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Stages of Madness: Representations of Madness in Shakespeare's *Richard II*, *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth*

Andrew J. Power

2006

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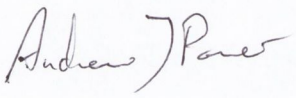

Andrew J. Power

Summary

'Stages of Madness: Representations of Madness in Shakespeare's *Richard II*, *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth*'

This thesis is divided in six chapters that are grouped in pairs. The first, third, and fifth chapters deal with a single theoretical area of influence on the perception of madness in Shakespeare's time and provide contextual material for the ensuing chapter. The second, fourth, and sixth chapters each offer a reading of a single play in the light of the theoretical and contextual chapters that precede them in the thesis.

The opening chapter of the thesis, 'Self Made Man,' investigates the increasing subjectivity of characters on the English stage up to and during the renaissance, (engaging with the biblical pageants, medieval moral allegorical drama and Tudor moral interludes). It further investigates medieval religious means of attaining self-knowledge (and most importantly what it means to lose self-knowledge) as evident in penitential and other religious literature in the medieval period and draws new conclusions about the influence this literature had on the medieval and renaissance stage.

This second chapter, '*Richard II*: A Mirror for Madness,' engages in a new reading of *Richard II* in the light of the theoretical and contextual material investigated in the opening chapter. In particular, the use of the rhetoric of shrift in the play is examined along with the assumption of court roles and titles. This then becomes the basis from which to explore the significance of suggestions of madness in relation to the character of Richard II.

The second section of the thesis investigates medical literature (by Shakespeare's predecessors and contemporaries) as it relates to madness. Without a specific contemporary textbook on madness it has been necessary in the third chapter, 'To Define True Madness,' to investigate a range of related texts in order to offer a more complete understanding of the contemporary medical approach to madness than was previously possible.

The second section of the thesis concludes in Chapter Four, '*Hamlet*: An Anatomy of Madness,' with a new reading of *Hamlet* which incorporates the research of the first section as well as the theories expounded in the medical literature of the third chapter. Hamlet and Ophelia are thus examined in terms of the medical theoretical approach to madness and in terms of the older religious approach illustrated in the first chapter.

The third and final section of the thesis looks at classical dramatic and epic representations of madness and illustrates the incorporation of tropes and motifs from these representations of madness into a specific set of dramatic texts written in the second half of the sixteenth century.

This section closes in Chapter Six, '*Macbeth*: Things Mad Begun,' with a new reading of *Macbeth* which illustrates the use of features and motifs from the traditions outlined in the fifth chapter. It also incorporates the research and conclusions of each of the preceding sections of the thesis.

By structuring the thesis in this way and illustrating the implications of each section of the research with the use of a single play I have illustrated a more complete understanding of madness theory in the age of Shakespeare than was previously possible.

Acknowledgements

This thesis has left me indebted to a range of people for a range of different things. It would be impossible to thank everyone individually for everything that they have done. I am extremely indebted to my colleagues and friends in the School of English in Trinity College, Dublin. I am particularly grateful to Dr. Amanda J. Piesse whose supervision has made this endeavour possible and whose encouragement and belief has kept me motivated. The encouragement and advice of Prof. John Scattergood has also been invaluable. My thanks also go to Dr. Kate Hebblethwaite for coffee, company, and camaraderie. For their understanding and encouragement I am very grateful to my siblings and to my friends. Those who read portions of my thesis and whose advice has been invaluable deserve particular mention; Maeve McLoughlin, Rory Lawton, David Moor, Sean MacErlaine, Derrick Divine and Jim Shanahan. Any remaining errors are my own. Finally, I can never repay the debt I owe to my Mother for her support and encouragement throughout these years.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my father,

Seamus T. Power

"whiles memory holds a seat / In this distracted globe…"

(*Hamlet*, I. v. 96-7)

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Introduction

This thesis aims to re-evaluate the contemporary understanding of madness in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in order better to understand and interpret characters that suffer from it in the drama of the period. It will combine three factors that contribute to contemporary concepts of madness. These are theories of the 'self' current and emergent in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries; contemporary medical writings on madness; and the legacy of portrayals of madness from classical Greek and Roman drama. The more complete understanding that this combined approach will provide will facilitate a more informed reading of the plays and a better understanding of the characters presented.

