hamlet* became a Protestant parable reminding Shakespeare's audience to be cautious and faithful.

By the time of Shakespeare, Catholicism became associated with conjuring and treason, and to depict Catholic concepts on stage would have been too subversive even for Shakespeare. Being a playwright in early modern England was a risky career. In 1593, the Privy Council arrested a group of writers and "Thomas Kyd was arrested … under suspicion as the author of the libel" (Nicholl 286). In the same year, Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593) was stabbed to death for "his epicurism and atheism" (Nicholl 67). In *The Reckoning: The Murder of Christopher Marlowe,* Charles Nicholl presented several different accounts from Thomas Beard, Ingram Frizer, and Francis Meres to explain the death of Marlowe as a consequence of backlash his unorthodox religious beliefs (65-71). Ben Jonson (1572-1637) and Thomas Nashe (1567-1601) co-wrote a 'seditious' play, *The Isle of Dogs* (Scoufos 310). In "Nashe, Jonson, and the Oldcastle Problem," Alice Lyle Scoufos pointed out the danger of being part of public entertainment: "The Privy Council ordered the arrest of the players, and the authorities were successful in apprehending three of the men. 'We caused some of the players to be apprehended and comytted to pryson, whereof one of them was not only an actor but a maker of parte of the said plaie.' The 'maker' appears to have been Jonson…" in 1597 (310). The outcomes for Jonson and Nashe were that the Privy Council arrested and imprisoned Jonson, and Nashe fled from England. The career of playwright was not a safe one in Elizabethan or Jacobean England. The fates of Shakespeare's colleagues illustrated the dangers of staging sensitive topics in drama during his time. Shakespeare's successful and mostly peaceful career demonstrated his ability to avoid the inherent dangers of presenting Catholic topics on stage.

Macbeth

As time went by, England had a new king, King James I, whose belief in the existence of supernatural could have altered the cultural direction of early modern England, but it wouldn't

have altered Shakespeare's belief. Shakespeare continued to challenge his audience by producing *Macbeth*. The protagonist, Macbeth, murders both King Duncan of Scotland and Banquo, a Scottish general who was considered to be a future adversary by Macbeth, in order to obtain kingship. When Macbeth, exclusive to himself, sees the apparition of the dead Banquo, the depiction of his vision serves to emphasize the character's consciousness of his morality. Macbeth sees Banquo's ghost sitting in a seat which supposed to be Macbeth's; it is another way to arouse Macbeth's moral consciousness for murdering an innocent person to satisfy his evil craving for the crown. Macbeth is scared and panics in public. The ghost of Banquo could be a reflection of Macbeth's moral consciousness, which explains why he is the only one who can see the ghost because he feels guilty for his own crime. Moorman concluded: "we are prompted to see in the ghost the agent of the dread power of Nemesis, and as such it is a powerful instrument to bring about Macbeth's ruin" (196). What the ghosts in *Richard III* and *Macbeth* share is that they are embodiments of vengeance and justice, appearing to disturb the guilty conscious of their murderers and bring about their demise. In this way, Shakespeare's ghosts incorporate both the tropes of the revived Senecan model that was popular in Europe at the time and the ghost tropes that were popular amongst the early modern English laity[51]. Therefore, the visibility of the ghosts became a necessary element to mentally punish the murderer on stage.

At the same time, did Macbeth really see Banquo's ghost or was he just hallucinating due to a guilty conscience? If I use the anachronistic psychological method to analyze the situation, the explanation of his hallucination can be stemming from the consciousness of right and wrong[52]. Macbeth committed regicide, which was against the moral codes during his and

[51] Puhvel claimed "… an appearance is in harmony with traditional, time-honoured beliefs of ghost lore as well as concepts and premises of the 'revenge-tragedy' of the period, and it is also artistically effective" (287).
[52] In "Consciousness and Responsibility in *Macbeth*," Harvey Birenbaum explained the consequences of Macbeth's consciousness: "This play is primarily a devastating study of the split between the restless world within and the

Shakespeare's time. In other words, due to his guilty conscience, Macbeth sees the ghost sitting in the chair that belongs to a king. The throne is not for Macbeth, but for Duncan or Banquo's son, the next king. However, Duncan did not know it was Macbeth who killed him whereas Banquo knew Macbeth was the murderer behind the regicide and ruminated about Macbeth's succession to Duncan's throne:

> Thou [Macbeth] hast it now: King, Cawdor, Glamis, all
> Thou played'st most foully for't. Yet it was said
> It should not stand in thy posterity,
> But that myself should be the root and father
> Of many kings. If there come truth from them [three witches]—
> As upon thee, Macbeth, their speeches shine. (3.1.1-7)

Both Macbeth and Banquo learn about their own prophecies and each other's from the three witches. It explains why the image of the ghost is Banquo, instead of Duncan, sitting at the throne because it is Macbeth's hallucination. In "The Perplexing Ghost of Banquo: Ambiguity and its Roots," Martin Puhvel also suggested hallucination will be one possible way to explain Macbeth's experience of seeing Banquo's ghost. Puhvel also quoted from Kenneth Muir[53] who claimed, "after invoking long-standing arguments, 'It is clearly an hallucination'" (287). In Chapter 1, the Venn diagram does display the postulation that seeing a ghost, experiencing the supernatural, is either experiencing an illusion or suffering from mental illness[54]. Macbeth is

---

indifferent world without, for this is a tragedy of consciousness more clearly than any of the others—even more so than the obvious case of Hamlet. To experience the play is to be caught up not merely in a man's ambition but in the struggle between the spontaneous consciousness—the life that erupts of itself—and the reflective consciousness—the mind observing feelings, confounded by the eruptive energy driving against it, and aware finally how helpless it feels because it can see" (23).

[53] Kenneth Muir's *The Sources of Shakespeare's Plays.*

[54] As to mental illness, please see Chapter 3.

self-conscious about his evil actions in the play; hence, the need to create the false images was not counter to James I's beliefs and still promoted part of Shakespeare's central ideas.

Did King James I's arrival at England influence part of the central ideas in *Macbeth*? The answer is a resounding Yes. King James I might not have believed in hallucination, but he did believe in the existence of demons and the supernatural[55]. Puhvel suggested, between "ghost" and "hallucination," the play leaves open a third possibility "The idea-subscribed to by King James I-that devils are capable of temporarily animating dead bodies could here be thought to be in Macbeth's mind" (289). In terms of King James I's definition of spirits, the presumption is that the appearance still stems from Macbeth's thoughts. He thinks about the crime he committed or the victims so much that the demon could be "temporarily animating" the victim to create the same likeness of Banquo. In Act 3, Scene 2, Macbeth reveals his retrospective thoughts to Lady Macbeth:

> Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep
> In the affliction of these terrible dreams
> That shakes us nightly. Better be with the dead,
> Whom we to gain our peace have sent to peace,
> Than on the torture of the mind to lie
> In restless ecstasy. … (19-24)

[55] In "Dæmonologie: The Thirde Booke", King James I defined different types of spirits who had evil purposes to haunt people: "I haue spoken alreadie. The first is, where spirites troubles some houses or solitarie places: The second, where spirites followes vpon certaine persones, and at diuers houres troubles them: … For doubtleslie they are in effect, but all one kinde of spirites, who for abusing the more of mankinde. takes on these sundrie shapes, and vses diuerse formes of out-ward actiones, as if some were of nature better then other. Nowe I returne to my purpose: As to the first kinde of these spirites, that were called by the auncients by diuers names, according as their actions were. For if they were spirites that haunted some houses, by appearing in diuers and horrible formes, and making greate dinne: …" (57).

Macbeth's frank lines unveil his growing anxiety through acknowledging the unjustifiable nature of his crime. That is the reason he suffers from the torture of his own conscience. Due to his constant thinking about the victims, Macbeth yells at the ghost of Banquo "…Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves / Shall never tremble" (3.4.101-102). His yelling is aimed not only at the possible demon in front of him, but also at the demon within himself. The dark ambitions that had earlier murdered innocent victims can now assume any myriad of different shapes to ceaselessly torment Macbeth.

Macbeth indeed serves as a more complex and important work than *Richard III* in terms of the similarities between the two play. Both plays present the ghosts as instruments of revenge and both ghosts appear in front of murderers who suffer from a guilty conscience. Both murderers kill for their ambitions to ascend to the thrones that they desire but do not belong to them. Both ghosts could possibly be illusions. Yet there is one important distinction that separates the ghosts in the two plays. Even though the topic of seeing ghosts was very controversial during early modern England, in allowing for the possibility that Banquo's ghost was of demonic origin, Shakespeare's arrangement left the possibility open for people of King James' persuasion – are any other persuasion – to draw their own conclusions. "…King James and Protestant theologians" were encouraged "to interpret the apparition as a diabolic imposture, just as realists (of the mold of Reginald Scot and Horatio-initially-in *Hamlet*) who believed such visions to be illusions" (Puhvel 293). Comparatively, *Richard III* is more straight forward about the function of its ghosts: simply for justice and revenge. *Macbeth* is open to those from all different walks to take their own perspective and offer their own interpretations. After all, a play is a product composed of multiple illusions for the audience to contemplate.

Shakespeare's Mousetrap

Shakespeare might have written several scenes to taunt the nobles, the upper class, or even those in more authoritative roles to entertain his audience, but he would not show derision towards ghosts or ghost characters by any means. It is hard to decide Shakespeare's religious preference, but he clearly showed his moral preferences, as well as his respect to things he did not have a certain answer for. In "Ghost Technique in Shakespeare," the author concluded his argument by saying "Shakespeare treats the subject of the supernatural sympathetically and not without dignity—probably he personally was in favor of the popular superstitions" (162). The supernatural elements receive a space in his plays and enrich the plots. While the ghost characters speak for themselves, it is their last chance for them to appear with dignity – the dignity they were robbed of in the moment before their deaths. Shakespeare restored that moment back.

By depicting the illusion of ghosts so prominently, Shakespeare forced his audience to contemplate the guilty conscience of not just his characters, but the audience themselves. According to Kenneth Burke, "A tragedy is not profound unless the poet imagines the crime – and in thus imagining it, he symbolically commits it. Similarly, in so far as the audience participates in the imaginings, it also participates in the offense" (Birenbaum 18). Shakespeare made the audience complicit in the sins of Richard III and Macbeth, borne of ruthless or cunning ambition; and the sins of Hamlet, borne of vengeance and dalliance with forbidden supernatural powers. As Macbeth and Hamlet let their submission to the supernatural guide their actions, the audience follows along, guilty by association. Just like his cunning Danish Prince, Shakespeare created a mousetrap of his own to ensnare his audience's conscious. However, did the audience commit the crime? Did the actors on stage commit the crime? Each appearance of the ghost

characters is an illusion to guide the audience to carefully examine the three protagonists' humanity, emotions, personality, and their thought processes. Shakespeare's ghosts reflected the humanity of his characters. They embodied the humanity of his three protagonists and of the political environments they inhabit and represent. Shakespeare's innovation in depicting the vengeful ghosts of Richard III onstage – giving a space for both the powerful and the deposed – restored their humanity. By doing so, he affirmed that all the marginalized victims should have the right to seek justice fairly, no matter their gender, age, or status. That Richard's doom is prophesized at the start of the play via supernatural omens gives his ultimate divine sanction. The Ghost in *Hamlet* is yet another breakthrough from Shakespeare's previous ghosts. Hamlet's ghost is the representation of vengeance, taking inspiration from skeptical scholars like Lavater, the disembodied ghosts of the Senecan tradition that cried for revenge, and the uncanny spirits of folk tales. *Hamlet*'s ghost represented a shift in Shakespeare's focus on the nature of ghosts from merely vengeful to far more religiously complex. Shakespeare exploited the tension between both Protestant and Catholic theology as well as the tension between reality and illusion to explore ambiguities in the social and religious order. Shakespeare employed ambiguity with the supernatural in order to make a social and political statement about the nature of power and power related to belief. And he leveraged the ambiguity of the characters' sanity to have the audience question the social order regarding the supernatural and its influence on people. The audience could feel deep sympathy for a tacitly Catholic ghost, as well as the Wittenberg-educated Hamlet wrestle with its orders and his conscience. By sympathizing with both sides without revealing his religious leanings, Shakespeare demonstrated an ability to portray subversive content while still avoiding the grim fate of some of his fellow playwrights like Marlowe and Kyd. He continued to demonstrate this ability when King James ascended to the

English throne, producing *Macbeth* to appeal to James's interests in studying the demonic. However, Shakespeare did not change his beliefs, using the visibility of the ghost to mentally punish the murderer on stage. Macbeth is self-conscious about his evil actions in the play, and once again a ghost visible only to the murderer tortures his conscience for the injustice carried out against him in life. Shakespeare created these illusions to show the audience that the ghosts are also a reflection of the protagonists' vulnerability and incapability; the ghosts are reflections of our own humanity. When human nature loses the rein, it leads to toil and trouble.

Chapter 3

In the previous chapter, I examined the different functions and interpretations of ghosts in Shakespeare's plays. In this chapter, I turn to another macabre element found in his works—madness. In early modern times, madness was not a new subject, and Shakespeare drew heavily from madness in *The Comedy of Errors*, one of his early plays. Through its depiction of mistaken identity and farcical confusion, this play presented madness with the abnormal behaviors associated with the mentally ill. These behaviors were a sign of possession and needed to be cured with either confinement or exorcism, one of the horrifying superstitions of early modern England. In the story, there are two sets of twins: Antipholus of Ephesus and Antipholus of Syracuse – twin brothers; and Dromio of Ephesus and Dromio of Syracuse – twin brothers who serve their respective Antipholus. They grow up in different cities, Ephesus and Syracuse, and neither Antipholus of Ephesus nor Dromio of Ephesus are aware of the existence of their twin brothers. Antipholus of Ephesus and Antipholus of Syracuse were separated as infants due to a shipwreck. Antipholus of Syracuse unexpectedly goes to Ephesus for his business, and the arrival of the Syracusan Antiopholus and Dromio creates zany doublings and confusions in the daily events of Ephesus. Adriana, wife of Antipholus of Ephesus, gets confused with, angry at, and scared of her husband's unusual words and behaviors because she unknowingly speaks with Antipholus of Syracuse, instead of her real husband; thus, Adriana believes her husband's unusual words and behaviors to be 'madness.' This confusion and her fear for her husband's madness lead her to seek out a conjuring schoolmaster, Doctor Pinch, to cure her husband, who she believes is ill and crazed. In act 4, scene 4, after many different misunderstandings and much confusion, Adriana desperately wants to avoid any physical contact with her husband, so she asks for help from people watching their argument in public:

[*He reaches for* Adriana*; she shrieks*.] *Enter three or four, and offer to bind him. He strives.*

Adriana: O, bind him, bind him. Let him not come near me.

Pinch: More company! [Get help!] The fiend is strong within him.

…

Pinch: Go, bind his man, for he is frantic too. (101-108)

[They bind Dromio.]

Adriana's decision to bind her husband and seek help from Doctor Pinch partially reflects the culture and values of early modern England. The abnormal acts of Adriana's husband, who seems to be exhibiting signs of mental illness, are grounds for confinement. Reactions like this, which shock the sensibilities of our contemporary readers, are allowed by the public in the play. Not only are such acts farcical to the early modern public, they are depicted in a play that belongs to the genre of comedy. In the early modern era, when people encountered what was possibly mental illness, they would not often think to seek medical therapy because psychology was not yet a commonly accepted concept, let alone an institutionalized medical field. When early modern people needed some sort of guidance or method to manage out of control situations involving the mentally ill, they would often rely on religious or superstitious solutions like exorcism or a conjuring schoolmaster. Contrary to this, the confusion in *Comedy of Errors* is not ultimately resolved through exorcism, confinement, or conjuration, but via a female Abbess who provides a still uncommon, skeptical, and corporeal solution, through healthy diet and good rest, to resolve the misinterpretations of madness. As opposed to his more politically ambiguous portrayals of ghosts, Shakespeare was more willing to present the issues of mental illness, melancholy, and madness along with a more healthy, skeptical, and humanistic stance to his

audience. At the same time, his portrayal also depicted religious cures for madness – conjuration, exorcism, and confinement – as false illusions. In this chapter, I will argue that Shakespeare used the medium of the stage and the changing religious and rhetorical attitudes of his era towards madness to provide his audience with non-religious perspectives in which to reconsider societal stances towards the mentally ill.

I will use the methodology of New Historicism to examine how *Richard III*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth* revealed hidden early modern attitudes and challenged audiences to consider skeptical and empathetic ideas towards madness. These four plays are representative of the ways in which early modern society's rudimentary understanding of mental illness and psychology was influenced by sociocultural factors, like the changing religious landscape, superstitious beliefs and practices, and pre-existing societal biases regarding religion and gender. While the early modern English people held some degree of prejudice against madness, Shakespeare depicted how mad women suffered more than mad men due to cultural biases regarding madness. First, I will discuss the evolution of societal attitudes towards madness prior to the early modern era, such as the Greco-Roman era Galenistic concept of humors governing mental afflictions like melancholy, to the emergence of confinement in the Middle Ages, to the more skeptical and humanistic approaches that emerged in the early modern era. Even though the definition of madness might have differed and changed due to differences in cultures, people across all societies would witness, identify, categorize, and even react to the unusual acts of madness in their society. This statement is echoed by Sander Gilman who argued in "Madness,": "A broad understanding of madness therefore must account for medical perspectives (both allopathic and complementary/alternative practices), as well as multiple social, political, and cultural understandings of madness and mad people, all fluid and ever

moving across the world" (114). Thus, inspecting madness through all these perspectives is crucial. Next, I will examine how shifting religious attitudes in the wake of the Protestant Reformation changed societal attitudes towards the mentally ill, and how Catholic belief in possession exacerbated trends that dehumanized the mentally ill; for example, renewed religious propaganda from the continent encouraged English Catholics and Calvinists to promote the practice of charismatic exorcisms to demonstrate their dogmatic correctness. As a result, Post-Reformation culture was also more willing to attribute the supernatural with diabolic origins, encouraging society to view madness as demonic possession. Furthermore, by stripping society of the mystical folk practices appropriated over time by the Catholic Church, the Reformation allowed madness to become a surrogate for the intense experience of the supernatural. Alternatively, I will also examine how the Reformation also created an environment in which early modern thinkers could disseminate skeptical ideas that challenged entrenched religious dogmas and biases regarding mental illness. In this chapter, anachronistic methods of modern psychology are used to examine madness in the early modern era as a necessary procedure to reveal how mental illness was depicted through a religious lens and interpretation as demonic possession. The judgment, explanations, and therapies for madness had a series of historical evolutions and deviations, which were essential to understand and interpret the plays of Shakespeare because these perspectives influenced his values and judgement on madness. I conclude that the new developments of the early modern era – increased literacy, a general interest in madness and melancholy amongst the English populace, and the distribution of texts by skeptical experts daring to attribute to the pathological what had once been the sole domain of the supernatural – encouraged Shakespeare to incorporate these secular depictions onstage.

Shakespeare contributed to the perceivable shift towards pathologizing mental illness by helping shatter the illusion of demonic possession as a cause of madness and abnormal behaviors.

A History of Madness

Our understanding of historical perceptions regarding madness is complex and subject to constant revision and evolution in European history. The historical record regarding madness traces its existence as far back as ancient Greek society and the Roman Empire[56]. Scholars, philosophers, and physicians never ceased to study madness between Greco-Roman times and the early modern period. Some popular books or schools of thought focusing on madness could have influenced Shakespeare's views on madness. In *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), a popular book in early modern England, Robert Burton described a concept of mental illness – shadowing the system adopted by Ancient Greek physicians and philosophers[57] – in which the four liquids (or humours) circulating through the human body determined mood and behavior. The humorist practices of Galenus, a second-century Greek physician, dominated European societies' attitudes towards the mentally ill. Paracelsus, a sixteenth-century Swiss physician, tried to reform Galen's teachings and – through his lectures and publications at the University of Basel – made the first reference to unconscious motivation of neuroses in the history of medical psychology. Early modern English society was well aware of the rivalry in the practice of medicine between physicians of the Galenist and Paracelsian camps as it pertained to their understanding of the concept of madness. Knowledge of the rivalry was ubiquitous enough that Shakespeare could

[56] In "Demonic Possessions and Mental Illness: Discussion of selected cases in Late Medieval Hagiographical Literature," Carlos Espi Forcen and Fernando Espi Forcen compared Jesus's healing from the Gospel of Mark with exorcism: "[…] Jesus approached the demoniac and referred directly to the spirit that dwelled inside him: 'Come out of this man, you impure spirit!' (Mark 5:8). By freeing the demoniac from the evil spirit, the afflicted man would be rehabilitated and his judgment restored. This therapeutic method would become the standard with the final triumph of the Christian religion in the Roman Empire" (261).

[57] These physicians and philosophers were Aristotle, Alcmaeon of Croton, Empedocles, Hippocrates, and Aelius Galenus (also knowns as Galen).

reference this rivalry in one of his comedies, *All's Well That Ends Well*, in which Lafeu and Paroles have a conversation about "an unknown fear":

Lafeu: To be relinquished of the artists—

Paroles: So I say—both of Galen and Paracelsus. (2.3.9-10)

This unknown fear related to both Galen and Paracelsus' studies is indeed madness. In order to understand the concept of madness in early modern times, we need to learn how early modern physicians used medical perspectives and terms to explain the influence and exhibition of madness. In "Subsect. II Division of the Body, Humours, Spirits," Burton explained the concept of humors, in which four liquids circulated through the human body and included fundamental elements, such as water, air, earth, and fire. These four humors were black bile, reflecting the melancholic[58]; Phlegm, the phlegmatic; yellow bile, the choleric; and blood, the sanguine (Burton 95-96). The four physical qualities of the humors, as well as whether they were in a balanced state or not, determined the behaviors of the human body and the moods of human beings. This belief also directly affected how early modern English people perceived madness. Most scholars, physicians, philosophers, and writers followed this belief. Humorism also existed as part of Shakespearean cosmology.

The practice of exorcism in early modern England was another holdover relic of the Middle Ages. Some people may associate the Middle Ages with the pejorative "Dark Ages" because of conceptions of intellectual darkness; it is misleading to casually generalize mental illness in the Middle Ages from this aspect only. What had been viewed as intellectual darkness

[58] *Oxford English Dictionary* defines "melancholie" is "†1. Ill temper, sullenness, brooding, anger. Obsolete. 2a. Black bile, one of the four chief fluids or cardinal humours recognized by ancient and medieval physiologists (see humour n. 1a). Formerly also called choler adust. Now historical. 2b. Medicine. Originally: a pathological condition thought to result from an excess of black bile in the body, characterized in early references by sullenness, ill temper, brooding, causeless anger, and unsociability, and later by despondency and sadness. Later: severe depression, melancholia. Now archaic and historical."

or regression[59] could simply be interpretations of cultural fronts in which society did not improve, but simply moved in a different or unexpected direction.[60] They also had widely divergent cures for madness. During that time, some Europeans considered madness or melancholie as a pathological diagnosis, but others ascribed the unusual or abnormal behaviors of the mentally infirm as possession by evil spirits[61]. Due to religious influence and interference, exorcism became one of the therapeutic methods for people of the Middle Ages and early modern eras to rely on when encountering uncontrollable abnormal behaviors. In "Being Mad in Early Modern England," Aleksandar Dimitrijevic pointed out that "[i]n practically all the earliest documents that have been preserved, mental disorders are described as possession" (1). Moreover, "The means of treatment was similarly mixed: from spiritual exorcism to the use of somatic interventions such as diet to restore mental balance and physical control to restrain the individual from actions that could harm their estates" (Gilman 116). The religious authorities would treat people who suffered from the mental disorders by attempting to exorcise the supposed devils from their bodies, by confining them when the devils refused to leave, or by starving the possessed to weaken the power of the Devil. In other words, the spiritual mandates of the church used a theological perspective for solutions that took precedence over other treatments, such as scientific or medical methods that were practiced by more secular advocates.