Though I have chosen three plays by Shakespeare[1] for the purposes of this project, the research should open up the possibility of gaining more informed readings of other characters in Shakespeare's plays. It should become evident that the interpretation of many other plays of the period that engage with the idea of madness (such as Marston's *Antonio's Revenge* (1600), Middleton and Dekker's *The Honest Whore, part 1* (1604), Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (1614) Middleton and Rowley's *The Changeling* (1622), Ford's *The Lover's Melancholy* (1628) and many others) will likewise be affected in no small way.

The first section of this thesis is an investigation of concepts of the self current in the period.[2] Also involved will be an investigation of some of the iconography of madness of the period. Symbols that Lacanian psychoanalytic theory has posited as ostensibly representative of subjectivity, the mirror and the book, will be compared

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[1] *Richard II*, *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*.

[2] Although this section of the thesis will make reference to theories of 'subjectivity', 'self-fashioning', and 'inwardness' discussed in Catherine Belsey's *The Subject of Tragedy* (London: Methuen, 1985); Richard Hillman's *Self-Speaking in Medieval and Early Modern English Drama: Subjectivity, Discourse and the Stage* (London: Macmillan, 1997); and Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1980) as well as Elizabeth Hanson's more recent *Discovering the Subject in Renaissance England* (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), my focus throughout will be on primary sources.

with their early-modern counterparts in order to ascertain whether they hold the same subjective signification in the period. Comparisons will be made between the significance of these images for self-recognition and religious moral guidebooks in the *Specula* (mirror) tradition such as *A Myrour to Lewde Men and Wymmen.*[3] *Richard II* will be shown to embody the difficulty of reconciling older ideas of the self often constructed out of religious doctrine with more contemporary understandings of the self. A greater emphasis on religious ideas of sins, and their effect on the self (the sinner is forced to examine the two elements that make up a human, body and soul, earthly temptation and divine reason, and decide which part is the 'self'), opens up the possibility of a greater understanding of Richard's fragmented identity. Ultimately this interpretation will investigate what it means in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century for an individual to be incapable of self-definition.

The second stage of the research will investigate the medical literature in and leading up to the time in which Shakespeare's plays were produced. There is no contemporary textbook that specifically treats of madness. This means that in order to construct an appropriate definition and understanding of madness research must be broadened into all publications available at the time relevant to mental health. Included in the research for this section will be a wide range of contemporary texts, from those concerned primarily with humoral physiognomy such as Andrew Boorde's

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[3] Venetia Nelson, ed. *A Myrour to Lewde Men and Wymmen* [ca. 1400] (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1981). Also *The Middle English Mirror: Sermons from Advent to Sexagesima* [late fourteenth century] (Thomas G. Duncan & Margaret Connolly, eds. *The Middle English Mirror: Sermons from Advent to Sexagesima*, Middle English Texts / 34. (Heidelberg: Winter, 2003)), the *Speculum Virginum* (*Mirror for Virgins*) (extracts in Constant J. Mews, ed. *Listen, Duaghter: The Speculum Virginum and the Formation of Religious Women in the Middle Ages* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001)) and John Gower, *Mirour de l'Omme (The Mirror of Mankind)*, trans. William Barton Wilson, Medieval Texts and Studies (East Lansing: Colleagues Press, 1992).

Dietary of Health,[4] to texts on melancholy like Andreas Laurentius' *A Discourse of the Preservation of Sight: Of Melancholike Diseases; of Rheumes, and of Old Age* (1599),[5] Timothy Bright's *Treatise of Melancholie* (1586)[6] and Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621)[7] to more moralistic works like Thomas Wright's *The Passions of the Mind in General* (1601),[8] to texts on love like Jacques Ferrand's *A Treatise on Lovesickness* (otherwise referred to as *Erotomania or a Treatise Discoursing of the Essence, Causes, Symptomes, Prognosticks, and Cure of Love, or Erotique Melancholy*) (1640).[9]

A reading of *Hamlet* informed by this research will follow. *Hamlet* will be shown to incorporate many of the theories expressed in the medical literature and to expose some of the contradictions therein. The benefit of the research will be cumulative, in that the reading of *Hamlet* will not only be concerned with the medical literature investigated in the second phase of research material, but will incorporate the findings of the first section on ideas of the self.