---

[59] People of the Middle Ages would have seen and experienced some progress, yet "we can find evidence of the regression of thought in some intellectual arenas. For example, in many areas of thought and pursuit, there was a return to primitive magical and superstitious thinking. This regression often had an influence on psychological and medical thought…" (Viney 76).

[60] For example, Chapter 2 reviewed evidence indicating that religion had intervened in society's understanding of the mind and mental health for several centuries. When Protestants reached the conclusion that the apparitions that Catholics believed to be the spirits of their deceased loved ones were instead demonic illusions, this represented a lateral cultural shift, rather than either an advancement or regression of thought.

[61] Zilboorg, Gregory, and George William Henry. *A history of medical psychology*. (1941).
Clarke, Basil Fulford Lowther. *Mental disorder in earlier Britain: exploratory studies*. University of Wales Press, 1975.
Wallis, Faith, ed. *Medieval Medicine: A Reader*. Vol. 15. University of Toronto Press, 2010.

During or before the early modern era, abnormal words or behaviors – e.g. behaviors we would now identify as epilepsy, seizures, Tourette's syndrome, dementia, delirium schizophrenia, etc.[62] – were associated with either the field of the supernatural, which was the domain of the Church, or the use of somatic interventions. Religious doctrines and interpretations led the people of the early modern era to view madness as more the result of supernatural causes, instead of pathological ones. According to Thomas Schoeneman, many texts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries began to regard witchcraft as the cause, not the result, of insanity (341). There were a few scholars like Edward Jorden or Timothy Bright whose opinions diverged from this, but in most cases, religious teachings overruled the medical experts on mental illness.

These works included both superstitious texts motivated by an intense fear of witches, as well as more scholarly work that approached mental illness from a pathological perspective. For example, according to Heinrich and Sprenger's *Malleus Maleficarum*, one of the witches' "ways of injuring humanity" is to "deprive them of reason" (115). Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholie* listed the influence of devils as a possible cause of mental disorder. During this era, witch hunts did not occur continuously, but sporadically, correlated with periodic outbreaks of religious wars during the Reformation. Perceived cases of possession increased with the fear of witches (Rosen 149); thus, demonic possession supplanted, not replaced, medical concepts of mental illness. According to Schoeneman, the Middle Ages and Renaissance were "a very long transitional period in which Galen's humoral paradigm went into decline and entered into coexistence with the demonological paradigm" (347). Fewer people associated humours with mental illness; more

[62] In "Demonic Possessions and Mental Illness: Discussion of Selected cases in Late Medieval Hagiographical Literature," Carlos Espi Forcen and Fernando Espi Forcen used "current psychiatric nosology to describe" the pathology of the possessed in the Hagiographical literature (261).

people instead sought religious help when they encountered someone with abnormal behaviors or words

Madness and Societal Interest

Perceptions of mental illness and demonic possession overlapped in certain aspects; therefore, some scholars and physicians who offered pathological diagnoses in certain cases still believed in demonology and considered demonic behaviors as a possible cause of disease. In *A History of Psychology* by Vayne Viney and *A History of Medical Psychology* by George Zilboorg and George W. Henry, the authors discussed the history of psychology in the Middle Ages. The Church would have a priest examine the "possessed," who was usually in confinement, and would perform an exorcism, read masses, or even resort to "whipping the patient" to evict demons or other spiritual entities from the possessed individual (Kemp, *Medieval Psychology* 7). The Catholic church developed a complete therapeutic system to help people who suffered from abnormal behaviors or demonic possession. Throughout the medieval period, "responsibility for and care of the mentally ill or behaviorally disordered rested in private rather than public hand. This was still in an era when – in Foucault's (1965) colorful phrase – 'The Great Confinement' had not begun" (Kemp, *Medieval Psychology* 6). Since the commoners dealt with these unusual behaviors in private, it would be difficult for them to have open conversations with physicians, experts, or even neighbors. Because of the singular position the Church occupied in early modern society, seeking help or solutions from the Church for concerns both trivial and paramount was the more orthodox and reliable solution for a populace that already depended on that institution for relief and guidance in all aspects of life. Physically isolating the mad from society was a common solution because "they [the mad] were usually incarcerated for a limited time, usually because of the costs to local communities" (Gilman 116);

thus, people likely resorted to confinement because they did not have a better solution. The idea of confinement began in the Middle Ages, signified by the foundation in London of Bedlam in 1247 as the "The Hospital of St. Mary of Bethlehem [63]" (*OED*, n.2). Incarceration was not the only means to deal with issues of the mad, but it was one of the options for commoners to simply and quickly restore the peace of society.

Besides its prior use as an institution for the care of the needy, Bedlam came to occupy an outsized space in the English imagination because of a cultural fascination with madness. As more and more mad individuals were confined within its walls, the administration of Bedlam became willing to invite a curious English public within its walls to gawk and stare at its mad occupants (MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam* 121). Bedlam was a source of amusement for the rich, who would buy tickets to observe the behavior of the mad as if they were going to see a play. Shakespeare also depicted scenes of confinement in *The Comedy of Errors* as well. Knowing the mad were tucked away behind bars or in confinement, the early modern English common folk, who may not necessarily have possessed a desire to enjoy watching them as did the rich, could feel their life was normal in comparison.

Scholarship of the Mad

Conversely, this growing fascination towards the mad led scholars and physicians from different fields[64] – under the influence of the Renaissance movement – to pursue their beliefs,

[63] It wasn't until 1377, however, that Bethlehem became a hospital exclusively for the mentally disturbed. Over the centuries, its name had transmuted from Bethlehem to Bedlam, which by that point had become synonymous with the distracted nature of the subjects confined within its walls. "In 1247 the Priory of St Mary of Bethlehem was founded, devoted to healing sick paupers. The small establishment became known as Bethlehem Hospital. Londoners later abbreviated this to 'Bethlem' and often pronounced it 'Bedlam'" ("From Bethlehem to Bedlam").

[64] Juan Luis Vives (1493-1540), the Spanish humanist, believed "that of all worldly knowledge, knowledge of the soul is most important" (Viney 97). "In an overview of the physiological-psychological thought of Vives, Clements (1967) pointed out that sometimes Vives' 'writings seem to show brief but almost brilliant flashes of physiological and psychological insights'" (Viney 99). Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) considered "the eye as the premiere instrument of human knowledge" which contributing to our understanding of visual perception (Viney 101). This

studies, and research due to their curiosity or care for mad individuals. Scholars' and physicians' views on madness informed the public at the time, but there was disagreement with regards to whether madness was supernatural or psychological in origin. During this time, with Reformists challenging previously established doctrines of the Catholic Church, a slew of thinkers and scholars found more leeway to question preconceived notions of madness, possession, and exorcism. In the late sixteenth century, Richard Napier, an astrologer and medical practitioner, saw over two thousand patients for disorder of the mind. Not trusting himself to distinguish whether ailments were natural or supernatural in origin, Napier simply assumed multiple causes (Neely, *Distracted* 47). Although Napier could not verify the validation of religious and supernatural infliction, he was willing to accept different explanations for the uncertain causes of madness. Timothie Bright[65], writing in *A Treatise of Melancholie* (1586), was more confident in his ability to distinguish between spiritual and pathological causes of melancholy and listed different symptoms of melancholie that he observed and recorded:

> The perturbations of melancholy are for the most parte, sadde and fearful, and such as rise of them: as distrust, doubt, diffidence, or dispaire, sometimes furious and sometimes merry in apparaunce, through a kinde of Sardonian, and false laughter, as the humour is disposed that procureth these diversities. Those which are sad and pensive, rise of that melancholick humour, which is the grossest part of the blood, whether it be iuice or

assertion and contribution help the later psychological studies on mental illness, especially illusions and hallucination. Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim, Paracelsus (1493-1541) did not believe in demonology and believed "that mental processes may have an impact on the health of the body and vice versa…. People such as Paracelsus represent an important bridge from Medieval scholasticism to modern science" (Viney 102). Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592) emphasized on human beings in this world more than God and afterlife. "According to Bloom (1987), 'Montaigne, until the advent of Shakespeare, is the great figure of the European Renaissance, comparable in cognitive power and in influence to Freud in our Century'" (Viney 103). Juan Huarte (1530-c.-1592) was one of the pioneers in modern psychology, and "his book *Examen de Inegios para las Sciencias* (*The Examination of Men's Wits*) stands as one of the great classics in differential psychology" (Viney 108).

[65] Timothy Bright was an Early Modern British physician and clergyman.

excrement, not passing the naturall temper in heat whereof it partaketh, and is called cold in comparison onely. (102)

Bright used melancholia to explain the unusual shifts of human emotions which were caused by an excess of black bile. It could be commonplace for gentlemen of that era to experience feelings of sadness or melancholy, and Bright recognized that such feelings could be the secular natural result of their suffering from mental health issues. Bright's *Treatise* spent all but one chapter talking about the material self rather than the spiritual self.[66] In effect, he demystified madness, prioritizing the secular over the supernatural (Neely, *Distracted* 15). Up until the Reformation, early modern English thought remained mostly within the parameters of the Catholic Church; Bright appropriated a spiritual deficiency into the material realm as a curable physical ailment.

Later, both Edward Jorden and Samuel Harsnett went even further with their skepticism than Bright in claiming ideological territory from the religious world for the material world. As the authors of, respectively, *A briefe discourse of a Disease Called the Suffocation of the Mother* (1603) and *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* (1603), their skeptical writings saw their origins in the religious conflict between Reformists and Catholics and Puritans. Exorcism in early modern England played a major role in the propaganda battle between the Anglican Church and other Christian sects, with Catholics and Puritans staging spectacular exorcisms to captivate the public's attention and affirm that their sect was the true faith. Jorden and Harsnett's works explicitly rejected these charismatic exorcisms and attributed to the pathological what had previously been consigned to the supernatural. These works were written with either the commission or encouragement of the Anglican Bishop of London specifically to discredit the validity of possession and witchcraft that Catholics and Puritans had exploited in their exorcisms

[66] The 36th Chapter, "A Consolation unto the Afflicted Conscience", in *A Treatise of Melancholie*.

(MacDonald, *Witchcraft* viii). Seen this way, these skeptical tracts were also works of propaganda in the ongoing propaganda war between the Church of England and the Catholic Church.

As scholars and physicians studied and looked for ways, other than religious, to understand and cure melancholie, a fad of appropriating melancholia was picked up by those outside the scholarly communities. The Renaissance's emphasis on humanism and scholars' interests on madness could have sparked early modern commoners' interest as well: "Gentlemen and ladies proclaimed themselves melancholy" (McDonald, *Mystical Bedlam* 2). Early modern Europeans along with English gentlemen and ladies often labeled themselves with "melancholy." They did not consider melancholy to be insanity or a mental illness, but a special identity, which made them feel different from others. It became a trendy act to proclaim oneself melancholic. Starting from the early modern era, menlancholie became a label which was no longer unspeakably taboo to bear. Melancholie became a topic of literary works, zealous studies, and a fashionable label in early modern Europe.

The Reformation's removal of Catholicism's image and traditions also influenced the era's traditional gender biases. According to Scribner, the Reformation narrowed the religious space allowed to women. The removal of the trappings of Catholicism also mean the excision of female religious institutions such as convents, or any number of female saints that served as role models for female piety, narrowing the scope of available religious status to that of the dutiful pastor's wife (Scribner 254). The resulting resurgence of misogyny meant that the only ways in which women were capable of connecting with the supernatural world was as witches, victims of witchcraft or possession[67], or through female-specific maladies like hysteria.

[67] As Michael MacDonald noted, in his analysis of Edward Jorden's *A Briefe Discourse*, "some people undoubtedly did mimic the illness of possession in order to gain the attention and authority it conferred" (p. xxxvi). In the case of

Exorcism Propoganda

Catholics and Puritans used demonic possession and exorcism as a cause and cure, respectively, for mental illness because the process of exorcism captivated people and reaffirmed their faith. The Anglican church counteracted the process of exorcism by shifting toward skepticism. The propagandic element was heavy in the charismatic and well-publicized exorcisms conducted by Catholics and Puritans. Greenblatt noted that Harsnett explicitly associated exorcisms with secular stage plays ("Shakespeare and the Exorcists" 106). These were not ceremonies that took place cloistered away in the inner grottos of old churches, far from the prying eyes of the laity. To serve the exorcists and their advocates' true purpose, they required an audience to witness the demonic throes of the supposedly possessed, the virtuosity of the priests attempting to save their souls in the name of Christ, and the power of their specific confession that compels the possessive demon to release the possessed victim. These rituals were often presented as a theatrical contest of confessions in which the Protestants' tactics proved less compelling. "Successful" treatments of demonic possession – through Catholic exorcism or Protestant prayer – were used as propaganda by their respective denominations (Kemp and Williams 27). In this regard, Protestants were at a disadvantage – while Catholics could stage charismatic displays that captivated observers, Protestants were limited to whatever practices had explicit biblical sanction, i.e. prayer and fasting (MacDonald, *Witchcraft* xix). Otherwise, the Anglican Church's two remaining options for combatting Puritan and Catholic exorcism were to

---

the possession of Mary Glover, which Jorden diagnosed as hysteria, a great deal of importance was indeed conferred upon both Mary Glover and the lady she accused of bewitching her. MacDonald further noted that Mary Glover came from a devout Protestant family; thus the Puritan exorcists were trying to cure her (p. xxxviii). Mary Glover had stumbled upon a way to elevate a personal conflict with another woman into a very public confrontation between God and Satan, with herself as the female avatar of feminine godliness. Whether she really suffered from hysteria or was feigning possession, she had carved out a space for herself within despite strict Reformist strictures to attain feminine religious status.

either question the very existence of witchcraft and possession (at least after the 'age of miracles'[68]) or claim that the individuals the exorcists supposedly healed were faking their possession or bewitchment. To challenge such theatrical performances in this propaganda war, reformists and skeptics would need theatrical spectacles of their own that could grab as much attention from the public.

Madness on Shakespeare's Stage

Shakespeare gave the ideas of skeptical tracts a stage and an audience by incorporating them in his works, countering the theatrical displays of exorcism with theatrical and illusional displays of skepticism. The increasing awareness and shifting beliefs regarding mental illness are evident in creative works of the time, including Shakespeare's *Hamlet, Macbeth,* and *The Comedy of Errors*. The use of mad characters in these plays served to ruminate on the significance of the motif behind society's reaction to their abnormal behaviors. The designation of the mad characters reflects on the humanity of one set of protagonists - Hamlet, Ophelia, Gertrude, Macbeth, and Lady Macbeth - and the consequences of confinement and exorcism on another set of characters, the protagonists of *Comedy of Errors*. Shakespeare bestowed human qualities upon his characters who were either mad or accused of madness. His mad characters cover the spectrum of the myriad ways in which early modern society viewed madness through the lens of gender, class, and religion. Shakespeare presented an alternative depiction of madness and mental illness for his audience far different than what they would witness as a paying spectator of the occupants of Bedlam. By portraying his characters as avatars of the various

[68] In the *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, Reginald Scot questioned the existence of witchcraft and possession and sharply criticized the belief in the ability of so-called witches to perform miracles: "lilthough in times past, it pleased God, extraordinarilie to shew miracles amongest his people" (125). This reflected the widely-held understanding amongst reformists of Scot's era that "the working of miracles is ceased" (39). In his mind, it was blasphemous to suggest that people possessed the ability to work miracles that God Himself chose to cease performing.

forms of madness experienced by different groups in early modern English society, Shakespeare restored their humanity. Furthermore, his mad characters have significant human qualities the audience can empathize with which highlight the injustice of confinement and exorcism. His mad characters and his staging of secular approaches to their madness evolved over time that their evolution followed the path of early modern England's politics, society, and culture.

Hamlet

The Renaissance views of the four humours certainly informed views towards madness, and early modern English audiences could easily sense a strong atmosphere of melancholie throughout *Hamlet*. Prince Hamlet is demonstrative of the Reformation's effect on the psychology of early modern England and Jennifer Rust's idea that, by rejecting much of the pomp and circumstance of Catholicism, the Reformation created a melancholic longing for surrogates for these symbols and rituals. In a post-Reformation society, in the process of stripping away the old Catholic symbols and other avenues for mystical experience, *Hamlet*'s Ghost as well as Prince Hamlet's madness may be surrogates for the intense and visceral ritual experience of the supernatural that was being rejected in Protestant Elizabethan England. *Hamlet* demonstrates Hamlet's mind struggling between the old and new religious systems. Cherished symbols and rituals of the previous generation had been suddenly (and occasionally violently) cast away by a new regime, and previously held beliefs were suddenly cast as meaningless. Under such tremendous mental pressure, how can Hamlet not feel and act melancholie? As the early modern audience saw his melancholie, our contemporary readers will find Hamlet suffering from depression. In this way, Hamlet's character exists as a surrogate for the early modern audience upon which to project anxieties and uncertainties about the loss of their previously held rituals or even the significance of this "empty" world in favor of an intense single-minded focus

on piety and the afterlife. With all of this, a sense of melancholia became commonplace in society partially due to the development of printing press, and this melancholia hangs over *Hamlet* as existential questions are considered.

The gendered differences in Shakespeare's portrayals of madness are also noteworthy. It was only a matter of time before these medical diagnoses of madness found their way onto the stage. By representing madness and the process of identifying madness onstage, plays taught audiences how to identify and respond to madness (Neely, *Distracted* 49). However, the early modern people responded differently towards madness based on gender. For example, in *Hamlet*, madness is always interpreted for the audience by other characters as it appears. As Ophelia and Polonius misinterpret Hamlet's madness for not getting Ophelia's love:

> Polonius: Mad for thy love?
> Ophelia: My lord, I do not know,
> But truly I do fear it.
> Polonius: What said he?
> Ophelia: He took me by the wrist and held me hard,
> Then goes he to the length of all his arm,
> ….
> He raised a sigh so piteous and profound
> ….
> He seemed to find his way without his eyes,
> For out o' doors he went without their help,
> And to the last bended their light on me. (2.1.86-101)

Horatio enters a public room of the castle and reports to Queen Gertrude about Ophelia's madness in Act 4:

> Horatio: She is importunate,
> Indeed distraught. Her mood will needs be pitied.
> Queen Gertrude: What would she have?
> Horatio: She speaks much of her father, says she hears
> There's tricks i'th' world, and hems, and beats her heart,
> Spurns enviously at straws, speaks things in doubt
> That carry but half sense. Her speech is nothing,
> Yet the unshaped use of it doth move

The hearers to collection. They aim at it,
And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts…
Which, as her winks and nods and gestures yield them,
Indeed would make one think there might be thought,
Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily. (4.5.2-13)

It is necessary to compare and analyze these two descriptions of madness in parallel. The early modern audience had a certain degree of understanding about reading and accepting melancholie and madness. However, early modern society adopted a binary system based on gender to interpret madness. In "Wittenberg and Melancholic Allegory: The Reformation and Its Discontents in *Hamlet*," Jennifer Rust noted that from a modern perspective, we would diagnose Hamlet's actions as melancholic depression belonging to part of madness. Early Modern England's social values, scholars' studies, and physicians' diagnosis explained Hamlet's melancholia and depression by depriving him of a way to resolve the tension between the opposing interpretations. However, someone from the skeptical perspective of Edward Jorden would ascribe Ophelia's madness into the feminine category of hysteria. When the audience observes her language and behavior, they can tell Ophelia suffers from a sort of madness. Her affliction definitely cannot be the trendy and masculine melancholie that an early modern gentleman would experience. That Hamlet chooses melancholia shows his entrapment not only in the social and political order of Protestantism but also in a binary system between Protestants and Catholics that did not tolerate ambiguity. Hamlet's madness creates an illusion to ensure the safety of Shakespeare. Ophelia does not choose her own madness. The play presents her madness as coming from Hamlet's abandonment and her father's death, resulting in her distraught state of mind. The gender inequality eventually forces her to be mad.

Moreover, if the audience views the characters' madness through the lens of gender, then Prince Hamlet is vulnerable like Ophelia, but the difference in gender causes Ophelia to possess

far less agency over her fate and her madness. Ophelia is the female representation of madness in *Hamlet*. The mental states of this pair have been a popular subject of discussion for centuries. In "William Shakespeare and the Representation of Female Madness," Maria Isabel Barbudo analyzed the comparison between Hamlet and Ophelia and refuted Fernando Pessoa's depiction of male madness "for violent action, physical or mental [presentation]…female madness, …, is conveyed through 'silence and poetry'" (152). Barbudo disagreed that Hamlet's madness contains masculine qualities, arguing instead that "hysteria, related to repressed sexuality, seems to affect both characters, Hamlet and Ophelia. To this approach we may add the analysis of Hamlet's tragic flaw, generally attributed to his melancholic incapacity for physical action" (Barbudo 152). Neely, as a feminist scholar, pointed out several studies on both Hamlet and Ophelia's psychological context, and how "she and Hamlet act out distinctions between feigned and actual madness and between rational and mad suicide, distinctions that the culture was gradually establishing" ("Documents in Madness" 324). Seen this way, Ophelia serves as the counterpart of Hamlet. Without Ophelia, Hamlet would still act out in ways that suggest a mental state somewhere between feigned and actual madness. Yet without Hamlet, Ophelia's father will still dominate her life and force her to be the pliable and obedient daughter or the perfect sister. Per Laertes, "…, if praises may go back again, / Stood challenger, on mount, of all the age / For her perfections" (4.7.27-29). Ophelia does not possess any agency of her own, and her depiction serves as a reminder of the fate of the noble's daughter: as that of a valuable property that belonged to her father, brother, or husband. The reading of madness as it relates to and contrasts Hamlet and Ophelia is gender-inflected.

In comparison, Gertrude serves a better counterpart to Ophelia than Prince Hamlet. As a noble female character in the same society, Gertrude enjoys a high quality of life at court. When

the Old Hamlet was still alive, she was his beloved queen. After he passed away, she is her former-brother-in-law, now-husband's beloved queen. As a woman, she might not even have experienced the emptiness of not having a man who loves her or of losing her title. After Old Hamlet passed away, she immediately marries Claudius, granting herself a measure of stability and sparing her from the prolonged and uncertain yearning that sapped away Ophelia's sanity. There is no clear line to demonstrate the love Old Hamlet possessed for Gertrude while he was still alive outside the accounts of his contemporaries, but the audience could feel the sincere love Claudius had for Gertrude, "Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen, / Th'imperial jointress [joint possessor] of his warlike state, / Have we as 'twere with a defeated joy, / With one auspicious and one dropping eye, / With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage" (1.2.8-12). Claudius promises to share equal status and power of state and marriage with his queen, an unusual promise and idea in early modern England.[69] Sadly, compared with Gertrude, Ophelia's eventual madness seems inevitable.

Ophelia's lack of a narrative arc and her association with madness serve to use her female characteristics to fight against the patriarchal society, cannon, and norms. In "Representing Ophelia: women, madness, and the responsibilities of feminist criticism," Elaine Showalter challenged Neely's advocacy that Neely "'must 'tell' Ophelia's story.' But what can we mean by Ophelia's story?" (78). Rebutting Neely's argument, Showalter went further still and claimed that "Deprived of thought, sexuality, language, Ophelia's story becomes the Story of 0—the zero, the empty circle or mystery of feminine difference" (78-79). This analysis eliminates the existence of Ophelia's mind, feelings, and language. If the reader tends to compare Hamlet and Ophelia, then, indeed, Ophelia has no story found in *Hamlet* because her character was created to

[69] Even Queen Elizabeth I also tried very hard to avoid stepping into a marriage which would make her inferior to her husband.

be subordinated to a patriarchal figure: possessing no story arc of her own, she exists only as narrative beats in the story arcs of male characters like Hamlet and Leartes. Driven out of breath and mind, she drowns herself: a means of suicide that is also heavily associated with the feminine. Water, the flowing feminine fluid, carries away her life and sanity from her original masculine world. Scholars tried to analyze the causes of Ophelia's madness because she is dependent on men to tell her what to do and how to behave in most aspects of her life: Hamlet treats Ophelia cruelly in their courtship; her father's sudden death – for which Hamlet is responsible – also shakes her gravely; Hamlet's abrupt exile seems to signal that he has abandoned her forever; and finally, her country, king, and queen watch her descent into a lunatic state without providing any assistance. Barbudo claimed that feminists from the 1970's saw "Ophelia's madness mainly as a protest and rebellion, and Ophelia herself as a heroine, a powerful figure who refuses to speak the language of the patriarchal order" (152). Ophelia's life is a man-made illusion by the patriarchal society that consumes her sanity gradually. If she cannot be her own master in even one aspect of her existence, drowning herself under the label of madness might be a last sorrowful resort for Ophelia. Her silent void she leaves behind after death becomes a visible figure of power and strength on stage.

According to Christian decrees and an early modern perspective, committing suicide was a severe, secular, and sinful crime against God, but the popularity of melancholie or madness became an excuse for the upper class to alleviate the degree of the crime if needed.[70] Even

[70] "Suicide was a civil and religious crime in Tudor and Stuart England, and custom and criminal law dictated penalties to be exacted from the deceased and his survivors that seem savage to our minds. The seriousness of the act called for condign punishment. Suicides were denied funerals and burial in the churchyard, the rites that marked the transmigration of Christian souls into the afterlife and membership in the community of the dead. Interred hugger-mugger at a crossroads, the body was pinioned through the heart with a wooden stake. … Confiscation of the suicide's goods was encouraged by offering royal officials a portion of the spoils that they secured from the crown, a procedure that was routine in all felony cases" (McDonlad, *Mystical Bedlam* 132).

though suicide was considered a heroic act in Ancient Greek and Roman times,[71] in early modern times suicides were barred from receiving a Christian burial, including burial in sacred grounds with the associated church rituals. In act 5 scene 1 of *Hamlet*, two peasants secretively carry Ophelia's body into a churchyard and discuss whether Ophelia deserves a Christian burial or not because she drowned herself. One of the peasants criticizes Ophelia's sinful act: "Why, there thou sayst, and the more pity that great folk should have count'nance in this world to drown or hang themselves more than their even Christian…" (5.1.25-27). The peasants' bitter remarks reveal the injustice of Shakespeare's contemporary society. Although the upper class could avoid the punishment of denial of burial in a churchyard, suicide was still considered a despicable act. The conversation between the two peasants reveals their discontent toward the upper class wielding their privilege to dodge the punishment and abusing a religious system which every good Christian is supposed to obey. *Hamlet* was published in 1603, and the churchyard scene reflects the atmosphere of that time. This realistic depicture of the inequality between upper and lower classes might have served a conduit for most of Shakespeare's audience to vent their discontent. However, Claudius and Gertrude might feel somewhat guilty for Ophelia's madness, for the all-consuming flames of her madness were unwittingly fanned by Hamlet's deeds. Claudius and Gertrude's acquiesce grants the privilege of a Christian burial to Ophelia which serves to protect her final dignity and her family's reputation. By doing so, they hope she might still have the merest chance to go to heaven as a compensation. Even in death, the upper class possessed more privilege to empathize privately with the mentally ill people in early modern England.

[71] In *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594), Lucrece treats suicide as a sinful crime even though this poem is set before the establishment of the Roman Republic in 509 B.C., not a Christian background. The act of suicide was still considered contemptible.

Macbeth

By the time *Macbeth* was published in 1623, the atmosphere regarding mental illness and suicide had changed, and by then society directly considered suicide to be an act derived from madness. This change had affected Shakespeare as well, and he adopted this new interpretation of suicide with madness and set the stage for the denouement of Lady Macbeth's suffering mental state. Near the end of *Macbeth*, Lady Macbeth ends her life through suicide. Neely also tried to attest to Lady Macbeth's madness through one of Shakespeare's contemporaries: "[Robert] Burton attributes night-walking to the diseased imagination, but he traces all the ways in which the imagination, the body, the mind, and the soul can infect one another" (*Distracted* 57). It is not a conscious decision on the part of Lady Macbeth, but her sleepwalking was a consequence of her guilty conscience. Shakespeare did not depict the actual scene, but had the character of Malcom announce her death: "… his fiend-like queen— / Who, as 'tis thought, by self and violent hands / Took off her life—this and what needful else / That calls upon us, by the grace of grace" (5.11.35-38). Lady Macbeth's suicide was supposed to be a despicable act, like Ophelia's. However, as melancholy became a fashionable emblem during late 16th and early 17th centuries, "the fascination with this classical malady fostered the belief that suicidal behavior was a sign of mental illness, rather than a religious crime" (McDonald, *Mystical Bedlam* 135). The societal tendency to equate the heavy concept of suicide with a sinful crime suddenly gave way to a pathetic aspect and concession. When Lady Macbeth is mentally ill, she will not be able to obey Christian decrees because she no longer possesses control over her own body or mental faculties. In fact, Shakespeare had implied the oncoming suicide before the denouement. When the Doctor suggests Lady Macbeth to seek for divinity, he especially instructs the gentlewoman to "Remove from her the means of all annoyance, / And still keep eyes upon her. …" (5.1.66-

67). “The means of all annoyance” means self-injury, implying foresight of her future suicide. Lady Macbeth’s suicide represents that madness can endanger a person’s mental and physical health. In doing so, Shakespeare demonstrated early modern English society’s growth to a more understanding, empathetic, and humanist concern towards mental illness.

Lady Macbeth is also representative of the ways in which the discussion of madness in *Macbeth* pulls the deviance of the therapies on mental illness from a religious direction to a pathological one. Both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth suffer from mental illness. Macbeth’s mental instability, which accompanies the illusion of seeing Banquo’s ghost, appears earlier than hers. As Macbeth suffers from a guilty conscience, he is unable to fall asleep. Lady Macbeth tries to comfort and persuade him by saying that “You lack the season of all natures, sleep” (3.4.140). Lady Macbeth wants him to know that sleep is vital for him, and lack of sleep will only deteriorate his situation. Unfortunately, and ironically, Lady Macbeth suffers from somnambulism later in Act 5. A guilty conscience is a recurring literary trope in Shakespeare’s works. Even though Lady Macbeth’s mindset and words are more masculine than Macbeth – and her masculinity seems to conquer Macbeth’s in the first half of the play – she can only demonstrate her masculinity while awake. Lady Macbeth’s guilty conscience slowly invades her while her otherwise-dominant willpower rests during the night. At the beginning of Act 5, a Doctor of Physic and a gentlewoman are discussing Lady Macbeth’s somnambulism as they witness her walking and talking in her sleep. The gentlewoman first seeks help from a doctor for pathological therapy, rather than a priest for religious cures. The Doctor’s home visit for Lady Macbeth reflected the change in the early modern English people’s mindset and understanding regarding abnormal behaviors of a patient. *Macbeth* was one of Shakespeare’s 17th century works that presented attitudes and methods different from Adriana’s decision in Shakespeare’s

earlier *Comedy of Errors* to bind her husband, keep him in confinement, and seek out an exorcist. Even though Lady Macbeth is a fictional character, the early modern audience could still recognize her illness and understand the purpose of pathological therapy which demonstrates the acceptance of pathological therapy was increasing in the early 17th century.

The Doctor in *Macbeth* manifests knowledge nearly comparable to that of a modern psychiatrist. As the Doctor observes Lady Macbeth sleepwalking and hears her speak in her sleep of all the crimes she has committed with Macbeth, the Doctor realizes what drives Lady Macbeth to sleepwalk, and refuses to cure her, declaring her affliction outside his ability: "Do breed unnatural troubles; infected minds / To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets / More needs she the divine than the physician. / God, God forgive us all! Look after her" (5.1.62-65). The Doctor seems to settle into recognition of the higher power of religion. In his diagnosis of her sleepwalking condition, he suggests Lady Macbeth instead gets help from God. In *Distracted Subjects*, Neely's interpretation of the Doctor's suggestion focused the literal meaning, without taking into consideration the setting. "The doctor explicitly reads Lady Macbeth's state as religious despair that is the result of guilt—in Bright's terms, caused by a sense of sin rather than natural melancholy…Hence the doctor's confident distinction between diseases requiring divines and those requiring doctors may be too simple" (*Distracted* 57). Neely ended the paragraph here without providing further explanation. In the play, the Doctor knows Lady Macbeth suffers from a guilty conscience when he hears her confessing in her dream. No matter what he hears, he cannot and will not take any further action to treat her conditions because she is still the queen, who – as soon as she is awake – might be forced to kill him once she becomes aware of the knowledge he possesses of her sinful secret. He is terrified when he learns about the murder of Duncan, the ghost of Banquo, and the death of Lady Macduff, telling

himself: “Go to, go to. You have known what you should not” (5.1.39). He clearly knows that he should not risk his own life by treating Lady Macbeth’s illness. Moreover, he believes what the queen needs is not a doctor, but a priest for her confession. Although this sounds more divine than pathological, and although the Doctor is not a modern psychiatrist, he still prescribes a treatment that modern psychiatrists will agree upon: She needs to talk to someone and to release her stress. Lady Macbeth kept such a heavy and sinful secret for a prolonged period. Her mental condition can no longer bear the pressure of her guilty conscience, so she must release it in her sleep. When the Doctor suggests the gentlewoman tell Lady Macbeth to go for “divine” therapy, his suggestion possesses the concept of a near-modern scientific and treatment showing Shakespeare was more eager to admonish his audience to seek for physicians’ therapy first on mental illness.

Through a modern perspective, recent studies also clarify the ambiguous issue of whether Lady Macbeth suffers from mental illness. At the beginning of the 21st century, scholars shifted the emphasis on studying Lady Macbeth’s sleepwalking from a pathological case or the image of a suffocating woman desiring male power[72] to her psychoanalysis. Neely raised questions regarding the representation of Lady Macbeth and the three witches to shine a light on the bifurcated belief of early modern England, “melancholy or the devil, madwomen or witches, castrating wives or ambitious tyrants” (*Distracted* 59). Nonetheless, Neely did not dig further in terms of psychoanalysis. Later, in “Lady Macbeth and the Daemonologie of Hysteria,” Joanna Levin argued that “the sexually powerful Mother purported to split the female subject—to divide both her mind and her body—hysterics were not the ‘masters of [their] own affections’ and could

[72] In “Escaping the Matrix: The Construction of Masculinity in Macbeth and Coriolanus” in *Suffocating Mothers*, Janet Adelman emphasized on the loss of male power to Lady Macbeth, “This image of murderously disrupted nurturance is the psychic equivalent of the witches’ poisonous cauldron; both function to subject Macbeth’s will to female forces” (134).

not control their own anguish and desire" through the representation of Lady Macbeth (45). Levin's focus was solely on Lady Macbeth's mind and body, her anguish and desire as a woman and mother, and the significance of hysterical demonstration. In "A Mind Diseased: Reading Lady Macbeth's Madness," Christine Couche took a more specific means of interpreting the unstable mental state of Lady Macbeth and her sleepwalking in Act 5 by "looking at the text in the light of a modern understanding of postnatal psychosis" (110). Couche believed Lady Macbeth's unusual and distressful behaviors meet the profile of postnatal psychosis. The concept is nothing new to modern readers because it is a concept and term well understood by modern psychologists and psychiatrists. At the same time, we cannot claim it did not exist in Shakespeare's time. Couche explained that "Lady Macbeth seems to have provided Shakespeare with an opportunity to represent some awkward, unnamed behaviours which he had observed or heard were occasionally associated with recently delivered women… Because postnatal psychosis is as close to purely biological as a mental illness can be, it is a relatively safe bet that it occurred in Shakespeare's time" (104-105). From the constant occurrence rates in which women in all cultures around the world are afflicted with postnatal psychosis today, one can infer that the condition was present at the same rate of occurrence in early modern England as well. While the early modern populace might not have had the same term to diagnose or describe postnatal psychosis, it could be ascribed to the category of hysteria. The unusual behaviors and moods of contemporary mothers suffering from this condition would have existed in enough cases to have been witnessed by a big enough portion of the early modern population that the general contours of the affliction would be witnessed or known to a significant portion of the populace. Postnatal psychosis did not simply come into being in the modern age, for Shakespeare had recorded and presented the portrayal of postnatal psychosis.

While Shakespeare was openly skeptical of the practice of exorcism, his audience could see instances of a sort of successful exorcism in his canon. Death can neither exorcise the evil of Macbeth nor purge him. Yet rather than exorcising the world of Macbeth's evil by removing his spirit from it, Shakespeare chose to remove Macbeth's physical body instead. Hampton argued that "Macbeth's fiendlike foulness is exorcised by Edward III's saintly fairness" (330). However, Macbeth dies at the hands of Macduff, who was not a priest, but a warrior. At the same time, Macbeth is not possessed by a devil. He may have suffered from mental illness, which is one possible reason why he (and he alone) could see Banquo's ghost and attempt to exorcise it. Many guests simply see him talking into the void. The purgation Hampton described did not focus on mental or spiritual purgation. Even though he discussed how a priest could take a physician's job to "purge its deleterious effects," the fate of Macbeth is death—his entire removal from his kingdom and the world. It is not a typical exorcism; it more resembles a physical purgation or an excision. The wickedness inside of Macbeth's body still existed, just not in their world. His death is more akin to a symbolic exorcism. Macduff indeed purged his world by taking Macbeth's life and sending his evil or his mental illness to the undiscovered country, unable to further inhabit the ambiguous, liminal space between the supernatural and the psychological.

The Comedy of Errors

Additionally, Shakespeare also examined the connection between madness and exorcism from his contemporaries in order to disassociate the two in his plays. As compared with ghosts and witches, Shakespeare's beliefs were more pronounced and outright skeptical on exorcism. Greenblatt demonstrated that there exists evidence that Shakespeare consulted Samuel Harsnett's *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* for his depictures of madness and exorcism ("Shakespeare and the Exorcists"). In "Shakespeare and Madness," Will Tosh stated both Galen

and Bright "helped Shakespeare to understand the causes and treatment of melancholy and madness as his contemporaries understood the conditions." How could a priest provide a feasible and effective method to cure the ill while most of symptoms of the mentally ill remained uncertain and without a specific cure? How could the priest discern that a person suffered from mental illness if the priest did not possess understanding of it as a disease beyond a metaphysical case of the devil inhabiting someone? In *the Comedy of Errors*, Antipholus of Ephesus was arrested for demonic possession. Before Shakespeare drew the play to a close, he introduced the Abbess to resolve the plot. With the Abbess, possessing a respectable reputation, Shakespeare exorcised exorcism to provide a near modern examination and analysis towards mental illness. The Abbess, based on pathological – rather than religious – logic, openly suggests the treatment of madness and forsakes the practice of exorcism. The Abbess' perspective disassociates her identity from her admonishment: "In food, in sport, and life-preserving rest / To be disturbed would mad or man or beast" (5.1. 84-85). The Abbess disassociates the relationship between possession and madness. The Abbess, as a female, still voices her opinion on the seemingly supernatural issues, contra the gender bias displayed in *The Malleus Maleficarum*. To end this play, Shakespeare had an Abbess, a female religious figure, possess the voice of authority and provide the cures for the mental illness in front of the audience. In a subversive reversal of gender roles of the time, it was the female character providing narration and clarity for the audience. Shakespeare upended the norms and expectations by placing a woman in a position of power. While many other portrayals of that era would only put a woman in a position of such great power if she were a witch (powerful women were assumed to be wicked figures that ought to be feared), Shakespeare presented an Abbess – a Godly and pure Christian woman – to provide the absolute truth. Bright articulated concepts like the exhortations of the Abbess in *A*

Treatise of Melancholie (1586): "depression was a physiological disorder caused by bad diet, so that the first step in recovery is to avoid" bad ingredients. Philip Barrough, an English medical writer, developed a more discreet theory that "a bath of sweet water with a moist dyet let the sicke use often as one of this remedies, sleep is wonderful good for them, as also moderate carnal copulation" in *The Methode of Phisicke Conleyning the Causes, Signes, and Cures of Invvard Diseases in Mans Body From the Head to the Foote*. The Abbess, Bright, and Barrough all consider that bad diet and an improper sleep schedule can drive people crazy, and that good sleep and diet are the best remedies for a person who suffers from mental illness—a diagnosis that our modern psychological therapy still adopts. Again, Shakespeare reinforced the significance of the idea of a proper cure for mad people without holding ambiguous aspects. He also questioned the dominant ideology by having a Godly woman express a corporeal interpretation in order to orient the audience in one of the few areas where there was still ambiguity of causation.

Seen this way, Shakespeare yet again conducted another exorcism on stage. Using all the theatricality inherent in exorcism, Shakespeare presented – before a packed audience of enraptured spectators – possessed individuals in need of divine intervention. In this case, the ones in need of divine intervention are the twins who see misfortune at the invisible hands of the plot. And like the charismatic exorcists of his age, Shakespeare unshackled his subjects of the curse that clings to them – in this case, the comical misunderstandings artificially generated by the plot. However, the means of this unshackling is not the well-rehearsed rituals of Catholic or Puritan healers, nor the scripturally restricted exhortations of Protestant dogma, but the explicitly secular admonitions of a secular Abbess. Like a charismatic healer, Shakespeare conducted an exorcism on stage to heal his beleaguered protagonists. Only he was not exorcising any

supernatural demons. Through the secular and rational power of the Abbess, Shakespeare exorcised exorcism itself.

For the Skeptics, A Muse of Fire

More than with ghosts or witchcraft, Shakespeare was willing to openly challenge the illusions associated with possession, madness, and confinement, and more willing to claim outright that exorcism was a fraudulent illusion. The skeptical texts promoted by the Anglican Church attacking previous notions of what caused mental illness, like Harsnett and Jorden's, as well as the propaganda war between the Anglican Church and the charismatic exorcisms of Catholics and Puritans, created an environment in which Shakespeare was free to present secular solutions to madness. At the same time, this same secularization was a driver of melancholy. By stripping society of the mystical and supernatural practices appropriated over the centuries by the Catholic Church, melancholy and madness became surrogates for the intense experience of the supernatural that the reformists were attempting to cast away. By depicting practical solutions to madness and the horrors of confinement in *The Comedy of Errors*, Shakespeare displayed an affinity for the skeptical scholars who tried to shine a light on the lingering illusions of previous epochs. By depicting the melancholy of characters like Hamlet, Shakespeare demonstrated a humanist sympathy for those who seek meaning in a world casting away these lingering illusions and directing his contemporary audience to take a non-religious perspective to evaluate madness or melancholie. Through the lens of gender, the audience could see the struggles of Ophelia living in a patriarchal-scaffolding society that slowly drives her mad. Suicide becomes a method for her to free her madness from the suffocating environment. Suicide contained the implication of suffering from madness in the early modern England. Besides that, in the propaganda battle of the Anglican Church versus the Catholics and Puritans, the latter had charismatic crowd-

captivating exorcisms that they could rely on to win converts. Protestants only had the less-theatrical methods of prayer and fasting to rely on to heal the mad or supposedly possessed. Skeptical reformists appealed to rationality rather than charismatic showmanship. The Anglican Church sponsored skeptical texts, which – aided by the printing press which helped the Protestant reformation, and a societal interest in madness demonstrated by the crowd of gawkers that congregated at Bedlam – served to demystify madness. Whereas these rational skeptical texts could not hold the attention of the laity like the charismatic exorcisms, by borrowing from and heavily adopting the ideas of these skeptical authors in his plays, Shakespeare provided a stage to theatrically put forth charismatic demonstrations of their ideas before a wide audience. In this way, Shakespeare invited his audience to question religious approach toward madness and offered them pathological therapies with a muse of fire and a scaffold to bring forth Harnsett and Jorden's ideas and turn their accomplishments into an hourglass.

Chapter 4

In the previous chapter, I discussed how Shakespeare tried to give a voice to those accused of madness or possession and subjected to confinement and exorcism. The practice of exorcism in early modern England served as a spectacle to ease people's anxiety about then-unexplainable behaviors that we today would recognize as mental illness, and to earn people's religious favor. It was a common means through which religious sects could demonstrate their dogmatic validity over other confessions. In this chapter, I would like to uncover the mysterious veil of witchcraft. In *Macbeth*, Act 1 Scene 1, three witches appear on stage. It is a simple and straightforward scene that begins the play with a gruesome aura and dreadful weather, as early modern Europeans, including the English, often associated bad weather with a gathering of witches. In that era, witches were "routinely blamed for events that they could not possibly have caused," such as a 1583 shipwreck in which 14 seamen drowned, and was "supposedly effected by a witch named Mother Gabley boiling eggs in cold water" (*All Things* 677). *Macbeth*'s opening is a classic rendition of that trope:

FIRST WITCH When shall we three meet again?

In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

SECOND WITCH When the hurly-burly's done,

When the battle's lost and won.

THIRD WITCH That will be ere the set of sun.

FIRST WITCH Where the place?

SECOND WITCH Upon the heath.

THIRD WITCH There to meet with Macbeth.

FIRST WITCH I come, Grimalkin.

SECOND WITCH Paddock calls.

THIRD WITCH Anon.

ALL Fair is foul, and foul is fair,

Hover through the fog and filthy air.

This scene sets the stage for a story about witches. It briefly introduces a story thick with a foul eldritch aura as it associates Macbeth with witchcraft, using well-known witchcraft tropes that would have been familiar to early modern audiences to implicate the evil potential of the titular character. Shakespeare illustrated the common tropes of his contemporaries' perceptions, derived from folklore. Witches could manipulate weather and have their own familiar spirits to assist them.[73] While Shakespeare frankly depicted this scene of witchcraft and the supernatural, the scene reflected the political changes in England, rather than just a literary depiction of the practice of magic. In his plays, Shakespeare was more willing to outright challenge these practices as fraudulent, portraying possession as a man-made illusion used to explain unexplainable phenomena or events.