The final phase of research will examine the legacy of representations of madness in classical tragic drama and epic literature. The focus in this section will be

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[4] Andrew Boorde, *The Wisdom of Andrew Boorde*, ed. H. Edmund Poole (Leicester: Edgar Backus, 1936).

[5] M. Andreas Laurentius, *A Discourse of the Preservation of Sight: Of Melancholike Diseases; Rheumes, and of Old Age*, trans Richard Surphlet [1599], intro. Sanford V. Larkey Shakespeare Association Facsimiles No. 15, (London: Shakespeare Association, 1938).

[6] Timothy Bright, *A Treatise of Melancholy*, [1586] intro. Hardin Craig (New York: Columbia U. P., 1940).

[7] Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, 3 vols. [1621] eds. Thomas C. Faulkner, Nicholas K. Kiessling & Rhonda Blair, intro. J. B. Bamborough (Oxford: OUP, 1989).

[8] Thomas Wright, *The Passions of the Mind in General*, [1601] ed. William Webster Newbold (London: Garland, 1986).

[9] Jacques Ferrand, *A Treatise on Lovesickness*, trans. & ed. Donald A. Beecher & Massimo Ciavolella (Syracuse, NY: SUP, 1990). Among the modern critical resources most useful to this section are Lawrence Babb's *The Elizabethan Malady: A Study of Melancholia in English Literature from 1580 to 1642* (1951), Bridget Gellert Lyons' *Voices of Melancholy: Studies in Literary Treatments of Melancholy in Renaissance England* (1971) Penelope B. R. Doob's *Nebuchadnezzar's Children: Conventions of Madness in Middle English Literature* (1974), Michael MacDonald's *Mystical Bedlam: Madness, Anxiety and Healing in Seventeenth Century England* (1981), Duncan Salkeld's *Madness and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare* (1993) and Carol Falvo Heffernan's *The Melancholy Muse: Chaucer, Shakespeare and Early Medicine* (1995). Again though these texts have been useful, I have relied for the most part on my own reading of the contemporary literature.

on Senecan portrayals of madness, and on renaissance tragic drama that adapts and augments tropes and motifs from Senecan and from epic representations of madness. From Homer's portrayal of the rage of Achilles and the madness of Ajax to Orestes pursued by the Furies in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, to the title characters of Seneca's *Heracles* and *Medea*, these characters are referred to in the medical textbooks as though they were case studies, thereby colouring contemporary understandings of madness. These classical representations of madness are further adapted in the early renaissance tragedies, *Jocasta* (1566) by George Gascoygne and Francis Kinwelmersche, *Gorboduc* (1565) by Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton, *Tancred and Gismund* (1568) by Robert Wilmot and others, *The Misfortunes of Arthur* (1587) by Thomas Hughes, *The Spanish Tragedy* (1592) by Thomas Kyd and *The Battell of Alcazar* (1588-9) by George Peele.[10] In this transmission of classical representations pagan ideas of madness as divine retribution mingle (both in the drama and the medical literature) with Christian ideas of sin.

Macbeth's relationship with the witches will be compared to the relationships between classical protagonists and the Erinyes, whose task it was to punish the shedding of kindred blood.[11] I will show that many of the superstitions exposed in the play are informed not only by contemporary religious belief but also by Greek myth as transmitted through the classical drama, which was an integral part of the early modern schooling system.[12]

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[10] The plays are not listed chronologically here, but in the order in which they are examined in Chapter Five for reasons that will become apparent at that stage.

[11] "The function of the Furies was to punish three major sins: blasphemy against the gods, treachery to a host or guest, and the shedding of kindred blood." Philip Vellacott, trans., *The Oresteian Trilogy*, Aeschylus, Penguin Classics (London: Penguin, 1956, 1959), intro., 17.