Shakespeare's depictions of magic and witchcraft, and the way in which his portrayals fed off his audience's anxieties and uncertainties in order to present a wide range of interpretations of the supernatural. An awareness of magic, having different extents, was pervasive among all walks in early modern society. The era's understanding of magic stemmed from the dogma-driven depictions put forth by religious agents (both Catholic and Protestant), folkloric traditions shared by the laity via oral tradition through successive generations, and the occult interests shared by the elite through mutual curiosity and interest. Additionally, evolving

[73] Familiar is a small creature, of demonic origin (oftentimes a cat or a toad) that carries out the witch's billing. In *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England*, Alan Macfarlane pointed out "The fear of witches, and beliefs concerning their familiars and their evil activities, seem to have been both widespread and very similar to those in other parts of Essex" (76).

perceptions of magic throughout the early modern age changed the politics, scholarship, and culture of England. First, in the political realm, the religious politics of Post-Reformation England were constantly upended by a succession of monarchs of alternating religious confession. During the reign of Elizabeth I, this confessional uncertainty – as well as the numerous conjuration plots coordinated with the major Catholic powers of continental Europe to replace her with a Catholic monarch, and the anti-conjuring laws enacted to counter this threat – gave magic a sinister and treasonous air, changing society's attitudes towards magic. Meanwhile, in the scholarly realm, those who feared witches and skeptics waged a war of rhetoric over belief in the supernatural, a back-and-forth struggle in which both sides attempted to refute each other through publications over the course of the early modern era. Finally, in the cultural realm, the changing religious environment exacerbated existing gender biases, leading early modern English society to judge magical acts differently depending on the gender of the alleged conjurer. The way in which these political, scholarly, and cultural attitudes towards witchcraft evolved are evident in the way Shakespeare chose to portray them on stage. In *The Comedy of Errors*, *Richard III*, *Macbeth*, and *Tempest*, Shakespeare mined the tropes of magic and conjurors to stir the imaginations of his audience. For instance, in *Tempest*, Shakespeare used the Elizabethan trope of magic as the weapon of the foreign invader, casting Prospero as the magic-wielding invader of Caliban's island. The depictions of his characters and the way the characters deal with the acts of witches become substitutes for the early modern audiences' interpretations of magic. Furthermore, Shakespeare's ambiguity in his plays mask his own thoughts on magic just enough for him to protect himself from the political danger that brought ruin to his contemporaries due to their publications. By providing a wide range of possible interpretations of

conjuration and witchcraft for his audience, Shakespeare allowed them to glimpse at the ways magic can be wielded as an illusion.

The Hammer of the Witches

Beliefs in witchcraft varied depending on the types of witches in question, as well as the gender of the person suspected of witchcraft. The *Oxford English Dictionary* identified two separate definitions in the early modern era of the witch, depending on gender. One defined a witch as "A man who practises witchcraft or magic; a magician, sorcerer, wizard" (n.1a); the other as "A female magician, sorceress; in later use esp. a woman supposed to have dealings with the devil or evil spirits and to be able by their co-operation to perform supernatural acts" (n.2.1a). The *OED*'s definitions demonstrate a clear denotation: a male witch performs magical actions, yet a female witch takes actions that either channel the evil energies of the devil or other demonic powers. This gender bias, in which the magical practices of men are mostly benign yet spectacular, but those of women are demonic, is established and systemized in *OED*'s database. In *The European Witch-Hunt*, Julian Goodare categorized four distinct conceptions of witches that existed in early modern society: The demonic witch, the village witch, the folkloric witch, and the envisioned witch. The first type of witch – the demonic witch – mostly pertained to females who committed sinful crimes like possession or conjuration due to their allegiance to the Devil, and females who "renounced God and promised their souls to the Devil" (9-10). The second type was the village witch of the common folk, who used their magic to harm their neighbors. While witches were often associated with the demonic in opposition to God, they alternatively operated on the smaller scale of the simple village who consigned her powers to benign mischief. Village witches were believed to cast spells on certain villagers based on another villager's request because of "personal, individual malice" (*Witchcraft and the*

Supernatural 8), and villagers often scapegoated their misfortunes on the supernatural impact of this type of witch. The third type – folkloric witches – appeared in the stories told by villagers and passed down through generations. No matter what happened in the story, a folkloric witch "was always maleficent" (*Witchcraft and the Supernatural* 9). Finally, the fourth type is the envisioned witch (*Witchcraft and the Supernatural* 7-8). The envisioned witches were considered responsible for a phenomenon in which "some people had trance experiences" (*Witchcraft and the Supernatural* 9). The envisioned witches would not necessarily hurt other people but were responsible for moments in which the targets of their magic felt they were being carried away, experiences that were painful and traumatic. In this chapter, I will focus mainly on early modern society's perceptions of the demonic, village, and folkloric witches as these categorizations drove the political and scholarly reactions to witchcraft and were the source for Shakespeare's depictions of witchcraft.

The impression of the demonic witch held widespread popularity due to the publication of an influential book written by Heinrich Kramer, an Inquisitor of the Catholic Church, and Jacob Sprenger, a Dominican Friar: *The Malleus Maleficarum*. First published in the German city of Speyer in 1487, *The Malleus Maleficarum* (Latin for "The Hammer of Witches"), was the standard medieval text on witchcraft.[74] Kramer and Sprenger attempted to systematically define and describe different forms of witchcraft and their remedies in order to provide information for laity who feared the power of witchcraft and to encourage them to ruthlessly persecute witches. This handbook's contents became a tool by which these witch hunts were conducted, instigating

[74] *The Malleus Maleficarum*, or *Hammer of Witches* published in 1487, is one of the best known and arguably the most important treatise on witchcraft. Due to its publication, "its appearance did much to spur on and sustain some two centuries of witch-hunting hysteria in Europe… The *Malleus* went through 28 editions between 1486 and 1600 and was accepted by Roman Catholics and Protestants alike as an authoritative source of information concerning Satanism and as a guide to Christian defense" ("Malleus").

a fervor of persecution in mainland Europe.[75] Through this text, gaining the authority of the Catholic Church's endorsement via the papal bull of 1484, not only did commoners believe in the evil power of witchcraft and the methods to defend themselves against witches from a religious perspective, but so did many scholars and physicians as well. *The Malleus Maleficarum* spread all over Europe and even became prevalent in the New World. Many scholars and educated elites of the era praised the book for its supposedly supreme authoritative content. The reach of the *Malleus* was such that lawmakers consulted it to craft policy and persecution. The views of Jean Bodin (1530-1596), a French jurist and political philosopher on politics, economics, and philosophy, effectively promoted this book and influenced that of his contemporary Europeans, including the English. In both print and oratory, Bodin endorsed harsh methods with which society should deal with witchcraft, influencing many to adopt his beliefs. According to Bodin, "the handling of witches was not a medical matter, and that doctors should not meddle with the problem. It was a legal, theological matter[,]" (Martin, "Four Hundred Years" 9). With the public's credulity, Bodin validated *the Malleus*'s categorization and prioritization of witchcraft. To the middle age Europeans, categorizing witchcraft and witches was not an easy task due to the diverse complexity of witchcraft tropes. At the time, the clergy was still trying to figure out how they could use an authoritative and legitimate method to explain the supernatural to the public. The publication of *the Malleus* seemed to systematically answer many of the Middle Age Europeans' questions and concerns. However, demonic witchcraft was merely one facet of public perceptions of witchcraft; those wishing to conduct

[75] "This tract became enshrined as the most popular model for demonological writings, evolving into one of the central texts of the European witchcraft prosecutions. Some thirty editions were published between 1486 and 1669…. Already, by the mid-fifteenth century, the numbers of women executed for alleged witch crimes in south-eastern France, Switzerland, and south-western Germany had increased significantly. Trials began in Europe around 1430 and ended around 1780, with the year between 1560 and 1630 seeing the most vigorous persecutions" (Williams, "Demonologies" 74).

witch-hunts had yet to contend with the other forms of witchcraft: the village witch, the folkloric witch, and the envisioned witch. The *Malleus* was a powerful supernatural incendiary lobbed at the heart of European society, and it provided for many a finalized definition of witches and their practices.

The prevalence of the *Malleus* in early modern English society can be seen in the way in which elements of the book can be traced to passages in the works of Shakespeare, indicating that the playwright had either read or was familiar with the work. In "Four Hundred Years Later: An Appreciation of Johann Weyer," John Martin found similar supernatural elements in the gathering of the three witches in *Macbeth*, Act IV, Scene I – almost as if he used the caricature put forth by Kramer and Sprenger as the template for his witches – leading him to conclude that Shakespeare "certainly must have been acquainted with the book…*The Malleus Maleficarum*" (7). The power of witchcraft attracted not only religious and political concerns but also Shakespeare's interest in unraveling its mysterious influence among all walks.

The Spectrum of Magic in Early Modern England

It is worth considering the level at which magic permeated every level of the hierarchy that made up early modern English society. Early modern European society possessed a spectrum of beliefs regarding the influence of a witch's power, which also served various functions for commoners to provide explanations for supernatural, unfortunate, trivial, or even unpleasant incidents. The subaltern, the non-elite, the commoners of society, whose ranks were more likely to include those from marginalized populations, would concern themselves with the practical divinations of the village witches whose practices were passed down from generation to generation through folk tradition. Edward Bever claimed these magical folk traditions were possibly as significant as the role of formal Christianity in the lives of the laity, who relied on

these practices for seemingly mundane everyday problems like "health, fertility, and prosperity, rather than on cosmological issues or the moral requirements of salvation" (Bever 52). According to Bever, even though Christianity's official position in early modern society was dominant and pervasive, in practice, most people had a limited understanding of it and were more concerned with the practical issues of survival and necessity. Middle age and early modern commoners lived in a shared community in which – by affinity or necessity – they had to rely on one another for survival. For the laity of that era, when economic concerns were a matter of life or death and folk superstitions were universal, asking cunning folk or witches to practice magic and witchcraft in order to assuage their economic anxieties – either to protect their livelihood and material possessions or to curse their enemies – was a common solution. Villagers believed in the power of a witch's curses, or they would at least feel disturbed due to the threat of malicious curses. They feared the benign mischief of the village witch, as well as their ability to cast spells on behalf of the grudges of other villagers. Similarly, they feared the maleficent power of folkloric witches pervasive in the stories told by villagers and passed down through generations. The era's commoners still sought out explanations when economic disaster affected their lives, their children, their livestock, their harvests, or their ability to recover in the aftermath of a natural calamity. In this way, the existence of village witches and the magic of witches satisfied the middle age and early modern populace's practical and psychological needs.

However, as folk witchcraft invariably failed to carry out the subaltern's desired outcomes, their inevitable disappointments would eventually affect their judgement. Witchcraft and magic became an easy scapegoat. In *European Witchhunt*, Goodare pointed out "Witchcraft was not the only possible explanation, but for some types of misfortune it was an attractive one" (89). He further explained that early modern people could not "prosecute a demon or a ghost

(though you may be able to banish it through ritual), but you can prosecute a witch, or negotiate with her or him" (90). While everyone lived in the same community, so long as each person contributed part of his or her effort for the benefits of community, it was difficult to blame people for their own contributions and hardships. They were more willing to instead blame the black arts of suspected witches as the reason for their inexplicable misfortunes. Blaming suspected witches or the supernatural was a convenient conduit for them to release anger, anxiety, grievance, or despair. Thus, it was easier to cast blame on those on the outskirts of society – outcasts and the subaltern. In Edward Jorden's *A briefe discourse of a disease called the Suffocation of the Mother* (1603), Elizabeth Jackson – accused of bewitching Mary Glover – casts a very unsympathetic figure (Macdonald x-xi). As skeptics of the era – like Reginald Scot – were keen to point out, those accused of witchcraft tended to be vulnerable or mentally ill women, easy to serve as scapegoat for any inexplicable malady that befell a community. Most of them cared not so much about persecuting a witch as much as they simply yearned to soothe their economic anxieties. In this manner, witchcraft, magic, and witch persecutions served as both solution and scapegoat for the everyday concerns of the laity.

At the same time, the practices of magic invited different voices in this "supernatural" battlefield among the upper levels of early modern English society. While the subalterns flirted with sorcery and magic to address parochial and practical concerns, many amongst the elites – despite being more educated – relied on magic as well to achieve their aims in the realm of statecraft and politics. Those seeking influence would harness astrology, prophecy, alchemy, and magical occult ceremonies to induce angelic revelations in order to shape the political realm. Whereas demonic witches supposedly used demonic magic to achieve their aims, and village and folkloric witches used natural magic, elite practitioners of the occult sought to cultivate "angel

magic" to conjure angels for guidance and divination (Kieckhefer 14). One of the most prominent cases of this can be seen in that of John Dee, Elizabeth's personal advisor, who had a noted obsession with astrology, alchemy, divination, and other practices of the occult, and famously relied on astrological principles to choose the best date for Elizabeth's coronation. Despite vehement disagreement amongst Elizabeth's trusted counsel on the issue of magic, Dee applied his "alchemical-prophetic reading in political advice papers, which urged Elizabeth I to pursue a global imperial role" (Parry 19). Such policies invoked a backlash from more conservative elements of Elizabeth's inner circle, not just against Dee himself, but against the occultist beliefs that inspired him as well. Such occult practices would lose favor as the Protestant Reformation began the process of defenestrating popular magical practices that had been welcomed into the Catholic Church. During Elizabeth's reign, William Cecil, the chief advisor of Queen Elizabeth I, often associated popular magic with Catholicism and treason for his political use. The skeptical writer, Reginald Scot, encouraged skepticism in all magical folk beliefs by claiming they were the fraudulent work of jugglers and charlatans. Those magical practices and their practitioners took on a sinister and deceitful aura in Reginald Scot's *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584). The upper class' different perspectives and beliefs represented the political and social debate surrounding the practice of magic and the belief in witchcraft.

Foreign Interference, and Magic as a Political Tool

On the matter of the practice of witchcraft, duplicitous Catholic behaviors certainly threatened England's political realm. Compared with the zealous witch-hunters in continental Europe, the citizenry of early modern England did not recognize the practice of witchcraft as a matter of great concern until early in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Various Catholic plots and conspiracies against the life of Elizabeth I gave devoted Protestants in her Privy Council, namely

William Cecil, impetus to pass the anti-witchcraft acts of 1563, helping cement the association amongst the English laity between English Catholics and conjuring. Fear of witchcraft was eventually coopted by the state as a means of controlling society. Immediately upon Elizabeth's ascension to the throne, several prominent Catholics were arrested on suspicion of conjuring against the new monarch, most notably a priest named Francis Coxe, who in 1561 was caught providing private masses with some of the Catholic gentry in Essex. The group was arrested for practicing magic, conjuration, prophecy, idolatry, and conspiracy (Devine 75-76). The threat of such conjuration plots gained further urgency when Elizabeth contracted and nearly died of smallpox in 1562, no doubt giving some credence to the idea that these magically backed plots possessed some measure of efficacy and thus mortal danger. The excommunication of Queen Elizabeth and later Pope Pius V's papal bull – which released all her subjects from any allegiance to her and subsequently excommunicated all who obeyed her orders – were further fuel for the fire[76]. According to the account put forth by Cecil and his cohort, Spain, French Catholics, Jesuit monks, and English Catholic aristocrats were all in on the conspiracy: "to kill the queen, to put Mary [of Scot] on the throne" (Lake 22). Cecil tried to convince Elizabeth that "the group [the English Catholics] had conspired to kill her with sorcery" (Devine 80). These plots also helped cement witchcraft as a common metaphor for Catholicism (Young 143), creating an association between witchcraft, Catholicism, and foreign meddling in England's affairs in the minds of the populace. According to this narrative, Catholics, like witches, could blend in with the general populace while deceitfully carrying out the agenda of a distant and

[76] In 1570, Pope Pius V excommunicated Elizabeth and released English Catholics from any obligation to obey her or recognize her legitimacy. His successor, Pope Gregory XIII, took matters further, seemingly sanctioning murder and regicide. A representative of the pope serving the papacy of Gregory XIII notedly suggested that assassinating Elizabeth would not be mortal sin – "there is no doubt that whosoever sends her out of the world with the pious intention of doing God service, not only does not sin but gains merit" (Plowden 199).

foreign power through magic and conjuration in order to undermine the monarch and society itself. This was a metaphor that Shakespeare would visit in works like *Macbeth* and *The Tempest*. There existed no real sorcery nor witchcraft in the eyes of people manipulating English politics; there were merely tools for people who could willingly promote the dominant ideology. It was the idea of sorcery and witchcraft that was dangerous and powerful.

Due to Catholic plots against the life of Queen Elizabeth and thus the stability of England, Parliament approved the enactment of the Witchcraft Act of 1563. This enactment reflected a societal attitude change[77], further changing the attitude of the early modern English people toward Catholics: "The 1563 Act against witchcraft…was established during the tense and difficult years when a Catholic regime gave way to a Protestant one, a time when Elizabeth and her supporters were understandably anxious about any signs of conspiracy against her" (Willis 118). Statutes detailing harsh penalties for crimes related to conjuration, sorcery, and witchcraft were enacted. Catholicism certified the danger behind the practice and power of witchcraft and magic, as per the popularity of the *Malleus Maleficarum*, and Catholicism also forbade such malevolent practices. Yet while Catholics condemned the malevolent practice of witchcraft and magic, some aggressive and conspiratorial Catholic radicals used the condemned powers of conjuration and divination to conduct plots against Elizabeth.

Successive Refutations, and Magic as a Scholarly Tool

In addition to roiling the political realm, the idea of magic and witchcraft churned and agitated the scholarly realm as well. From the publication of Kramer's *Malleus Maleifcarium,* the scholarly realm saw a rigorous back-and-forth between witchhunters and skeptics. Johann

[77] In some ways, the 1563 Act was more lenient than the Henrician Act of 1542, sentences the death penalty only in situations "wherby any person shall happen to bee killed or destroyed" (*The Statutes Project*).

Weyer's *De praestigiis daemonum* in 1563 was a refutation of Kramer. Contrary to what most of society believed at the time, Johann Weyer, the father of modern psychiatry, was among the first to publish against the persecution of witches. He wrote *De Praestigiis Daemonum et Incantationibus ac Venificiis* (On the Illusions of the Demons and on Spells and Poisons) which was written, almost sentence by sentence, as a refutation against *The Malleus Maleficarum*. Many twentieth century psychiatrists celebrated Weyer's arguments. John Martin, a doctor, lauded Weyer's open challenge and loathed Catholics' stance in "Four Hundred Years Later: An Appreciation of Johann Weyer," stating that "He [Weyer] saw mental illness [in witches] where the Church and State saw criminality, and he was the first physician boldly to confront the Inquisition and deny its right to carry on in the name of Christianity" (Martin 12). Based on his own profession, Weyer took a different perspective from the religious view. He accused the Church – which held enormous power – of wrongdoing, a stance which could very likely have put Weyer's life in danger. Martin commented on his modern perception of the stance of the laypeople of the Middle Ages: "The Church was not, to the peasant masses, a pillar of hope or help; rather, it was something to be obeyed with fear, and lives were lived out under the burdens of toil and hopelessness" in the late 15th century (4). Both Weyer and Martin took a pathological lens to examine the topic of witchcraft and used ethical aspects to scrutinize the Church and accuse it of failing society's stability and order. They believed the Church created countless superstitions through its powerful institution, which kept the masses in submission through ignorance and fear.

The 1563 publication of *De Praestigiis Daemonum* marked the beginning of a series of competing witchcraft publications authored for the purpose of refuting the preceding work. Because Weyer first attacked the witch-hunts and persecutions of the *Malleus Maleficarum* in *De*

Praestigiis Daemonum, he sparked an unofficial public trail on the issue of witchcraft among scholars. Subsequently, in the 1580s, Bodin wrote *De la demonomaine des sorciers,* a treatise on witches that was widely read in England (Olsen 677). Bodin went into detail on how the supposed powers of witches having profaned God and advocated extreme measures to root witches out from society.[78] Bodin also harshly condemned Weyer of "doing the devil's work for speaking out against witch-hunting. According to Bodin, such men were driven by their 'evil will' (their rationality corrupted by pride or the desire for power and knowledge) to make pacts with the devil, thereby associating themselves with the female-connoted sins of witchcraft and carnality" (Rowlands 457). By tying the image of evil witchcraft with Weyer's defenses of mentally ill women suspected and accused of witchcraft, Bodin planted the seeds for prejudice against any refutations against his own values towards witchcraft. Bodin's views on witchcraft were later enforced in England by the witch-hunter Brian Darcy in the 1580s. Bodin and Darcy's efforts would in turn invite condemnation by Reginald Scot, who unofficially carried Weyer's banner of skepticism. Scot's true purpose in the publication of *Discoverie* was to attack the arguments of Bodin in *Demonomanie* and to deny belief in the existence and power of witchcraft. Scot was admonishing the witchmongers. As Scot exhorted his readers, witchcraft was not real, but an illusion. To Scot, there was no witchcraft, only vulnerable or mentally ill women who were falsely accused of being witches and who received the unfair sentence of death. Even though Scot could not change most people's mindsets towards the evil influence of

[78] In "The German Witch Trials," Thomas Robisheaus concluded that "Jean Bodin's *De la demonomania des sorciers* (On the Demon-Mania of Witches, 1580) into German in 1582, and Peter Binsfeld's treatise based on the Trier trials, *Tractatus de confessionibus maleficorum et sagarum* (Treatise on the Confessions of Malefactors and Sorcerers, 1589), provided fresh and powerful arguments for treating witchcraft as a crime of *lese-majeste* against the ruler and God himself. So alarmed was Binsfeld by the danger of witchcraft that he also argued for treating witchcraft as an 'exceptional crime' (*crimen exceptum*)" (189).

witches, his work did influence some to start questioning or stop believing in charlatans and superstition.[79]

However, King James VI and I's firm belief in the power and threat of witchcraft further inflamed the discourse past the boiling point of mere scholarly quarrel since his belief represented the point at which the political and scholarly realms converged, with the anti-witchcraft side winning out over the skeptics. After the death of Queen Elizabeth I, King James I ascended to the throne, along with his distinct enthusiasm on the topic of witchcraft. Prior to his ascension to the English throne, James himself had published *Daemonologie*, an anti-witch tome that also attacked skeptics like Scot. While other anti-witch tracts were published during this period, *Daemonologie* was written by a person who was both King of Scotland and successor-in-waiting for the English crown, conferring upon it a singularly powerful authority. James possessed a unique hatred not only of witchcraft but of the skeptics who questioned its existence. This hatred had roots in a supposed satanic plot against him during his trip in 1590 from Denmark. In *Witchcraft and Religion: The Politics of Popular Belief*, Christina Larner discussed how King James learned of the ideas and discourse on demonology prevalent on the continent during his stay in Denmark, from whence he fetched his bride to return to Scotland. Larner believed James brought these Continental ideas of demonic pacts and demonology back to Scotland (3-22). In Denmark, he developed a marked fascination with theories of witchcraft and demonology that had gripped the attention of the Danish court. When James and his entourage were menaced by storms on the return voyage back to Scotland, this fascination was further

[79] Scot influenced even those, like William Perkins, who published *A Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft* in 1558 and believed witchcraft was real and should be punishable by death. It appears that reading *Discoverie* influenced Perkins to repudiate many of the superstitious tests used to secure evidence of witchcraft, such as swimming, scratching, or testimonies of "good witches," the ill, or the dying, and to look at many of the superstitious tests he once endorsed with a more skeptical eye (Davies 386).

ignited, leading James to believe he had encountered the black magic of so-called Scottish and Danish witches who had conspired together to raise the storms and bring about his demise. So troubled was he by the plot, that James personally supervised the torture sessions of some of the alleged plotters. In *A History of Witchcraft in England from 1558 to 1718*, Professor Notestein noted James I's enthusiasm at the torture of the so-called witches: "It is a little hard to understand how it was that the king 'took great delight to be present at the examinations,' but throughout the whole wretched series of trials he was never wanting in zeal" (96). As the highest authority takes interests in a certain topic or issue, it will arouse the same interest within his or her subjects, either by way of curiosity or to more skillfully flatter the authority. At this point, it was widely known that James would ascend to the throne in the event of Elizabeth's death, making his parochial interests of great concern for the power brokers who wished to gain favor with the incoming regime. Thus, James' interest in witchcraft became the interest of those in England who sought to gain a toehold in his impending monarchy. As James demonstrated his "delight" in public, it certainly grabbed the attention of first his Scottish subjects and later his future English subjects.

James I's personal obsession and royal position could sway his court's decisions and the public's attitude on the issue of witch hunts and persecutions. Fear of the evil of witchcraft was beginning to permeate the lives of early modern English commoners. James published his *Daemonologie* in 1597, which warned of the dangers of witchcraft, justified witch trials, and advocated severe punishments for the accused whom the trials found guilty. As a result of James's ascension, his *Daemonologie's* newfound significance drew more attention among the English people to the possible existence of witchcraft because "James intensely despised Scot's *Discoverie*. In the Preface to the Reader in his *Daemonologie*, first published in Scotland in 1597

and in England in 1603, James singled out Scot along with the German physician Johann Weyer as two of the chief instigators of skepticism about witchcraft" (Almond, *England's First Demonologist* 210). His implacable refutation of any skeptical explanation for witchcraft or supernatural power was not that of a detached debate among scholars. Unlike the Elizabethan government's focus on the threat of conjuring and prophecy in terms of political conspiracy, James tended to focus attention on the dangerous power of witches in and of itself.

Witchcraft in Shakespeare

While James raised awareness of witchcraft and the supernatural in English society, these superstitions were also being used in the political dramas of the times and informed Shakespeare's use of these elements in his plays to provoke a thoughtful, and sometimes visceral, questioning of the structures of power and hegemonic oppression. The cultural and political history of witchcraft was deeply embedded in Shakespeare's plays as he invited his audience to consider the entanglement of the audience in an institutional system that considered the practice of magic and witchcraft a crime. Shakespeare mined the use of tropes regarding witchcraft and magic in myriad ways: In *Richard III,* he subverted the trope of magic as the destabilizing tool of an invader; in *Macbeth*, he seemingly embraced the trope, but he secretively subverted belief in the power of witchcraft; and in *The Tempest*, he staged a play through the eyes of the destabilizing magic-wielding outsider.

Richard III

As England increasingly became a Protestant nation, Shakespeare used the ambiguous nature of the supernatural to challenge his audience by revealing to them the marginalized groups that were being denied and systematically wiped out by opportunistic Protestant politicians. After the tumultuous era starting in 1547, marked by constant confessional polarization and the

threat of foreign interference (both Spanish and papist), this upheaval might have motivated Shakespeare to seek endings where all subversions were contained and a peaceful outcome resulted for the English laypeople for their spiritual tranquility and social order, rather than to endorse subversions favorable to any particular side. In *Richard III*, the supernatural curses and prophecies of a despondent Queen Margaret, and the ghosts that visit the principals before the Battle of Bosworth lead to the containment of all of Richard's subversions. In doing so, Shakespeare gave a supernatural sheen on the containment of Richard III (Lake 153). Furthermore, analyzing how audiences of the early 1590's would have reacted to *Richard III*, Peter Lake noted that the play introduces Richmond as savior: a prince from abroad with foreign backing, yet still benefiting from "God-satisfying legitimacy," who promises "ending a period of intense internal dissension and tyranny, to bring peace and unity to … a land racked by internal (both religious and political) divisions" (Lake 168-9). Lake noted that the obvious parallel here is King James VI, a foreigner from Scotland who yet still possessed that God-satisfying legitimacy. It cannot be known if in staging *Richard III*, Shakespeare sought to flatter or endorse the reigning Protestant order of the Elizabethan/Jacobin regime, yet elements of *Richard III* simultaneously seemed to subtly hint affinity towards some of the Catholic anti-regime tracts of the day as well. These tracks, such as *Cecil's Commonwealth,* had libeled supporters of the Elizabethan regime as a conspiracy of "evil counsellors and Machiavels, practical atheists, dedicated to the service of their own corrupt interests and ambitions" (Lake 26). Shakespeare's *Richard III* seems to embody these caricatures:

> But then I sigh, and with a piece of scripture,
> Tell them that God bids us do good for evil:
> And thus I clothe my naked villainy

With odd old ends, stol'n forth of Holy Writ,

And seem a saint when I most play the devil. (1. 3. 331-336)

As *Richard III* was produced, William Cecil's son, Robert Cecil, severely disfigured from scoliosis, was entering the public stage as his father's political heir. Pauline Croft drew connections between the various libels against Robert Cecil and productions of *Richard III* – like Richard III, Robert Cecil was mercilessly portrayed as "a ruthless hunchback, a younger son with vaulting ambition" – further noting that the comparisons between Robert Cecil and Richard III were widespread and most likely familiar, given that early modern audiences were "exceptionally alert to contemporary political applications" (Croft 55-56). Shakespeare cunningly established a secure space, a politically correct arrangement, for his plays to be performed on stage. Then, he unraveled his ideology towards the belief in the power of witchcraft slowly yet gradually over the course of his career, so as to avoid the political danger and dire persecution that fell upon his contemporaries, like Christopher Marlow and Thomas Kyd[80]. By keeping his affinities hidden and peppering his plays with allusions each side of the religious or political divisions could recognize or appreciate, Shakespeare was able to render himself immune from charges of favoring one side or another.

In *Richard III*, Queen Margaret represents the old religious belief: Catholicism and the belief in the power of witchcraft. She also serves a role - as prophetess - like Cassandra from Homer's *Iliad*. *Richard III* was a product of an era that witnessed the violent clash between Catholicism and Protestantism. The arrangement of the Robert Cecil-like Richard (representing

[80] In 1593, the Privy Council arrested a group of writers and "Thomas Kyd was arrested … under suspicion as the author of the libel" (Nicholl 286). In the same year, Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593) was stabbed to death for "his epicurism and atheism" (Nicholl 67). In The Reckoning: The Murder of Christopher Marlowe, Charles Nicholl presented several different accounts from Thomas Beard, Ingram Frizer, and Francis Meres to explain the death of Marlowe as a consequence of backlash his unorthodox religious beliefs (65-71).

opportunistic Protestantism) challenging Queen Margaret (the prior queen, representing the previous regime and the previous official religion) serves to augment the conflict between the two. While Richard III and other courtiers try to console Queen Elizabeth for King Edward IV's illness, Queen Margaret shows up in anger and curses everyone present to release her pain: "Did York's dread curse prevail so much with heaven / That Henry's death, my lovely Edward's death, / Their kingdom's loss, my woeful banishment, / Should all but answer for that peevish brat? / Can curses pierce the clouds and enter heaven? / Why then, give way, dull clouds, to my quick curses! / Though not by war, by surfeit die your king, / As ours by murder to make him a king" (1.3.188-195). In actuality, after her husband and son's deaths, Queen Margaret spent her life outside of England and the court. Her return to Richard's court is a historical embellishment on Shakespeare's part that represents the augmentation of the religious conflict. While many in Shakespeare's audience would have been familiar with the characteristics of a witch, they must have sensed Queen Margaret carrying out one of the most prominent and malicious characteristics of a witch: curses. Here, Shakespeare subverted the prevalent metaphor of magic as a tool of a deceitful scheming foreign power seeking to kill the English monarch. Indeed, Queen Margaret's subversive prophecy (or curse) signals the coming of a foreign power to overthrow the monarch, yet rather than sow disorder, her prophecy sees the restoration of order under Henry VII and the containment of Richard III's subversions.[81]

The Comedy of Errors

Shakespeare levered both ambiguity and coincidence in both his tragedy and his comedies. While Margaret's prophecy is an example of Shakespeare turning witchcraft tropes on

[81] This is a marked evolution from his earlier *1 Henry VI*, in which Shakespeare associates Joan of Arc with many of the negative tropes associated with witchcraft.

their head in a drama, it is ambiguous whether the fulfillment of her prophecy is the result of supernatural intervention or mere coincidence. Similarly, in his comedies, one of Shakespeare's oft-used devises was to play with the element of ambiguity in order to reveal the facts behind the superstition on stage. In both *Twelfth Night* and *the Comedy of Errors*, Shakespeare had exorcism and confinement interwoven into their plots. Meanwhile, he presented coincidence caused by human tricks or fate; yet, such happenstance was neither based on supernatural power nor the dark power of any witch. In these two plays, fate separates twins who grow up as strangers, appear in the same city, and then confuse people around them merely by coincidence. The denouement of the two plays highlighted the ignorance or unawareness of part of the Elizabethan populace who might have associated such unexplainable things with magic, witchcraft, and supernatural power, or who could be easily duped into believing in supernatural causation. It was not a forced situation, but a natural consequence of their beliefs. The audience also enjoyed the foolish misunderstandings on the stage because they went to the theater to enjoy watching a comedy. Shakespeare embedded such subliminal messages in a vehicle devised for his audience' laughter and enjoyment, rather than to scare them with the danger of supernatural power. All the coincidences exist to make light of the intensity behind the power of witchcraft.

The setting of the *Comedy of Errors* was based on the prevalent understanding of witchcraft in early modern England. Shakespeare used the terminology of witchcraft to constitute this confusing and "magical" city, such as witches, sorcerers, the devil, and Satan. This is the demonic witch in Goodare's categorization: an evil witch that makes a satanic pact with a devil to practice evil actions. Act IV, Scene III fully demonstrates how the early modern commoners integrated all the terminology and their understanding about the supernatural in their daily conversation. In this scene, Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse bump into a courtesan who

mistakes him for Antipholus of Ephesus, who took her ring. Without knowledge of the relationship between the courtesan and Antipholus of Ephesus, or the reason her request to take the ring back, Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse do not outright identify her as a real witch, but merely associate her with the evil qualities of a witch. They continuously use degrading words to insult her by calling her a devil, and Dromio of Syracuse even taunts her: "Some devils ask but the parings of one's nail, / A rush, a hair, a drop of blood, a pin, / A nut, a cherry-stone; / But she, more covetous, would have a chain. / Master, be wise; an if you give it her, / The devil will shake her chain, and fright us with it" (4.3.66-71). They want to avoid encountering a greedy courtesan with the qualities of an evil witch because both are harmful to men. Dromio of Syracuse's lines also reflected a deep understanding during early modern times of how a witch could practice her witchcraft through the medium of a small item. This was a very trivial detail that existed in the vernacular early modern commoners' uses in their daily lives. They used the concept of witchcraft to fear and despise others. The authenticity of a witch was to be unimportant in this play.

Macbeth

In Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, the prophecy of the three witches – the authenticity of which is similarly ambiguous – ignites Macbeth's ambitious desire with mysterious and negative embellishment. The witches indeed talk to Macbeth and Banquo, and there is no doubt that they are real people, but their identities are tricky to verify. As they talk to Macbeth, they prophesize his future:

> First Witch: All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Glamis.
>
> Second Witch: All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor.
>
> Third Witch: All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter! (1.3.46-48)

They awaken his dormant political ambitions. That is, the reason Macbeth fought wholeheartedly for King Duncan was to earn Duncan's favor. The play begins with the victory of Macbeth after having just defeated the allied forces of Norway and Ireland. This spectacular victory makes Duncan publicly deem Macbeth a "valiant cousin, worthy gentleman!" (1.2.24). He directly tells Macbeth that Macbeth is the "the worthiest cousin" (1.4.14). Macbeth is not only a thane to the King, but family as well. Macbeth risks life and limb on the battlefield for his country to earn honor, respect, and status from King Duncan, his cousin. This takes great courage and risk, which can instead trace a sinister but similar path: seeking an even higher honor and status, but that which belongs to his cousin and liege. If the witches are real human beings, they are not necessarily mentally ill either; they could have been political saboteurs from Duncan's enemy. Because of the instigation from the witches' prophecy, Macbeth commits regicide and replaces his cousin as king. Macbeth does not receive his crown through destiny nor natural heritage. He pointedly chooses not to let the prophecy run its course and happen naturally. He takes action himself, murders Duncan, and plunders the crown because of his desires. Without the prophecy, the ambitious Macbeth may well have committed regicide anyways.

The ambiguity is central to *Macbeth*: the witches' prophecy is not explicit, leaving it up to the viewer to decide if it is the witches' prophecy that makes Macbeth commit evil acts, or if it is his own ambition and paranoia. On the surface, with *Macbeth*, more than any other play, Shakespeare seemed to embrace the trope of witchcraft as the tool of an outside power seeking to throw a kingdom into disarray. However, Shakespeare never outright specified the nature of the witches' origin[82], pointedly leaving himself ambiguous and purposely refusing to clarify whether

[82] Given his family's involvement in the Gunpowder Plot, and the scrutiny that brought, Shakespeare absolutely did not have to be ambiguous. It is curious that he did chose to remain ambiguous rather than commit to absolutely flattering King James, even though it would've granted him a substantial measure of personal safety (Greenblatt, "Shakespeare Bewitched" 20).

it is the witches' prophecy or Macbeth's dormant ambition that leads to toil and trouble. In "Toil and Trouble," Stephen Greenblatt criticized Garry Wills' *Witches and Jesuits: Shakespeare's Macbeth* for viewing *Macbeth* almost exclusively through a political lens and attempting to remove the ambiguity the play has with regards to witchcraft, saying "Wills wants us to see Macbeth as an evil wizard, complete with magic cloak and staff. What we see instead is psychological, political and moral torment, without the consoling answers offered by the Jacobean church and state" (Greenblatt 36). In a way, Macbeth's sense of guilt and self-conscious form an illusion of the three witches' prophecy. At the same time, Greenblatt asserted that Macbeth encounters a complex problem mixed with "psychological, political, and moral torment," and he also uses "we" as the majority against Wills' emphasis on certainty and clarity regarding political conspiracy and witchcraft. "The witches have something to do with this torment, but what that 'something' is remains as elusive as the dagger that Macbeth sees before him" (Greenblatt, "Toil and Trouble" 36). The ambiguous part of the existence of the three witches implies that the prophecies are actually Macbeth's ambition and that it was his thirst for power that may have acted upon him. Macbeth's actions reveal how the confusion of belief in the supernatural can influence a person to commit regicide and political upheaval much in the same way that the writings and actions of Weyer, Bodin, Scot, Cecil, and James I were able to manipulate or influence the English public.

However, Shakespeare wanted to warn his king and the audience of the dangers behind this belief. It is not the power of witchcraft that destroys Macbeth; it is his obsession with the supernatural power and illusion that destroys Macbeth. The early modern English audience could very likely have drawn the connection between Macbeth and King James I. Many scholars believed the production of *Macbeth* was to flatter King James I, but Greenblatt presented a

different interpretation. Once, during his reign, King James witnessed the re-enactment of a witch's Sabbath by an accused witch. Shakespeare might have mirrored this in the witches' dance witnessed by Macbeth. At the end of the article, "Toil and Trouble," Greenblatt reversed what most people believe to be the purpose of Shakespeare's composition of *Macbeth* – "if James recognized the similarity, he might not have been convinced that the play was altogether flattering. The witches dance to delight a 'great King,' but the king in question is not the virtuous Malcolm, it is the evil Macbeth" (Greenblatt, "Toil and Trouble" 37). In this telling, *Macbeth* may have been Shakespeare's mousetrap for James, staging a play to unsettle a very specific member of the audience. James was a firm believer in witches and witnessed Macbeth similarly obsessing over the power of the three witches. Greenblatt's assumption invited his readers to ponder what were the real intentions behind the creation of *Macbeth*. This analogy is not a metaphor, but more like a simile. Macbeth, as a king, believes in the prophecies of three witches, resulting in the destruction of him and his wife. The early modern audience could perceive this message as they watched *Macbeth* in the theater.

The Tempest

If *Richard III*'s Queen Margaret and *Macbeth*'s weird sisters represent the tropes of female witches, in *Tempest*, Shakespeare presented a magical male character as a counterpart for the previous female witch characters of his other plays. Witchcraft and supernatural power in the middle ages and early modern Europe were gender biased, but Shakespeare created a male sorcerer to reverse this bias. Examining the image and setting in which Prospero practices magic, the audience will realize that regarding the long-term debate of witchcraft, Shakespeare might not be entirely on Weyer or Scot's side of skepticism in the power of witchcraft, but he was definitely not entirely on Bodin or King James I's side of belief in the power of witchcraft either.

"In English, a 'witch' was always bad; a 'magician' could be bad or good[83]" (Goodare 16). According to Peter Lake, Shakespeare took great care with which his plays utilize supernatural phenomena "to confirm its essentially providential reading of the events it is staging" (157). When the audience watches this play, he or she may not necessarily think how Prospero lost his dukedom is "providential," but as more the result of nature running its course. As a duke, Prospero did not fully carry out his responsibilities because he distracted himself with magic, so his brother had the chance to usurp his dukedom. Marginalized from his own home, and as an outsider or refugee on the remote island, Prospero plunders Caliban's island and asserts his own dominance. As a sorcerer, Prospero uses his magic to threaten Caliban and Ariel, and if they do not obey him, they will receive verbal abuse and/or physical punishment. Everything that Prospero has done so far makes him out to be an evil sorcerer. Being a witch or a sorcerer in and of itself is not always evil. Yet when a sorcerer practices magic malevolently, then he is certainly malicious. Prospero does not acquire his privilege because of his gender in this play. When supernatural power occurs, gender is not the key element to decide the nature of evilness or goodness of a sorcerer.

If *Richard III* and *Macbeth* also represent the tropes of magic as the destabilizing tool of an invader foreign to the protagonists, with *The Tempest*, Shakespeare pushed this idea even further through the portrayal of Prospero. Whereas previously, witchcraft and conjuration were depicted as the weapon of foreign invaders (usually from Catholic countries), with *The Tempest*, Shakespeare staged a play through the eyes of the magic-wielding outsider and invader. As a

[83] As *The Malleus Maleficarum* introduced and established the image of witches in the middle age Europe, witches were usually understood to be evil women who gained their powers through pacts with the Devil. According to the *Malleus Malificarum*, witches made a pact with the devil in a black sabbath, carried out when the "sorceresses come to a certain assembly on a fixed day and see the demon in the assumed guise of a human as he urges them to keep their faith to him, which would be accompanied by prosperity in temporal matters and longevity of life. The women who are in attendance commend to him the female novice who is to be accepted", who proves herself ready to "renounce the Most Christian Faith and Worship, and never to adore the [the Virgin Mary] and Sacraments."

Duke of Milan, Prospero forgoes his responsibility for his dukedom and people, chooses instead to lock himself in his study den, and indulges himself in witchcraft, sorcery, and other black arts gleamed from his books (1.2.66-91). The setting of Milan, a Christian territory, and Prospero's zealous interests serve to foreshadow the destabilization and endangerment of his dukedom. His brother, Antonio, eventually usurps his dukedom, with seemingly little resistance from the general populace of Milan. At the end of the play, Prospero drops his books into the ocean and declares witchcraft is merely an illusion, which was a suggestion for King James I as well. If the publication of *Macbeth* was to warn the audience about King James I's interests in witchcraft, the creation of Prospero might well have been to warn King James I to stop investing his time in studying the books of witchcraft. Combining the identity of Christianity and the belief in the power of witchcraft manifested the real danger to a country and authority in *The Tempest*.

After Prospero lost his dukedom, he did not grow nor learn his lesson; he uses his newly-learned skills to oppress other marginalized groups. When Prospero is reestablished as the dominant power in his new home, another trope is inverted. Usually it is society's outcasts who were accused of witchcraft and sorcery, yet in *Tempest*, the magical practitioner is the dominant of his new island home, while Caliban – who would otherwise be an outcast in Prospero's original dukedom – is the victim of Prospero's magic and sorcery. Prospero, the disempowered duke of Milan, escaped to an island which westerners would deem barbaric. Just like the feared outsiders in early modern England, away from his base of power, Prospero is marginalized as he arrives on Caliban's island, and must resort to deceit, juggling, and trickery to subvert the island's dominant power. After he arrives on the island of Caliban, Prospero, the magic-wielding invader, greets Caliban with a cordial facade to loosen Caliban's guard and befriend him, before cunningly tricking and violently enslaving Caliban. Then, Prospero calls Caliban a savage or a

beast and periodically tortures Caliban, the island's original dominant. Caliban became the marginalized one at the hands of the island's new master. Though Prospero accused his brother of using despicable means to seize his country, Prospero himself was no better, engaging in the same deceitful juggling as his brother to subjugate Caliban. Why did Shakespeare degrade Prospero, a white, upper-class male, to such a despicable role? Without realizing the endangerment that witchcraft brought to himself and lacking his dukedom or his noble life in Milano, Prospero embodies the ugliness of the foreign oppressor.

According to the *OED*'s definition, a sorcerer, having half a chance, might be evil. Prospero is certainly an evil one. Coming from continental Europe, Prospero does not bring his western culture and knowledge that early modern Europeans were proud of to his so-called barbarian island. As per Gayatri Spivak, the least powerful groups in society – the subaltern – were robbed of the power to speak for themselves by those with power in society. All Prospero has done as the newly established dominant power on the island is contaminate, threaten, and torture Caliban to an inhumane level. Prospero presents himself as a malevolent sorcerer, imposing his will through cunning arts:

Caliban: You taught me language, and my profit on't
Is I know how to curse. The red plague rid you
For learning me your language.

Prospero: Hag-seed, hence!
Fetch us in fuel. And be quick, thou'rt best,
To answer other business. –Shrug'st thou, malice?
If thou neglect'st or dost unwillingly
What I command, I'll rack thee with old cramps,

Fill all thy bones with aches, make thee roar,

That beasts shall tremble at thy din.

Caliban: No, pray thee.

equal [Aside] I must obey. His art is of such power. (1.2.366-375)

As a former duke, coming from a civilized dukedom, Prospero neither acts nor talks like a noble man. Prospero's language demonstrates his lowly and malicious intentions. He does not share any of the civilized western cultural canon to benefit Caliban's primitive lifestyle. He has instead robbed Caliban of his voice, and the subaltern Caliban is portrayed within the language of the dominants. What language Caliban has learned from Prospero is a form of cursing like a sorcerer or witch, yet Caliban does not acquire the power of witchcraft. Through his evil skills, Prospero enslaves Caliban, who lost his island and freedom. According to Goodare's categories, Prospero's cruel behaviors shall align with the devil.

Besides Prospero, there is an unseen witch character in The *Tempest*. Caliban's mother, Sycorax, is the counterpart of Prospero, reinforcing the triple consciousness of being a colored woman with the label of a witch, versus Prospero. Prospero is not only the male version of Sycorax, but the inferior and devious version as well. Caliban's mother was the "foul witch Sycorax, who with age and envy / Was grown into a hoop" (1.2.259-260). Prospero never sees Sycorax in person, as she had died a few years before he arrived. The audience never sees her on stage either, but learns of her through Ariel, Caliban, and Prospero's conversations. Sycorax was banished from Algiers, an Islamic city in the northern part of Africa. Sycorax never appears in the play nor utters a single line on stage, yet Prospero's discourse fills the gap with his imperial, superior, and masculine position whenever she is mentioned:

This blue-eyed hag was hither brought with child,

And here was left by th' sailors. Thou, my slave,

As thou report'st thyself, was then her servant;

And for thou wast a spirit too delicate

To act her earthy and abhorred commands… (1.2.271-275)

In these five lines, the audience learns of Sycorax. Shakespeare inverted the gendered trope of witchcraft here, with Sycorax as a pregnant witch and Prospero as a deceitful male sorcerer. Like Prospero, Sycorax arrived on the island as a foreigner and used her magic power to turn Ariel, the inhabitant of the island, into her "servant." Both Sycorax, a witch, and Prospero, a sorcerer, become Ariel's master through supernatural force. However, there is a difference between the two: Ariel was Sycorax's servant, but he is Prospero's slave.[84] Ariel was working for the benefit of Sycorax, who was pregnant when she first arrived the island. However, Ariel is mere property belonging to Prospero and does not have freedom nor personal rights of his own. In the play, Ariel has begged for freedom from Prospero, who usually provides Ariel false hope. Sycorax and Prospero's similarities in identity and characteristics inspired Kamau Brathwaite to compose "Sycorax's book" in his 1994 work *Barabajan Poems* to correspond to "Prospero's book" that Prospero studies for his supernatural power in the play. Through Sycorax' silence and Prospero's unreliable masculine discourse, Shakespeare degraded Prospero's superior, white, male identity drastically, based on Prospero's words and behaviors. On the other hand, the audience does not see her horrible deeds on stage at all. The stereotype of an evil witch who is also a colored woman seems not to do any harm in this play. Sycorax plays the part of Prospero's double to erase the line of gender bias in witchcraft in *The Tempest*. Witchcraft seems to be illusional, but human beings' wickedness is real.