[12] English grammar school students, Miola tells us, "learned to value ancient authors – Greek and Roman – as models in the arts and sciences and also as valuable guides to practical problems. … The declamatory rhetoric of Seneca's Latin, for example, thrilled Elizabethan auditors, who adopted him as their model for tragedy." Robert S. Miola, *Shakespeare's Reading*, Oxford Shakespeare Topics (Oxford: OUP, 2000) 2-3.

Though early texts dealing with madness, like Bucknill's *The Madfolk of Shakespeare* (1867)[13] provide a useful survey of references to madness in Shakespeare's plays, a lack of reference to secondary material leads to circular arguments that draw conclusions about contemporary medical science from the plays themselves. Twentieth-century scholars correct this, though attention to material other than the plays remains meagre in works including Peers' *Elizabethan Drama and its Madfolk* (1914)[14] and Craig's *The Enchanted Glass: The Elizabethan Mind in Literature* (1936).[15] More recent material like Babb's *The Elizabethan Malady: A Study of Melancholia in English Literature from 1580 to 1642* (1951)[16] focuses attention on contemporary medical writers like Robert Burton, Timothy Bright and Andreas Laurentius. Other works like Scott's *Shakespeare's Melancholics* (1962)[17] and Kail's *The Medical Mind of Shakespeare* (1986)[18] again draw unsupportable conclusions about Shakespeare's medical knowledge.[19]

Other recent critical material focuses on particular elements of madness rather than on madness as a broad topic.[20] In theatre, madness is not divided into categories to the same extent that it is in the medical writing of the period or in these modern critical texts. For a more complete interpretation of the plays it seems necessary to

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[13] J. C. Bucknill, *The Madfolk of Shakespeare* (London: Macmillan, 1867).
[14] E. A. Peers, *Elizabethan Drama and its Madfolk* (Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons, 1914).
[15] Hardin Craig, *The Enchanted Glass: The Elizabethan Mind in Literature* (New York: 1936).
[16] Lawrence Babb, *The Elizabethan Malady: A Study of Melancholia in English Literature from 1580 to 1642* (East Lansing: Michigan State U P, 1951, 1965).
[17] W. I. D. Scott, *Shakespeare's Melancholics* (London: Mills and Boon, 1962).
[18] Aubrey C. Kail, *The Medical Mind of Shakespeare* (Balgowlah: Williams & Wilkins, 1986).
[19] Kail for instance writes, "It is unusual for all the symptoms of a disease to appear at the same time in a person suffering from that disease. On this basis, we can assume that Shakespeare presented Hamlet as a mentally ill and depressed individual, with the disease 'melancholia', which had been well recognized as a fairly common complaint. We know that Hamlet had no organic symptoms; for example, he had no fever, his 'pulse temporally' kept 'time', his 'sadness' was 'without any apparent occasion'. There was something 'within which passeth show', 'the heart of his mystery', the 'loss of his mirth' and his going 'heavily' with his 'disposition'. All these are among the many symptoms of depression, either reactive or endogenous, as we know them today." (Kail, 64).
[20] Ilza Veith, *Hysteria: The History of a Disease* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1965); E. Ruth. Harvey, *The Inward Wits: Psychological Theory in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (London: The Warburg Institute, Survey VI, 1975) and Judith Neaman, *Suggestion of the Devil: The Origins of Madness* (New York: Anchor, 1975).

first amalgamate the research in these works and gain a fuller understanding of the concepts of madness that helped form the characters who suffer from its extremities.[21]

Two factors crucial to the understanding of early modern madness are not taken into account in any of the previous material. First, the age's understanding of the 'self', the part of man most heinously disfigured by madness, remains unexplored in critical material dealing with madness except on a purely superficial level. Understanding the 'self' is vital to understanding how madness affects it. Second are the literary precedents for mad characters, particularly those set by classical Greek and Roman drama.[22] The combination of these three factors, theories of the 'self'; contemporary medical writings on madness; and the legacy of representations of madness in classical Greek drama, provides a more informed understanding of the theories of madness in the age. This greater understanding will consequently facilitate a more informed reading of the plays and a better understanding of the behaviour of the characters presented.

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[21] Duncan Salkeld's *Madness and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare* (Manchester: MUP, 1993) comes closest to the kind of overall investigation of medical factors contributing to madness. However he has not accounted sufficiently for non-medical factors which contribute to the understanding of madness in the age, nor does he devote enough attention to any one play.