[84] A slave is "One who is the property of, and entirely subject to, another person, whether by capture, purchase, or birth; a servant completely divested of freedom and personal rights" (n.1a).

Abjuring the Illusion

The ending of *Tempest* serves to demonstrate Shakespeare's ultimate illusion – the power of witchcraft. The stage is the illusion, and Shakespeare is the illusionist: *The Tempest* is a very self-referential play. Throughout his entire career, Shakespeare presented a skeptical attitude, incorporating his plays with the works of skeptical scholars who wished to abolish the magical from English life. It is fitting, then, that – having spent the entirety of *Tempest* demonstrating how ultimately powerless magic and magician are – Shakespeare concluded his final work with his stand-in, Prospero, giving up his magic and sorcery.

> I'll break my staff,
>
> Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
>
> And deeper than did ever plummet sound
>
> I'll drown my book. (5.1.54-57)

By doing so, Shakespeare brought a close – to rapturous applause from the audience – the illusions with which he had so skillfully entranced others. As usual, Shakespeare was willing to challenge himself and his audience to sit at the brink of the subversive act when the practice of witchcraft was still considered a crime in early modern England. Shakespeare wanted his audience to be more rational and less biased in judging the subject of witchcraft. In "The Reception of Reginald Scot's *Discovery of Witchcraft*: Witchcraft, Magic, and Radical Religion," S. F. Davies suggested that Scot's skeptical writings about magic, witchcraft, and incorporeal spirits placed him well outside the mainstream of European thought:

> It was ultimately because Scot went further [than others who wrote on the theory of witchcraft in England] that he was condemned by these writers: Scot rejected the idea that the Devil – or, indeed, any spiritual beings – could have any interaction with mortals,

> even as an instrument of providence. It was on this point that Scot's theology was a radical one; … it was this that led to accusations of impiety and atheism. (386)

Believing in the power of witchcraft and magic was not an uncommon thing because adherents of both the Anglican Church and the other major religious sect, Catholicism, believed in it too. Adherents of other religious sects might not have believed in such power, but they did not have any evidence to disapprove the existence of a devil who could have made pacts with witches since the Devil is the evil antithesis of God. In other words, by incorporating Scot's radical skepticism into his works, Shakespeare was committing a subversive act through his plays on stage. Deliberately, Shakespeare often walked along a thin wire by presenting his subversive thoughts. Starting from the *Comedy of Errors*, to *Richard III*, to *Macbeth*, till *Tempest*, Shakespeare kept revealing his intentions to appeal to his audience to discard their belief in the power of magic, witchcraft, and supernatural. At the same time, he did not place himself in an irretrievable situation. In *Richard III*, the image of Richard was to mock the deformed Robert Cecil, who adopted the anti-Catholic side of his father, William Cecil. Richard was set against Queen Margaret, who represents the old religious belief in the power of witchcraft and cursing. The ending of *Richard III* fulfils Queen Margaret's curse. The early modern England's audience must have focused on the parts of these plays that agreed with either their political or religious preference. After Macbeth chooses to believe in the power of witchcraft, his story ends with tragedy, which somewhat directly sent a warning to King James I to stop indulging himself in the belief of witchcraft. Prospero eventually drops his black arts to bid farewell to his illusions.

Chapter 5

My dissertation examines several overlapping aspects of ghost sightings, perceptions of madness, and belief in witchcraft through Shakespeare's plays. The overlapping aspects manifested in the way Shakespeare perceived the dangerous nature of the illusions behind them. Witnessing the frenzied changes of the Reformation, Shakespeare was able to portray many different facets of ghosts, madness, and witches in his plays in order to encourage his audience to use a non-religious perspective to ruminate on the credibility of such supernatural topics. This invitation indeed pushed against the boundaries of religious teachings on supernatural belief in early modern England. Shakespeare was not the only one to articulate such non-theological views on supernatural topics. Several secular scholars like Bright, Scot, and Lavater also challenged their contemporaries on these issues through scientific, pathological, medical, and/or political perspectives. In my previous chapters, I described how the early modern English upper class or competing Christian sects like Catholics and Anglicans used and twisted supernatural beliefs to achieve their political purposes and establish or strengthen their authority. According to New Historicist explanations, the orthodox doctrines and teachings usually excluded the voice of the subalterns from print records. The religious and political authorities decided what was to be included in the historical and cultural record, and the minority are usually silenced or ignored. On the other hand, the minority were given a voice on Shakespeare's stage. Shakespeare's portrayal of the supernatural on stage appealed to an audience that encompassed all classes. His narrative devices produced visceral reactions within his audience, and through his sympathy toward the subaltern he offered a stage to give voice to the outcasts and downtrodden; the mentally ill, the lower class, Catholics, women, non-aristocrats, and skeptics alike. In his works, the audience can hear the voice of the subaltern melancholic over the loss of old traditions, the

subaltern accused of sorcery by the public, and the mentally ill subaltern who were accused of having been possessed by demons. My aim in this dissertation is to prove that the contribution of the non-theological understanding of supernatural issues Shakespeare presented in his plays brought forth a perceivable shift for his audience to re-think the possibility that these supernatural phenomena – theological, political, or gender-biased – are man-made illusions, and his narrative revolt certainly challenged the dogmatic consensus of his era.

Shakespeare was a humanist who skillfully toed the line of risking his life and career by challenging religious and political authorities. He wanted his audience to learn the danger behind the illusions of the so-called supernatural that these authorities propagated in their society. Much of this danger came from the Reformation: if a person claimed to see a ghost, then he or she was accused of believing in Catholic concepts and teachings rather than Protestant ones, directly contradicting the English authority of Shakespeare's time; if a person suffered from mental illness, people around them believed he or she was possessed, and in need of exorcism; and the uncertainties surrounding belief in the power of witchcraft invited society to erroneously sense an air of the demonic in anything they did not understand. The Protestant English government forbade the malicious exercise of conjuration and witchcraft as well. Shakespeare's plays exhibited a corrective logic to view such supernatural events and ways in which the audience could avoid the hazards of such illusions. By discreetly studying his plays that deal with the supernatural, the reader can gain a better understanding of the historical and cultural contexts of early modern England, and how Shakespeare sympathized with the varying interpretations of ghosts, witches, and mental illness.

Ghosts

The ghosts in Shakespeare's plays reflect the religious changes in England, rather than just a literary depiction of the supernatural. Shakespeare exploited the ghost tropes of his era that had persisted despite the efforts of the era's religious elites to stamp them out. Using these tropes, he created ambiguous ghost characters that undermined his audience's preconceived notions of ghosts in subtle ways to challenge narratives that took hold in the intense aftermath of the Reformation. Richard III, Hamlet, and Macbeth all see, deliver monologues about, and/or interact with ghosts on stage. Prior to Shakespeare, stage ghosts were unmysterious, commenting on the action without intervening. If they do appear, they do so in dreams as avatars of the character's guilty conscience (Belsey 34). Traditional ghost characters would neither interact nor communicate with other characters on stage. Shakespeare presented all his ghosts with agency or ambiguity, with mystery and with menace, so as to fill his theater with a prevalently intense and gruesome atmosphere. This is a sharp break from the Senecan specters who never interacted with or were even seen, let alone spoken of, by their plays' characters. What did the three protagonists see? Did they encounter real ghosts, devils, or mere illusions? These were the questions Shakespeare raised in his contemporary audience' minds when he imbued human characteristics into his ghost characters as well.

Reformation England was steeped in a multitude of different religious sects' interpretations on seeing ghosts. The Catholic Church, Protestants, and many others held and endorsed their own respective opinions. The Church of England, the official sect in England, denied the existence of any kind of spirits or ghosts. Weeding out the somewhat pagan and extra-biblical folk beliefs that had been allowed to take root in English Christianity, Reformists abolished both the system of purgatory and the associated Catholic theological concepts that

accepted the existence of ghosts. Catholics believed in the existence of purgatory, a place for spirits to cleanse and prepare for heaven, where the punishment for unremitted venial sins might be expiated (Stevens 144). In this concept, ghosts were the spirits of the dead still purging their sins in purgatory, returning to the realm of the living to communicate with their loved ones. Therefore, the existence of ghosts was possible and necessary for Catholics, like a life preserver for the souls of those just virtuous enough to avoid hellfire, but not enough to ascend directly to heaven. The idea of purgatory offered Catholic followers a great psychological comfort. Protestants officially believed in neither ghosts nor purgatory. Reformists, such as Luther and Wilcox, saw the danger behind the concept of purgatory because it served as a way for corrupt papists to extract alms and donations. These were extracted from parishioners who could not envision what a few corrupt priests might want from them. In their stricter eschatology, Reformists and Protestants believed that those who sought salvation through Jesus could go to heaven, and that those who sought salvation through their own means went to hell. Since there was no purgatory, if anyone claimed he or she saw a ghost, it must be a diabolic illusion. Two different religious interpretations on purgatory and ghostly apparitions highlighted the sensitivity regarding ghost sightings in early modern England.

As a movement opposed to the Catholic Church, the Reformists' approach to eradicate this extra-biblical belief in the supernatural was to either express skepticism about these beliefs or denounce them as demonic illusions that tempted the laity into sin. The Reformists who fomented fear of the demonic sought to do away with what they believed were the demonic illusions behind ghosts. Catholic teaching on purgatory was not allowed in Protestantism cosmology. Furthermore, Protestant reformers saw the idea of purgatory as a persistent Catholic illusion that made mockery of Christian ideals. To them, the concept implicitly questioned the

importance of living a life of faith and piety if one could simply purge his or her sins after death. Compared with Catholicism, Protestantism was stricter because people could not repent after death. Real and sincere repentance could only be achieved during one's lifetime. The writings of Lavater, which informed Shakespeare's depiction of Old Hamlet, denied the existence of ghosts and refuted the concept of purgatory. Furthermore, Lavater also posited, what others mistook for ghosts were in many cases, illusions created by the Devil in Hell. He believed that the Catholic laity:

> founded chappels, alters, monasteries, perpetuall lights, anniuersaries, frieries, and such like, to release theri friends out of the torments of Purgatorie ... Hereby priests & monks increased daily, their parishes, colleges & monasteries with yerely reuenewes, & got into their hands y best farmes, vineyards, lands, medowes, pondes, parkes, bond me, jurisdictions, great lordships, and the authoritie of the sword. (Laveter 111)

As Protestantism and Catholicism had opposing views on Purgatory and ghosts, Protestants considered a ghost to be either a devil or a designated illusion. In this way, Reformists appropriated widely held folk beliefs as demonic illusions. The Reformation taught its believers to erase their belief in purgatory and ghosts, and that the supposed apparitions they believed to be ghosts were merely the illusions of Catholics. This was the conundrum the Protestant reformation offered to the early modern English laity.

As a skeptical movement, Reformists found it difficult to eradicate the folk belief in ghosts. Skeptical of any ritual or belief that did not explicitly originate from scripture, many Reformists sought to do away with the illusions of subaltern folk belief in ghosts. Yet eliminating the widely ingrained cultural belief in the existence of ghosts would be a persistently difficult task for Reformists. For the common folk of early modern England, the ghostlore passed

down through folk wisdom or fireside winter tales presented a comforting illusion. The folklore of ghost wisdom demonstrated the various attempts by generations of common folk to explain unnatural hauntings and apparitions. The ghostlore of fireside winter tales represented illusions shared from generation to generation to scare, entertain, or link the current listener to the previous generations from which these tales were passed down. One of these stories, Gobi's *The Gast of Gy*, provided a sense of hope that deceased loved ones are never truly gone. This popular story tied together the concepts of love, romance, and purgatory in such a way as to allow the living to retain optimism in their minds as they prayed. What these illusions ultimately display is the idea that the deceased relatives and loved ones of the common folk were not really gone. The middle ages and early modern common folk clung to these illusions because these illusions allowed people to believe that their deceased still loved them and needed their love in return. Thus, it was inevitable that generations of common folk would resist the Protestants and Reformers that attempted to erase, dismiss, or demonize these illusions. The government and the Church of England could denounce the concept of purgatory by decree, but they could not control or command the individual beliefs on which their subjects relied. Thus, the ghost scenes in Shakespeare's plays invited the audience to probe their own individual beliefs and ask themselves: "What did the protagonist see?" The answer would vary based on the audience' upbringing. No matter which sect they belonged to, their religious confession would inform their outlook. Even when Reformists could agree on what happened to the soul after death, the explanations offered in place of prior illusions were too harsh, too unfamiliar, or too alien for many of the common folk to accept. Thus, many common folks simply clung to the most comforting illusion at hand and refused to discard their ghostlore. The subaltern commoners

resisted the attempts by the elites to erase these folk illusions because the illusions provided their community hope and comfort.

This mental tug of war between Catholicism and Protestantism, between elite and subaltern, was placed in the English commoners' minds by the Reformation, and Shakespeare manifested this mental tug of war on stage in *Hamlet*. In post-Reformation society, Protestants removed the old Catholic belief in the existence of symbols, rituals, purgatory, ghosts, and anything else that derived from papist decrees. It might have been easy for some dedicated Protestants to erase all of these old trappings and embrace a new and simpler belief in God, but it would have inevitably been extremely difficult for some who had been raised up by Catholic teachings to abruptly cast away their beliefs. Where would their beloved ones' spirits go or stay? What if they were certain the spirits wanted to come back and visit the spirits' loved ones in the realm of the living? These were the relevant questions in the lives of the commoners, and in *Hamlet,* Shakespeare created a mental space for them to ruminate on their own internal conflicts regarding these questions. *Hamlet*'s Ghost represents the old Catholic belief in purgatory, which was rejected in Protestant Elizabethan England. As Hamlet talks to the Ghost, his anxiety and frustration tear his mind in two opposite directions within the same religious spectrum. Hamlet must ask the Ghost whether it is a demon or not because the new religious dogma rejects the existence of ghosts as demonic seduction. However, he has trouble rejecting the Ghost that wears the image of his beloved father. The communication scenes between Hamlet and the Ghost encapsulated the clash between Catholicism and Protestantism after the Reformation. The formation of Hamlet's character serves as the surrogate for the early modern audience on which they could project their anxieties and uncertainties about their memories of their deceased loved ones and their own afterlife. Hamlet's questions reflect the question which some English

commoners had been asking since the abolishment of purgatory – the people who could not openly seek answers to ease the conflicts in their minds because of an inability to completely give up on the hope offered by the purgatorial narratives. Watching Hamlet's dilemma as to whether or not to trust the Ghost could have been a release valve for the early modern English audience's concealed suffering.

Shakespeare tackled the subject of ghosts without expressing sympathy with any particular religious confession, but rather for the dead who were denied justice in life, and for those who cherish their deceased loved ones. In a nod to plays from the Senecan tradition that influenced his contemporaries, Shakespeare dedicated a place on stage to the dead who cry out for remembrance and justice. Shakespeare's innovation, however, was to give his ghosts the agency to interact with the living characters and affect the course of the plot. In *Richard III*, Shakespeare sidestepped the issue of whether the ghosts of Richard's victims were purgatorial spirits or demonic illusions. Shakespeare instead presented the ghosts demanding of Richard the justice denied to them in life. By appearing in his dreams to accuse Richard, they unnerve him on the eve of the Battle of Bosworth. On the other hand, while Hamlet does confront the question of the Ghost's origins in ways meant to unnerve the audience, the Ghost similarly presents itself as a victim that communicates with the living to demand justice. Finally, in *Macbeth*, while Banquo does not utter a single word, the manner of his appearance is a deafening cry for justice louder than the vocalizations of any specter from the Senecan tradition. By giving voice to those who cry out for remembrance and justice in this manner, Shakespeare restored the connection between the dead and the living that had been severed by the abolition of purgatory. In doing so, Shakespeare demonstrated a clear sympathy to those who had been denied justice in life.

The ghost characters in Shakespeare's plays are symbols of the victimization that inevitably results from the political and power struggles of the elites. Political ambitions drive Richard, Claudius, and Macbeth to murder their victims, who later appear before their murderers or the audience as images of ghosts on stage. Even without considering the heightened religious issues that informed the depiction of these ghosts, the audience can sense the intensity of injustice from both the audible and the silent ghosts. The reason for their deaths is the same: They were simply unfortunate enough to be in the way of the throne for Richard, Claudius, and Macbeth. Their deaths are the consequence of the station into which they were born and the power struggle that would regard their very existence as an obstacle or threat to Richard, Claudius, or Macbeth's legitimacy. In this light, the ghost characters simply exist to emphasize the cruelty and darkness inevitably wrought by a lust for power. In the three plays, Shakespeare executed poetic justice to support the victims and give them a chance to stand on stage and be heard. Did they really die at the hands of Richard, Claudius, and Macbeth, or of the political system in which they lived? Even if Richard, Claudius, and Macbeth never had the thought to murder these innocent victims, lust for power could have driven them or other real-life leaders possessing the same cruel and callous ambition to do the same thing.

The plots of these ghost develop and depict the dynamics between the powerful and the deposed or marginalized ones in the plays. As the lust of power drive Richard III and Macbeth to murder people, their murderous actions seem to possess a form of power because they decide the manner of their victims' deaths. The victims represent the marginalized side. After Richard and Macbeth obtain the thrones they desire, the awareness of their own guilt starts eroding away at their consciousness. They know they committed unforgivable crimes according to Christian doctrines, both Catholic and Protestant: "Moreover ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a

murderer, which is guilty of death: but he shall be surely put to death" (*Numbers*, 35:31). When the ghost characters appear on stage, it serves to remind the powerful Richard and Macbeth that God will not tolerate their evil actions. Richard and Macbeth's realizations invert the position of the powerful versus the marginalized. The ghost characters hold the power of religious justice against Richard and Macbeth's murderous crimes. The rise and decline of power are fluid in the play, with Richard, Macbeth, and the ghost characters having moments in which they are depicted as both marginalized and powerful.

Hamlet's Ghost elevates traditional ghost characters from that of a vengeful spirit to a religiously complex one because Shakespeare had an important message to deliver to his contemporary audience. While Senecan ghosts and ghosts in *Richard III* seek for justice, Hamlet's Ghost signified religious conflicts between Catholicism and Protestantism during early modern England. In this way, Shakespeare used his innovative depiction of the Ghost to deliver an important message to his contemporary audience. The existence of the Ghost places Prince Hamlet in an ambiguous position because Prince Hamlet must face the ethical dilemma of supernatural revenge. Christian doctrine, like the Protestant doctrine, he would have learned of at Wittenberg, had taught him never to murder a person, so there was no way in which he could morally kill his uncle to avenge for his father, no matter how much Prince Hamlet sought revenge (Lavater xix). Meanwhile, if Prince Hamlet believes the Ghost's words, then Hamlet would have admitted the existence of the concept of purgatory and the existence of ghosts, deviating from mainstream Protestant theology. This dilemma also resonated with some of the early modern English audience who partially clung still to old doctrines which stood against authoritative preference. The significance of portraying Prince Hamlet in such a dilemma was to deliver early modern audiences a lesson: to be cautious and suspicious of supernatural illusions.

After all, some of Shakespeare's colleagues, Kyd, Marlowe, and others, were either arrested or murdered because of their religious deviations. If Protestants in the audience were made uncomfortable by the depiction of a protagonist communicating with and listening to a ghost steeped in the Catholic tropes of purgatory, the conclusion of the play would still see Hamlet's pursuit of vengeance on the ghost's behalf end with his demise. Shakespeare depicted the danger of the illusion of ghosts: Hamlet loses his life because of his obsession with his dead father, the Catholic ghost.

Another reason the three protagonists saw ghosts could be as a consequence of their guilty conscience, and the acknowledgement of seeing ghosts is their illusion. Not all of them murder in cold blood, but they all suffer from a sense of guilt, stemming from their consciousness of right and wrong. Although power struggles drove Richard and Macbeth to kill, they remained aware that murder is an immoral act, no matter which creed they followed – whether it be Christianity, State law, or simple empathy. They choose an immoral means to seize the throne because their ambitions come before their consciousness of right and wrong. Hamlet falls into an escalated dilemma because he greatly desires to avenge his father, but at a crucial moment, his Christian mind stops him from committing murder. Hamlet is the embodiment of the struggle in the consciousness between right and wrong in a human being. The three protagonists suffer as their moral codes exert pressure upon their mental states. This moral code or guilty conscience is too heavy for an ordinary human being to undertake. As such, they start experiencing unnervingly unusual scenes and apparitions. Physically, they chose whether or not to take actions based on their own free will, but mentally, they cannot stop their guilty conscience from creating visual images - ghosts - that force them to face the wrongdoings for

which they have dodged responsibility for so long. Their guilty conscience affects their mental states which further creates the illusion of ghosts.

Madness and Exorcism

Catholic teachings also used the supernatural to explain madness. Shakespeare's depictions of madness reflect the early modern era's increasing interest and scholarship in madness, melancholy, and exorcism. During the time, early modern people often interpreted madness as a supernatural phenomenon because Catholic belief and teachings regarding possession aggravated trends that dehumanized the mentally ill. During the Middle Ages and early modern eras, religious remedies against possession used the practice of charismatic exorcisms. These exorcisms served the dual purpose of both removing the devil from the possessed person and demonstrating the exorcist's dogmatic correctness. Many physicians and scholars of the era - like Samuel Harsnett, Edward Jorden, or Timothie Bright - would push back against these practices and produce skeptical scholarship on the topic which offered non-religious perspectives on how to interpret madness. Shakespeare also exploited the widespread fascination with madness and utilized this growing literature of skeptical scholarship to craft narratives that demonstrated the plight of the mad and melancholic, and questioned the contemporary remedies of confinement and exorcism. Shakespeare's mad characters presented the various ways in which early modern society viewed madness: through the lens of gender for Gertrude and Lady Macbeth, class for Ophelia, and religion for Hamlet. The dehumanizing practices of exorcism and confinement were widely accepted as solutions to the abnormal behaviors of the mentally ill. To the extent that these characters were representatives of the different types of madness experienced by people from disparate subsections of early modern society, such as melancholia, hysteria, somnambulism, etc., Shakespeare used a non-religious

lens to look past theological therapies and restore mad people's humanity. Some of his audience could identify with the mad characters' plight when Shakespeare's narratives emphasized the injustice of confinement and exorcism. Using these tropes, he depicted situations in which audiences could witness the fear and injustice of those subjected to these "cures." Through his plays, Shakespeare influenced the perceivable shift away from such supernatural misinterpretations of mental illness by helping to shatter the illusion of demonic possession as a cause of madness.

Madness had existed for as long as human society, through ancient Greek and Roman times to Shakespeare's contemporary time. As the centuries advanced, the philosophers of each age possessed a curiosity for the study and discourse regarding this subject. Several centuries before Shakespeare's time, Galenus' humorist practices influenced many Europeans who had an interest in the study of the human mind. However, the scholarship in the field of madness took a backseat to the spiritual mandates of the Church. Because of religious interference, exorcism became one of the widely accepted therapeutic solutions for those who exhibited abnormal behavior (Forcen 261). Such theological solutions took precedence over other non-religious treatments. One of the drivers of exorcism was an increasing fear of witchcraft which caused large swaths of society to mistake mental illness as an indication of demonic possession for centuries until the sixteenth century. Nonetheless, there were different voices coming out against religious perspective. Beginning in the Renaissance Era, Europeans who had maintained a nearly all-consuming focus on the study of God became more and more interested in the study of human nature. As madness (mental illness or psychological studies in our contemporary time) became a popular topic in the Renaissance movement, the numbers of scholars, theorists, and philosophers who particularly engaged in the topic of madness increased. This increasing

significance on a notion of humanism led to different viewpoints and different scientific methods by which scholars could study madness and the human mind. This interest in madness also extended to the general populace. This could be seen in the way many early moderns would pay to stare and gawk at the mad individuals confined within Bedlam in early modern England (MacDonald, *Mystical* 121). Physicians in Bedlam used confinement and medical treatments on patients which had deviated from supernatural perspective. The field of psychology had its roots in this widespread interest on humankind's mental states.

Religious doctrines and interpretations led the people of the middle and early modern eras to view madness as more the result of supernatural causes, instead of pathological ones. Catholic doctrine and the Church would treat people who suffered from the mental disorders by attempting to exorcise the supposed devils from their bodies, by confining the possessed people when the devils refused to leave, or by starving the possessed to weaken the power of the Devil. When people believed witchcraft or the Devil could cause the abnormal behaviors in people, the whole situation would be uncontrollable for the commoners. Therefore, commoners had to rely on religious power to deal with abnormal behavior. Hence, religious followers believed in the power of exorcism and confinement. Madness became yet another supposedly supernatural phenomena associated with the demonic. Mad men and women were no longer being viewed as suffering from an imbalance of their humours but were possessed by demons conjured by witches. Religious power directed people's belief and understanding about Galenus' humorist's system towards a different direction in Western history. In this way, society misinterpreted pathological afflictions as demonic possession.

With the abnormal behaviors and speech of the mentally ill firmly associated with possession, the different religious sects of the era took to their own specific religious methods to

cure the suffering in order to gain people's favors. The Catholic clergy and the Puritans attempted to cure people who suffered from unexplainable or seemingly mysterious symptoms through exorcism, a practice which long predated the Reformation. Yet in the post-Reformation society, exorcism still served a new and significant role in an ongoing war of propaganda between Catholics, Puritans, and the Anglican Church (Kemp and Williams 27). This propaganda battle over combatting possession pitted Protestants and Reformists, who eschewed exorcism, against Catholics and Puritans. The process of exorcism became a perfect ceremony to attract people to watch like a play. The conclusion of the rite brought closure and comfort to the fearful because it was an ending for the subject's possession as well. Catholics and Puritans' enchanting exorcisms were spectacular displays that captivated the public's attention, both affirming that demonic possession was a true and dangerous threat, and that the exorcist's particular sect could offer protection to its adherents. Through these competing displays of illusions, Catholics and Puritans competed for public favor. Reformists, on the other hand, took a more rational – or even skeptical – approach to demonic possession: They believed exorcism to be an extra-biblical practice without scriptural warrant. To heal the mad or the supposedly possessed, Protestants could only offer prayer and fasting (MacDonald xix), practices which did not have theatrical elements as Catholic and Puritan exorcism did. Reformists were at a disadvantage to counter the charismatic practices of other sects.

To counter these Catholic exorcism illusions, Reformist scholars were more willing to explore skeptical viewpoints. For instance, the Anglican Bishop of London sponsored rational, skeptical texts by authors like Edward Jorden or Samuel Harsnett, which – aided by the printing press which had helped spread the Protestant reformation in the first place – served to demystify exorcism (MacDonald viii). Because of the societal interest in madness, there was an audience

for these texts (as evidenced by the gawking spectators at Bedlam), who would learn of their skeptical arguments against the practice of exorcism. Through these texts, Reformists attempted to paint exorcism as an illusory fraud peddled by Catholics. In this regard, the Reformation was in some ways a movement towards skepticism, working to put a stop to the supernatural practice of exorcism.

The Reformation allowed scholars more leeway to question the previously established thoughts regarding madness, possession, and exorcism. With authorities and the elites openly questioning the Catholic doctrine, and a rising humanism ushered in by the Renaissance, scholars were increasingly able to push the discourse on madness in a more skeptical and humane direction. Richard Napier's medical writings pointed to the possibility that abnormal behaviors or speech were natural, rather than spiritual, in origin. Timothie Bright, using a Galenist perspective to explain that melancholia was caused by an excess of black bile, was more confident to distinguish between spiritual and pathological causes for mental illness. By the dawn of the Jacobin era, Edward Jorden stated that mental illness was an entirely pathological condition in his *A Briefe Discourse of a Disease Called the Suffocation of the Mother*. Samuel Harsnett's *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* (1603), which sought to discredit the validity of possession and witchcraft as Catholic and Puritan illusions, rejected the illusion of exorcism and posited that the supposedly supernatural behaviors that early moderns mistook for possession was in fact a secular, pathological affliction. Over the course of the early modern era, these skeptical scholars were able to slowly pull away the veil shrouding the illusion.

The publication of these skeptical texts in depicting madness and exorcism influenced some early modern English people, including Shakespeare. One of the texts sponsored by the Bishop of London as part of an effort to counter the crowd-captivating practice of exorcism was

Samuel Harsnett's *Declaration.* Shakespeare used Harsnett's tome as a source in depicting madness, lifting passages and phrases from Harsnett's *Declaration* in his plays (Belsey 38). As opposed to his ambiguous depictions of the existence of ghosts, Shakespeare's portrayal of possession and exorcism are more direct. His depictions of these illusions suggested that he didn't embrace the Catholic illusions in the least and insisted on portraying them in a rational light. In general, Shakespeare's portrayal of ghosts, witchcraft, and madness demonstrated the perils of overzealous belief in the supernatural or of embracing such illusions for personal gain.

By using the rational arguments of skeptical scholars to underpin the narratives involving madness and confinement in his plays, Shakespeare gave voice to the mentally ill and those accused of being possessed, such as Hamlet and Olivia in *Hamlet* and Antipholus of Syracuse in *The Comedy of Errors*. It is impossible to find out the actual number of innocent women, mentally ill individuals, or other common folk who suffered under the dehumanizing practices of exorcism and confinement. But by getting his audience to witness the mentally ill and those accused of being possessed on stage, Shakespeare shed the rational light upon the minority in his society. Similar to the spectators who visited Bedlam to view the mad, spectators of Shakespeare's stage plays would also view and recognize the conditions of the mad — melancholie, hysteria, suicide, postnatal psychosis, somnambulism. However, unlike the confined subjects at Bedlam, Shakespeare's mad characters on the stage are given words, agency, and venues to communicate with the world and let audiences sympathize with their plight. Furthermore, none of his characters' madness is ever depicted as directly caused by the supernatural. By depicting his characters' slow descent into madness, and letting the audience hear their words, he implored his audience to sympathize with the mentally ill people's plight and have emotional stakes in their fate. By making the mad his protagonists, bestowing upon

them vulnerable and laborious human qualities as mad people, and guiding the audience to follow along the mad characters' journey over the course of the performance, Shakespeare had the audience empathize with their condition, their mental state, the threat and injustice of confinement.

Shakespeare emphasized the injustice of contemporary solutions to madness by demonstrating the danger and threat of confinement and exorcism present to his characters. Confinement and exorcism presented a particular danger to subaltern populations more likely to be accused of possession or witchcraft. An example of Shakespeare's emphasis of the injustice of these practices can be seen in the protagonists of *The Comedy of Errors*. Shakespeare used the plight of Antipholis to mock the practice of confinement and exorcism. Antipholis is suspected of madness and is unjustly bound in by Adriana. A conjurer named Pinch is introduced to try and exorcise Antiopholis's supposed demons. The belief in the power of exorcism and the practice of confinement could have driven a healthy person to be insane and mentally ill. A female authoritative character, Abbess, appears and provides a secular solution to resolve the farcical misunderstanding at the end of the play. She advises how to maintain good mental health: "In food, in sport, and life-preserving rest / To be disturbed would mad or man or beast. / The consequence is, then, thy jealous fits / Hath scared thy husband from the use of wits" (5.1.84-87). Her speech on mental analysis demonstrates precise observation, logical analysis, and shared sympathy which are also very close to our modern psychological therapy and values. By not only rejecting superstitious solutions, but presenting an effective secular solution, Shakespeare displayed an affinity for the skeptical Reformist scholars who tried to shine a light on these illusions and for the subaltern population that were subjected to these illusions.

The Reformation's denunciation of Catholic illusions was a source of societal melancholy, which Shakespeare depicted in *Hamlet*. The removal of all the trappings associated with Catholicism had a melancholic effect on peoples' mental states. Hamlet displays the emptiness and melancholy of someone in an age that ceased to place value on the many cherished symbols, figures, and rituals of Catholicism; an age that chose to disregard the concept of ascension to heaven through the pursuit of a life of good work in favor of ascension through a life of faith. If the conversations between the Ghost and Hamlet represent the conversation between Catholicism and Protestantism, Hamlet's longing for his father represents the at-the-time fashionable and trendy melancholy of a society that gave up, in a forceful and violent way, the traditions of Catholicism. In a world in which previously cherished beliefs were suddenly cast as meaningless or even sinful, Hamlet exists as a surrogate for a subset of the early modern audience to project their melancholy and depression over the loss of their previously held rituals. Through Hamlet, Shakespeare displayed empathy for a melancholic audience that still longed for Catholic tradition.

Hamlet's enchantment by the illusion of the ghost and purgatory – uncertain if they are real or not – leads to his demise, but the way in which he hides behind the illusion of madness prolongs his survival in a tense political situation. In *Madness and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare*, Duncan Salkeld claimed that madness "…is depicted not as a dissolution into the crazed but secure interiority of its characters, but as a means of personal and political survival" (86). Hamlet used madness as an illusion to protect himself from a political conflict that he doesn't have solutions for. Hamlet's embrace of this illusion of madness represents his entrapment in the social and political order of Protestantism, and for most of the play, allows him to navigate a binary system between Protestants and Catholics.

Hamlet's crisis of melancholy, however, stands in stark contrast with Ophelia's hysteria. Gender colored early modern people's perceptions of madness, and in this regard, Ophelia serves as Hamlet's counterpart. While melancholy was a trendy and masculine form of madness, hysteria was a feminine malady. Hamlet pretended madness covers his melancholy to ensure his safety, but Ophelia – unable to exert any type of power of her own because of her gender and her status – has madness foisted upon her by the actions of others. As the daughter of a noble, her agency belongs to her father or brother. When compared to Queen Gertrude, who is able to re-marry and retain her status, Ophelia does not possess that agency. Ophelia's powerless situation, the death of her father, and her abandonment by Hamlet drag her mental condition into hysteria. Subordinated to the patriarchal figures in her life who gradually consume her sanity, the only control she possesses over her life is to end it in a method of suicide that has heavy feminine connotations – drowning, her life carried away by flowing feminine fluid – in early modern England.

Mental illness also captivates another Shakespeare's female character, Lady Macbeth. She commits suicide as well. At the time *Hamlet* (1603) was published, suicide was considered a sin, yet by the time *Macbeth* (1623) was published, suicide was considered an act originating from madness. As melancholy grew more fashionable during the turn of the seventeenth century, suicide went from a sinful, despicable act to a tragic and pathetic outcome of untreated mental illness (McDonald 135). Lady Macbeth succumbs to her illness and is no longer fully in control of her body and mind. Her physician warns her maid to remove any means of self-injury from Lady Macbeth. However, in terms of agency, Lady Macbeth can be considered to be more masculine than Macbeth. In an era in which taking initiative was considered masculine, Lady Macbeth takes initiative, whereas he equivocates. Yet her somnambulism means that she only

possesses this masculine initiative when she's awake when she's asleep she loses her agency. Notably, in Act 5, she receives help from a doctor for pathological therapy, rather than a religious healer. Contemporary psychologists would recognize her ailment as postnatal psychosis. Yet in early modern England, her doctor recognizes that her sleepwalking reflects an awareness of her guilty conscience as it slowly creeps away at her dominant will in her unconsciousness.

Witchcraft

The last supernatural topic that Shakespeare addressed is the belief in the power of witchcraft. The portrayal of witchcraft and the supernatural in Shakespeare's plays reflected the political changes in England, rather than just a literary depiction of the practice of magic. Partially due to the prevalent negative impression of the practice of witchcraft, Shakespeare's attitude and criticism on challenging these practices as a fraudulent, man-made illusion were more straightforward, substantial, and less ambiguous in the comparison to his depictions regarding the existence of ghosts or the differences between madness and possession. The development of the plots and descriptions of magic and witchcraft fed off his audience' anxieties and uncertainties about the validity of the power of witchcraft. An awareness of magic and a willingness to seek out magical solutions to problems both paramount and trivial were pervasive among all walks of life in early modern society. Meanwhile, the belief in witchcraft did not impact the lives of early modern English commoners as much, compared to people in continental Europe. Unlike continental Europe, which engaged in pervasive witch hunts, the English populace perceived the belief and power of witchcraft as a malicious and dangerous, yet routine, political tool – heavily associated with Catholic conspiracy – that further endangered the stability of the state. While Shakespeare sought to expose the mysterious power of the supernatural by

portraying the concept of witchcraft in *The Comedy of Errors* in a merry and farcical way, he also heavily emphasized the seriousness and danger associated with the belief in the power of witchcraft – rather than with witchcraft itself – from a political perspective in *Macbeth*. These two works reflected Shakespeare's views on witchcraft and his intention to deliver his beliefs to his audience, including King James I.

When the audience observed the topic of witchcraft in Shakespeare's plays, they were already familiar with the depictions and the rudiments of the witch-characters; moreover, their shared understanding flowed across classes. Different witches and different types of magic served different functions for different classes when people felt the need to resort to the power of witchcraft. Through successive generations, and despite the vastly different lifestyles between the commoners and the elites, Englishmen of all classes frequently resorted to the mysterious power of superstitious magic to help them cope and deal with unfathomable issues in their lives. For instance, peasants would ask village witches to curse their neighbors whom they harbored a grudge against: "It was about personal, individual malice" (*Witchcraft and the Supernatural* 8). This malicious act occurred on a smaller scale. By hearing or learning of the fulfillment of a village curse, the peasants might have felt comforted to a certain degree. Although these witches might not have been real, their service provided real psychological comfort for the peasants' anger or frustrations. As to the elites' needs, Queen Elizabeth's personal advisor, John Dee used astrology – so-called angel magic – to inform her decisions, for example, to choose the best date for her coronation. This purpose was – on the surface – more positive, acceptable, and auspicious. Therefore, most English folks could accept magical practices such as astrology without directly associating it with the malicious concept of witchcraft. Mostly, the cases above

would not attract much of the government's attention because they did not hurt people's lives or threaten the government.

England's permissive attitude towards magic changed with the passing of the anti-witchcraft acts of 1563, which aimed to punish Catholic conspiracies against Queen Elizabeth I's safety and England's stability. As Elizabeth I succeeded the throne and inherited her father's break from Rome, Pope Pius V refuted the legitimacy of Elizabeth, excommunicated her, and released English Catholics from any obligation to recognize her authority. Furthermore, the papacy of Pope Gregory XIII intimated that assassinating her would not be a sin. Catholic authorities subtly encouraged a series of plots against her at the beginning of her reign. Because some Catholic conspirators chose conjuration or dark magic to carry out their plots, Cecil warned Elizabeth of the seriousness of the Catholic conspiracies against her safety (Devine 80). These conspiracies facilitated Parliament to approve the enactment of the Witchcraft Act of 1563. Afterwards, the practice of "evil" witchcraft soon became a symbol of wicked Catholicism. Neither the government nor the English people could tolerate the idea of foreign malice from Catholic powers on the European continent. The anti-conjuring laws enacted to counter this threat gave magic a treasonous air, changing society's attitudes towards it. These acts served to legitimize fear of witches and magic. This fear opened the gates to scrutiny and scholarship of magic and the supernatural.

The prevalence of the belief in the power of witchcraft in early modern England also ignited a war of words over its authenticity in the scholarly realm. This war began between witchmongers and skeptics, a back-and-forth confrontation in which both sides attempted to refute each other on the validity of the power of witchcraft through publications. Kramer and Sprenger's *Malleus Maleficarum* elevated sorcery and witchcraft to that of a criminal act and

recommended secular courts and witch-hunters to prosecute witches for their evil deeds. The *Malleus* had a great impact on continental Europe for centuries. Many witches were hunted, tortured, and prosecuted either publicly or privately. It was difficult to verify the validity of their identities as witches even though the book amply proscribed supposed methods of detection. The possibility that many of the witches were not real was discounted entirely. Weyer was among the first to publish against the practice of witch-hunts. The publication of Weyer's *De Praestigiis Daemonum et Incantationibus ac Venificiis* (On the Illusions of the Demons and on Spells and Poisons) served to refute the *Malleus Maleficarum*'s theories and methods because Weyer surmised that witches were mostly poor women who suffered from mental illness. These so-called witches were patients in his eyes. The purpose behind his book was to pursue a cessation to the persecution of witches and seek medical attention for the accused. Weyer's argument irritated Bodin, who soon published *De la demonomaine des sorciers* to condemn Weyer and other skeptics like him for speaking up for the accused, as Bodin believed they were providing aid to witches and their power to profane God. Bodin's book advocated the absolute elimination of witches. Bodin's extreme remarks also influenced Darcy, who implemented a wide-ranging witch-hunting program in England. Even though witch-hunting was not as prevalent in England as it was in continental Europe, Scot publicly condemned Bodin and Darcy's belief and actions – and the thought process that informed their works – in his *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*. As a skeptic, Scot doubted the power of witchcraft because he believed that many of their supposedly magical curses were either trivial scams or the rantings and ravings of poor women wracked by mental illness. However, King James' involvement in this scholarly debate would – due to his regal status – inevitably tip the scales of the debate to his side. In the preface of *Daemonologie*, King James refuted Weyer, Scot, and many other skeptical perspectives or explanations for the

power of witchcraft or the supernatural. King James' obsession with witchcraft and the authority conferred on it through his royal title drew early modern English people's attention towards the danger and threat of believing in the power of witchcraft. This scholarly war seemed settled once King James joined the fray because nobody could challenge or refute the anointed King of England.

On the surface, no one stood opposed to King James, and everyone around tried to placate and meet his needs, but Shakespeare shifted the terrain for this clash of ideas from the pages of scholarly publications to the site of his theater. *The Comedy of Errors*, *Macbeth*, and *The Tempest* each covered different motifs, but had similar themes: that of supernatural power as illusion. Shakespeare secretively challenged King James because Shakespeare did not believe in the power of witchcraft. In *The Comedy of Errors*, the power of witchcraft is never portrayed as real, and no one possesses it. While all the characters fear the unexplainable and chaotic situations and fear that the situations have magical origin, the audience is made aware that the seemingly supernatural scenes are merely farcical coincidence. In *Macbeth*, Shakespeare presented the power of witchcraft using the associated clichés and tropes of his day. He seemed to not even bother to create some novelty to change the stereotypes of witchcraft's images in order to please his audience. This was mainly because of King James' obsession with the power of witchcraft. Therefore, Shakespeare had to depict witchcraft in *Macbeth* with the stereotypical supernatural elements to meet King James' expectations. On the other hand, the denouement of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth seems to prove the devastating danger behind belief in the power of supernatural. The tragic ending of Macbeth served to warn King James to cease indulging in the supernatural studies in order to be a responsible king. In *The Tempest*, the supernatural seems to flow through the entire play. However, Prospero appears in the denouement and discards his

books – the symbol of belief in supernatural power – into the sea. Prospero further declares witchcraft as mere illusion which has no basis in reality. Shakespeare's last play still sought to instill in his audience the same theme: the power of witchcraft is an illusion.

Besides exposing of the power of witchcraft as illusional, Shakespeare also exposed the gender bias towards witchcraft on stage. In the cultural realm, the changing religious environment exacerbated existing gender biases, leading early modern English society to judge magical acts differently, depending on the gender of the alleged conjurer. The changing historical, cultural, and religious landscape was not easy on those accused of witchcraft, especially when the accused were subaltern women. As John Dee immersed himself in the study of sorcery and astrology, he could use his knowledge to serve as an advisor to Elizabeth I. However, outside the realm of the elites, many early modern English commoners believed that the angry curses of a haggardly old crone like Elizabeth Jackson could truly hurt Mary Glover, and deemed Jackson guilty of witchcraft. In *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England*, Macfarlane provided a table: "List of suspected witches in three Essex villages, 1560-99[85]" (95). Of twenty-two accused suspects over nineteen cases, nineteen were women. Throughout *The Comedy of Errors*, many characters use the term, "witch," as a simple insult. Shakespeare's audience was probably familiar with this benign way of invoking tropes associated with witchcraft to insult women in the theater or in daily life. In *Richard III*, Queen Margret's bitter curses are associated with old Catholic beliefs. This character seems to reflect the *Malleus Maleficarum's* trope of curses as a tool female witches used to cause harm. The *Malleus* used the religious authority

[85] Table 7-The village of Hatfield Peverel: Lora Winchester, Elizabeth Fraunces, Agnes Waterhouse, Joan Waterhouse, Joan Osborne, Agnes Francys, Agnes Bromley, Agnes Duke, Jon Cocke, Elizabeth Pillgram, Mary Godfrey, John Gosse and wife, John Heare/Jenny; the village of Boreham: 'Mason's wife', Mary Belsted/Middleton , Margaret Poole, Agnes Haven; the village of Little Baddow: Alice Bambricke and Alice Swallow.

conferred upon it to mark female witches as evil, capable of causing harm through curses. The three witches in *Macbeth* represent the stereotype of witches as old, ugly, and evil crones as well. All the above are examples of common tropes that existed in Shakespeare's society and became his literary inputs. In his previous plays, his portrayals of witches did not deviate from the early modern audience' shared values. However, Shakespeare's use of witchcraft and sorcery in *The Tempest* is unlike that of his previous plays. The setting in which Prospero, a poor, old, and evil male sorcerer appears and tortures Ariel and Caliban in front of the audience, subverted the gender bias on witchcraft. In Shakespeare's expanded cosmology, gender would not decide a person's wickedness, but wickedness exists in both genders.

Just like *Macbeth*, in *Tempest*, Shakespeare again exposed how wicked men like Macbeth and Prospero, driven by their selfish desires, achieve their goals by utilizing supernatural power in a deviant way. Macbeth believes the three witches' prophecy that he will be the king. However, they only told him he would be the king; they did not tell him to commit regicide in order to become a king. As Lady Macbeth plots murder, Macbeth accepts it and executes it. Banquo heard the prophecy with Macbeth together, but he did not contemplate murdering anyone in order to fulfill his fate. The three witches' prophecy serves as an excuse for Macbeth to commit the crime of murder. In *Tempest*, Shakespeare used the Elizabethan trope of magic as the weapon of the foreign invader, casting Prospero as the magic-wielding invader of Caliban's island. In order to live a semblance of his old life as duke at Milan, Prospero ruthlessly uses magic to threaten and torture Ariel and Caliban mentally and physically. Their submission reveals the wickedness of an invader who happens to learn magic and uses it in a terrible way. Witchcraft and supernatural power will not change their personality, and witchcraft and supernatural power are mere tools to them.

Shakespeare employed the trope of magic as the tool of the foreign invaders to create a cycle of subversion and containment in his works wherein the denouement brings about a stabilization to the societal upheaval portrayed on stage. This was a powerful trope in an era in which England had been under near-constant threat by the Catholic powers of continental Europe and the societal stability of the English laypeople was strained by the political and religious squabbles of the elites. In such an era, this trope was a powerful narrative device with which he could arrest his audiences' attention. It is possible the era's tumult motivated Shakespeare to seek endings where all subversions were contained, and a peaceful outcome resulted for the subaltern folk depicted in his plays. Shakespeare saved a space on stage for those marginalized by opportunistic elites: the Queen Margaret – stripped of her power – is afforded a stage on which she curses Richard III; Caliban – subjugated by Prospero – still has the freedom to curse his tormentor. Shakespeare then depicted the containment of their tormentors' subversions, and the achievement of a peaceful outcome for the laypeople who had been marginalized by the elites. In a complete inversion of the tropes involving magic as the tool of the destabilizing invader, Queen Margaret's curses eventually manifest in Richard's defeat, and it is Henry VII – invading as a foreign force – that contains Richards subversions and brings about stability for the English laypeople. At the end of *The Tempest*, Prospero – the foreign invader – relinquishes the magic he used to marginalize Caliban and Ariel, releasing the island's natives to restore a sense of normalcy.

Conclusion

Along with the efforts of many secular scholars, physicians, and experts, Shakespeare provided the subalterns with a stage to resist the injustice coming from the superstitious illusions regarding the existence of ghosts, the application of exorcism, and the belief in witchcraft.

During Reformation, the unsettled explanations between Catholicism and Protestantism dragged early modern English commoners into spiritual anxiety about the afterlife, purgatory, possession, dark magic, and Catholic threats. Even though there were many thinkers — Bright, Burton, Harsnett, Jorden, Lavater, Luther, Napier, Scot, Weyer, Wilcox, and others — who were willing to appease these anxieties, their works might not have been able to deliver their skeptical scholarship to all walks of life due to the cost of books and underdeveloped literacy in early modern England. Shakespeare's plays could be their conduits to deliver their significant messages against superstitious explanations to his audience, who would benefit from learning of their mutual efforts and results. His plays helped the early modern audience choose a non-religious approach on seeing ghosts, demystify madness and counter the interest in Catholic and Puritan exorcism, and reject the danger behind the belief in the power of witchcraft. These rational texts may not have captivated audiences in the same manner as the possibilities of seeing the deceased loved ones, the charismatic spectacles of exorcisms, or the utilitarian practices of witchcraft. Yet Shakespeare provided their ideas a stage and was able to amplify their ideas to a wide audience in charismatic spectacles of his own. In this way, Shakespeare invited his audience to question these superstitious cures for all the supernatural elements and offered a more scholarly and sympathetic approach. Shakespeare's ambiguity in his plays masked his own thoughts on magic just enough for him to protect himself from the political danger that brought ruin to his contemporaries from their own publications. By providing a wide range of possible interpretations of conjuration and witchcraft for his audience, Shakespeare allowed them to glimpse at the ways magic can be wielded as an illusion. His works led the audience away from the supernatural back to rationality.

Bibliography

Adelman, Janet. *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays, Hamlet to the Tempest*. Routledge, 1992.

Almond, Philip C. *England's First Demonologist: Reginald Scot & 'The Discoverie of Witchcraft'*. I.B. Tauris, 2011.

---. "King James I and the Burning of Reginald Scot's *the Discoverie of Witchcraft*: the invention of a Tradition." *Notes & Queries*, vol. 56, no. 2, 2009, pp.209-13.

Arkins, Brian. "Heavy Seneca His Influence on Shakespeare's Tragedies." *Classics Ireland*, vol. 2, 1995, pp. 1-16.

Bakhtin, Mikhail M. *Rabelais and His World*. Indiana University Press, 1984.

Barbudo, Maria Isabel. "William Shakespeare and their representation of Female Madness." *Creative Dialogues: Narrative and Medicine*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015, pp.150-155.

"Bedlam, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2020, https://www-oed-com.ccl.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/16879?redirectedFrom=Bedlam#eid. Accessed 20 May 2018.

Belsey, Catherine. "Beyond Reason: Hamlet and Early Modern Stage Ghosts." *Gothic Renaissance: A Reassessment*. Ed. Elisabeth Bronfen and Beate Neumeier. Manchester University Press, 2014, 32-54.

---. "Shakespeare's Sad Tale for Winter: *Hamlet* and the Tradition of Fireside Ghost Stories." *Shakespeare Quarterly*, vol. 61, no. 1, 2010, pp. 1-27.

Bever, Edward. "Popular Witch Beliefs and Magical Practices." *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America*. Ed. Brian P. Levack. Oxford University Press, 2013, pp.50-68.

The Bible. "1611 King James Version (KJV): The Preserved and Living Word of God." *King James Bible Online*. https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/1611-Bible/. Accessed 3 February 2017.

Birenbaum, Harvey. "Consciousness and Responsibility in *Macbeth*." *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal*, vol. 15, no. 2, 1982, pp. 12-32.

Blakeway, Amy. "'News from Scotland' in England, 1559-1602." *Huntington Library Quarterly*, vol. 79, no. 4, 2016, p.p. 533-559.

Brathwaite, Karmau. *Barabajan Poems 1492-1992*. Savacou Publications, 1994.

Bright, Timothie. *A Treatise of Melancholie*. *Early English Books Online*. 1586.

Brown, Theo. *The Fate of the Dead: a Study in Folk-Eschatology in the West Country after the Reformation*. Rowman and Littlefield, 1979.

Browne, Thomas. *Religio Medici*. Cambridge University Press, 1953.

Burton, Robert. *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. *Early English Books Online*. 1621.

Calvin, John. *Selected Works of John Calvin Vol.3: Tracts Part 3*. Albany: Ages Software, 1998. <http://media.sabda.org/alkitab-7/LIBRARY/CALVIN/CAL_SLW3.PDF?fbclid=IwAR2c7j2l5e2_9jNth2FQqKEmk2V3_jYvPU9bpcSgMMgv4vEmi8MhczhX9Aw>. Accessed January 27th, 2019.

Chambers, E.K. *The Elizabethan Stage*, vol.III. Oxford University Press, 1923.

Clarke, Basil Fulford Lowther. *Mental Disorder in Earlier Britain: Exploratory Studies*. University of Wales Press, 1975.

Couche, Christine. "A Mind Diseased: Reading Lady Macbeth's Madness." *Word and Self Estranged in English Texts, 1550-1660*. Ed. Philippa Kelly and L. E. Semler. Ashgate, 2010, pp.135-148.

Cressy, David and Lori Anne Ferrell. *Religion and Society in Early Modern England: A Source Book, 2nd Ed*. Routledge, 2005.

Croft, Pauline. "The Reputation of Robert Cecil: Libels, Political Opinion and Popular Awareness in the Early Seventeenth Century." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, vol. 1, 1991, pp. 43–69.

Crystal, Ben. *In King Lear: Before, During, After*. Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2013.

Davies, S.F. "The Reception of Reginald Scot's *Discovery of Witchcraft*: Witchcraft, Magic, and Radical Religion." *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 74:3 (July 2013) 381-401.

Devine, Michael. "Treasonous Catholic Magic and the 1563 Witchcraft Legislation: The English State's Response to Catholic Conjuring in the Early Years of Elizabeth I's Reign." *Supernatural and Secular Power in Early Modern England*. Ed. Marcus Harmes and Victoria Bladen. Ashgate Publishing Company. 2015, p.67-91.

Dimitrijevic, Aleksandar. "Being Mad in Early Modern England." *Frontiers in Psychology*. 6:1740, November 2015.

Dodd, Charles. "Supplication for the Beggars." *The church history of England, from the year 1500, to the year 1688. Chiefly with regard to Catholicks: ... In eight parts. ... Volume 2 of 3*. Gale ECCO, 2010.

Dollimore, Jonathan. *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries*. Harvester, 1984.

Dollimore, Jonathan, and Alan Sinfield, eds. *Political Shakespeare: Essays in Cultural Materialism*. Manchester University Press, 1985.

Edgar, Irving Iskowitz. *Shakespeare, Medicine and Psychiatry: An Historical Study in Criticism and Interpretation*. Philosophical Library, 1970.

Elmer, Peter. *Witchcraft, Witch-Hunting, and Politics in Early Modern England*. Oxford University Press, 2016.

Forcen, Carlos Espi and Fernando Espi Forcen. "Demonic Possessions and Mental Illness: Discussion of selected cases in Late Medieval Hagiographical Literature." *Early Sience and Medicine*, vol. 19, no.3, 2014, pp.258-279.

Foster, Edward E. "The Gast of Gy: Introduction." *Three Purgatory Poem: The Gast of Gy, Sir Owain, The Vision of Tundale*. Iddle English Texts Series. University of Rochester, 2004. https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/foster-three-purgatory-poems-gast-of-gy-introduction?fbclid=IwAR2POfySs6LXRwbTTCc0BHoEW2dXefjNBxwIPoaMTh5h2na2PWkQT1BVtQc. Accessed Dec. 2nd, 2018.

Foucault, Michel. "The Subject and Power." *Critical Inquiry,* Vol. 8, No. 4 Summer, 1982.

"From Bethlehem to Bedlam: England's First Mental Institution." Historic England. <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/inclusive-heritage/disability-history/1050-1485/from-bethlehem-to-bedlam/>. Accessed July 7th, 2019.

"Ghost, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2020, https://www-oed-com.ccl.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/78064?rskey=xnssd3&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid. Accessed 18 January 2018.

"Ghost Technique in Shakespeare." *The Shakespeare Association Bulletin*, vol. 10, no. 3, 1935, pp. 157-162.

Gilman, Sander L. "Madness." *Keywords for Disability Studies*. Ed. Rachel Adams, Benjamin Reiss, and David Serlin. NYU Press, 2015. Accessed March 28, 2019.

Glyn Parry, "John Dee, Alchemy, and Authority in Elizabethan England" in *Supernatural and Secular Power in Early Modern England*. Routledge, 2015.

Goodare, Julian. *The European Witch-Hunt*. Routledge, 2016.

Greenblatt, Stephen. "Capitalist Culture and the Circulatory System." *The Aims of Representation: Subject/Text/History.* Ed. Murray Krieger. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993, pp.257-273.

---. *Hamlet in Purgatory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

---. *The Power of Forms in the English Renaissance.* Pilgrim Books, 1982.

---. "Shakespeare and the Exorcists." *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988, pp.94-128.

---. "Shakespeare Bewitched." *Shakespeare and Cultural Traditions: The Selected Proceedings of the International Shakespeare Association World Congress, Tokyo, 1991*. Ed. Tetsuo Kishi. University of Delaware Press, 1991.

---. "Toil and Trouble." *The New Republic*, Nov. 14, 1994, pp.32-37.

---. "Towards a Poetics of Culture." *Southern Review*, vol.20, no.1, 1987, pp.3-15.

--- and Michael Payne. *The Greenblatt Reader*. Blackwell, 2005.

Hampton, Bryan Adams. "Purgation, Exorcism, and the Civilizing Process in Macbeth." *Studies in English Literature*, vol.51, no.2, 2011, pp.327-347.

Howard, Jean E. *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England*. Routledge, 1994. E-book.

"Illusion, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2020, https://www-oed-com.ccl.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/91565?redirectedFrom=illusion#eid. Accessed 6 October 2017.

Institoris, Heinrich, Jakob Sprenger, and Christopher S. Mackay. *Malleus Maleficarum*. Cambridge University Press, 2006.

James VI of Scotland. *Daemonologie*. Early English Books Online. 1597.

Jameson, Fredric. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. Cornell University Press, 1981.

Jones, Emrys. *The Origins of Shakespeare*. Oxford University Press, 1977.

Jones, Norman, "Defining Superstitions: Treasonous Catholics and the Act against Witchcraft of 1563." *State, Sovereigns and Society in Early Modern England: Essays in Honour of A.J. Slavin*, Ed. Charles Carlton, Robert L Woods, Mary L Robertson, and Joseph S Block. Palgrave Macmillan, 1998, 187-203.

Joseph, Miriam. "Discerning the Ghost in Hamlet." *Modern Language Association*, vol. 76, no. 5, 1961, pp. 493-502.

Kapitaniak, Pierre. "Reginald Scot and the Circles of Power: Witchcraft, Anti-Catholicism and Faction Politics." *Supernatural and Secular Power in Early Modern England*. Ed. Marcus Harmes and Victoria Bladen. Ashgate Publishing Company. 2015, p.41-66.

Kemp, Simon. *Medieval psychology*. Greenwood Press, 1990.

Kemp, Simon and Kevin Williams. "Demonic Possession and Mental Disorder in Medieval and Early Modern Europe." *Psychological Medicine*, vol. 17, no. 1, 1987, pp.21-29.

Key, Newton and Robert Bucholz. *Sources and Debates in English History, 1485-1714*. Blackwell Publishing, 2004.

Kieckhefer, Richard. "Magic and its Hazards in the Late Medieval West." *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America*. Ed. Brian P. Levack. Oxford University Press, 2013, p.13-31.

Krieger, Murray. "Two Faces of an Old Argument: Historicism vs. Formalism in American Criticism." *EurAmerica*. Vol.21, No. 4 (December 1991), 1-25.

Lake, Peter. *How Shakespeare Put Politics on the Stage: Power and Succession in the History Plays*. Yale University Press, 2016.

Larner, Christina. *Witchcraft and Religion: The Politics of Popular Belief*. Ed. Alan Macfarlane. Blackwell, 1984.

Lavater, Ludwig. *Of Ghostes and Spirites Walking by Nyght 1572*. Ed. J. Dover Wilson and May Yardley. Shakespeare Association at the University Press, Oxford, 1929.

Levin, Joanna. "Lady Macbeth and the Daemonologie of Hysteria." *The Johns Hopkins University Press*. *ELH*, vol. 69, no. 1, 2002, pp. 21-55. Accessed on April 29th, 2019.

Loening, Richard. *Die Hamlet-Tragödie Shakespeares*. Stuttgart: Cotta, 1893.

MacDonald, Michael. *Mystical Bedlam: Madness, Anxiety, and Healing in Seventeenth-Century England*. Cambridge University Press, 1981.

---. ed. *Witchcraft and Hysteria in Elizabethan London: Edward Joren and the Mary Glover Case*. Routledge, 1991.

Macfarlane, Alan. *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England: a regional and comparative study*.

"Malleus Maleficarum." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Edited by The Editors of *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Aug. 13, 2010. Accessed Aug. 8, 2017.

Marlowe, Christopher. *Doctor Faustus*. Ed. Sylvan Barnet. Signet Classic, 2001.

Marshall, Peter. *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England*. Oxford University Press, 2002.

Martin, John. "Four Hundred Years Later: An Appreciation of Johann Weyer." *Books at Iowa*, vol. 9, 1993, pp.15-22.

McDonald, Russ. *The Bedford Companion to Shakespeare: An Introduction with Documents, 2nd*

edition. Bedford, 2001.

"melancholie, n.1." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2020, https://www-oed-com.ccl.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/116007?rskey=pTdvm0&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid. Accessed 16 January 2018.

Montrose, Louis. *The Purpose of Playing: Shakespeare and the Cultural Politics of the Elizabethan Theatre*. The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1996.

Moorman, F.W. "Shakespeare's Ghosts." *The Modern Language Review*, vol.1, no.3, 1906, pp.192-201.

Muir, Kenneth. *The Sources of Shakespeare's Plays*. Yale University Press, 1978.

Neely, Carol Thomas. *Distracted subjects: Madness and Gender in Shakespeare and Early Modern Culture*. Cornell University Press, 2004.

---. "'Documents in Madness': Reading Madness and Gender in Shakespeare's Tragedies and Early Modern Culture." *Shakespeare Quarterly*, vol. 42, no. 3, 1991, pp.315-338.

Nicholl, Charles. *The Reckoning: The Murder of Christopher Marlowe*. University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Notestein, Wallace. *A History of Witchcraft in England from 1558 to 1718*. 1911. Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1968.

Oldridge, Darren. *The Supernatural in Tudor and Stuart England*. Routledge, 2016.

Olsen, Kirstin. All Things Shakespeare: An Encyclopedia of Shakespeare's World, Volume 1. Greenwood Press, 2002, p. ix-406.

---. All Things Shakespeare: An Encyclopedia of Shakespeare's World, Volume 2. Greenwood Press, 2002, p. ix-804.

"On the Causes of Melancholy." *Hamlet Conudrums*. <http://elsinore.ucsc.edu/melancholy/melCauses.html>. Nov. 5, 2018.

Parvini, Neema. *Shakespeare and Contemporary Theory: New Historicism and Cultural Materialism*, Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 2012. ProQuest Ebook Central, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/claremont/detail.action?docID=1080385.

Perry, Curtis. "Seneca and the Modernity of Hamlet." *Illinois Classical Studies*, vol. 40, no. 2, 2015, pp. 407-429.

Plowden, Alison. *Danger to Elizabeth: The Catholics Under Elizabeth I*. United Kingdom, Sutton, 1973.

Prynne, William, 1600-1669. *Histrio-Mastix the Players Scourge, Or, Actors Tragædie, Divided into Two Parts. Wherein it is Largely Evidenced, by Divers Arguments, by the Concurring Authorities and Resolutions of Sundry Texts of Scripture ... that Popular Stage-Playes ... are Sinfull, Heathenish, Lewde, Ungodly Spectacles, and most Pernicious Corruptions; Condemned in all Ages, as Intolerable Mischiefes to Churches, to Republickes, to the Manners, Mindes, and Soules of Men. and that the Profession of Play-Poets, of Stage-Players; Together with the Penning, Acting, and Frequenting of Stage-Playes, are Unlawfull, Infamous and Misbeseeming Christians. all sPretences to the Contrary are here Likewise Fully Answered; and the Unlawfulnes of Acting, of Beholding Academicall Enterludes, Briefly Discussed; Besides Sundry Other Particulars Concerning Dancing, Dicing, Health-Drinking, &c. of which the Table Will Informe You. by William Prynne, an Utter-Barrester of Lincolnes Inne*. London, Printed by Edward] Allde, Augustine Mathewes, Thomas Cotes] and William] Iones] for Michael Sparke, and are to be sold at the Blue Bible, in Greene Arbour, in little Old Bayly, 1633. *ProQuest*, http://ccl.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ccl.idm.oclc.org/docview/2240857050?accountid=10141. Accessed October, 20th, 2018.

Puhvel, Martin. “The Perplexing Ghost of Banquo: Ambiguity and its Roots.” *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, vol. 94, no. ¾, 1993, pp. 287-296.

“Purgatory, n.” *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2020, https://www-oed-com.ccl.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/154874?rskey=2j63Le&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid. Accessed 1 February 2018.

Robisheaux, Thomas. “The German Witch Trials.” *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America*. Ed. Brian P. Levack. Oxford University Press, 2013, pp.179-198.

Rosen, George. *Madness in Society: Chapters in the Historical Sociology of Mental Illness*. Harper &Row, 1969.

Rowlands, Alison. "Witchcraft and Gender in Early Modern Europe." *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America*. Ed. Brian P. Levack. Oxford University Press, 2013, pp.449-467

Roychoudhury, Suparna. “Melancholy, Ecstasy, Phantasma: The Pathologies of *Macbeth*.” *Modern Philology*, vol. 111, no. 2, 2013, pp. 205-230.

Schoeneman, Thomas J. “The Role of Mental Illness in the European Witch Hunts of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: An Assessment.” *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 13, no. 4, 1977, pp.337-351.

Scot, Reginald. *Discoverie of Witchcraft*. *Early English Books Online*. 1584.

Scoufos, Alice Lyle. “Nashe, Jonson, and the Oldcastle Problem.” *Modern Philology*, vol. 65, no. 4, 1968, pp. 307-324.

Scribner, Robert. “Elements of Popular Belief.” *The Handbook of European History 1400-1600:*

Late Middle Ages, Renaissance and Reformation. Ed. Brady, T et al. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994.

Seneca: Agamemnon. Ed. R.J. Tarrant. Cambridge University Press, 1976.

Shakespeare, William. *The Comedy of Errors*. *The Norton Shakespeare*. 1594.

---. *Hamlet*. *The Norton Shakespeare*. 1600 or 1601.

---. *Macbeth*. *The Norton Shakespeare*. 1606.

---. *Richard III*. *The Norton Shakespeare*. 1591.

---. *The Tempest.* Ed. Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan. The Arden Shakespeare, 2005.

Shaughnessy, Robert. *The Routledge Guide to William Shakespeare*. Routledge, 2011.

Showalter, Elaine. "Representing Ophelia: Women, Madness, and the Responsibilities of Feminist Criticism." *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*. Methuen, 1985, pp.77-95.

Sinfield, Alan. *Faultines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading*. Univ. of California Press, 1992.

Sivefors, Per. "'What do I fear? Myself?': Nightmares, Conscience and the 'Gothic' Self in Richard III." *Gothic Renaissance: A Reassessment*. Ed. Elisabeth Bronfen and Beate Neumeier. Manchester University Press, 2014.

"Slave, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2020, https://www-oed-com.ccl.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/181477?rskey=YLwnY7&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid. Accessed August 2019.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*. Ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman. Columbia University, 1994, pp.66-111.

---. "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism." *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 12, no.1, 1985,

pp. 243-261.

"The Statutes Project." "1563: 5 Elizabeth 1 c.16: An Act against Conjurations, Inchantments and Witchcraft." *Putting Historic British Law Online*. <http://statutes.org.uk/site/the-statutes/sixteenth-century/1563-5-elizabeth-1-c-16-an-act-against-conjurations-inchantments-and-witchcraft/>. Accessed: March 18, 2019.

---. "1604: 1 James 1 c.12: An Act against Conjuration, Witchcraft and dealing with evil and wicked Spirits." *Putting Historic British Law Online*. < http://statutes.org.uk/site/the-statutes/seventeenth-century/1604-1-james-1-c-12-an-act-against-witchcraft/>. Accessed: September 03, 2018.

Stevens, Catherine. "'You shal reade marvelous straunge things': Ludwig Lavater and the Hauntings of the Reformation." *Supernatural and Secular Power in Early Modern England*. Ed. Marcus Harmes and Victoria Bladen. Routledge, 2015.

Thomas, Keith. *Religion and the Decline of Magic*. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971.

Tillyard, E.M.W. *The Elizabethan World Picture: A Study of the Idea of Order in the age of Shakespeare, Donne, and Milton*. Random House, 1959.

Tosh, Will. "Shakespeare and Madness." *British Library*. March 15, 2016. Web. September 15, 2017.

Viney, Wayne, Brett King, and William Douglas Woody. *A History of Psychology: Ideas and Context, 5th Ed*. Routledge, 013.

Wallis, Faith, ed. *Medieval Medicine: A Reader. Vol. 15*. University of Toronto Press, 2010.

Williams, Gerhild Scholz. "Demonologies." *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in early Modern Europe and Colonial America*. Oxford University Press, 2013.

Williams, Raymond. *Problems in materialism and culture: Selected essays*. Verso, 1980.

Willis, Deborah. *Malevolent Nurture: Witch-Hunting and Maternal Power in Early Modern England*. Cornell University Press, 1995.

Winston, Jessica. "Seneca in Early Elizabethan England." *Renaissance Quarterly*, vol. 59, no.1, 2006, pp.29-59.

"Witch, n.1." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2020, https://www-oed-com.ccl.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/229574?rskey=OCvbXn&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid. Accessed 6 September 2018.

"Witch, n.2." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2020, https://www-oed-com.ccl.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/229575?rskey=OCvbXn&result=2&isAdvanced=false#eid. Accessed 6 September 2018.

Young, Francis. *English Catholics and the Supernatural, 1553-1829*. Routledge, 2013.

Zilboorg, Gregory, and George William Henry. *A History of Medical Psychology*. Norton, 1941.

Zwingli, Ulrich. *Commentary on True and False Religion*. Ed. Samuel Macauley Jackson and Clarence Nevin Heller. Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2015.