[22] Penelope B. R. Doob's *Nebuchadnezzar's Children: Conventions of Madness in Middle English Literature* (London: Yale U P, 1974) is a useful insight into earlier English literary representations of madness, and Ruth Padel's *Whom Gods Destroy: Elements of Greek and Tragic Madness* (Princeton, N.J.: PUP, 1995) is an important work on the mad characters of Greek drama.

Chapter 1: Self Made Man

"In the beginning was the Word...And the word was made flesh..."

- John 1:1&14

This opening chapter will deal with the development of subjectivity in dramatic characters up to the English renaissance.[23] There is an observable progression from the predominance of allegorical characters in the drama of medieval moral allegory, to the more subjective, introspective characters of Shakespeare's plays. I will investigate this progression in a number of sections. The first will engage with some of the more important allegorical plays that expose what is essentially a phase of growth and development for the dramatic subject.[24] The second section will deal with courtly ambition and dissembling. The third will investigate mirror and book imagery, which has been symbolic of the self-reflexive subjective experience throughout the ages. The fourth will investigate the significance of religious literature of moral guidance and the transmission of the rhetoric of shrift into other literature as it is used to convey the inward search.[25] In the concluding section I will explore the

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[23] For convenience, I take the English renaissance to begin with the accession of Henry VIII in 1509 and to run until the death of James VI & I in 1625.

[24] Envisioning the protagonist of English drama as a child going through stages of subjective development is obviously an over-simplification, but is nonetheless a useful one, for many of the problems that the protagonists of Shakespeare's plays face share their origins with the problems faced by the protagonists of earlier English drama. This developing child analogy is one that I will develop as I proceed.

[25] Among the more significant texts in this area are Robert Mannyng of Brunne's *Handlyng Synne* (1303), (Robert Mannyng of Brunne, *Handlyng Synne*, ed. Idelle Sullens (New York: Center for Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1983)), *Of Shrifte and Penance* (thirteenth century), (Klaus Bitterling ed., *Of Shrifte and Penance: The ME Prose Translation of Le Manuel Des Péchés*, Middle English Texts / 29 (Heidelberg: Winter, 1998)), *A Myrour to Lewde Men and Wymmen* (ca. 1400), *The Doctrinal of Sapience* (1489), (Joseph Gallagher, ed., *The Doctrinal of Sapience: ed. from Caxton's printed edition, 1489*, Middle English Texts / 26 (Heidelberg: Winter, 1993)), *The Middle English Mirror: Sermons from Advent to Sexagesima* (late fourteenth century), and *Four Middle English Sermons*. (early fifteenth century), (Veronica O'Mara, ed., *Four Middle English Sermons*, Middle English Texts / 33 (Heidelberg: Winter, 2002)). These books are meant to prepare the reader for a full and detailed confession. Clearly, in the cases of the last two items, it is only those sermons that deal with shrift and penance that are of interest to my argument.

developing relationship between the rhetoric of sin and shrift and the rhetoric and symbolism of madness in English drama in the renaissance.

The Allegorical Subject

The protagonists of medieval moral allegory (Mankind,[26] Anima,[27] Everyman,[28] Infans[29]) are, by their very nature, not subjective individuals. This is not to say that the characters are devoid of individual characteristics, but as embodiments of humankind as a whole[30] they can never be subjective individuals in the way that later renaissance (public playhouse) dramatic characters are. The more subjective characters of later drama do not, however appear upon the English stage without any relationship or debt to these earlier protagonists. An important allegorical play in the development of the early modern dramatic subject is *The Worlde and the Chylde*. The identification and re-identification process of the child in this play is a kind of prehistory of the dramatic subject. In his progression from childhood to old age, his experience of time, growth and change, this protagonist is unique in the genre. He is first of all named 'Infans' by the speech prefix, he then explains that his mother calls him 'Dalyaunce' (55), Mundus (the World) then renames him 'Wanton' (69), 'Lust and Lykynge' (125) and 'Manhode' (160); then Folye renames him 'Shame' (682). When he returns from a visit to London his speech prefix has changed to 'Age' (783), and finally Perseueraunce renames him 'Repentance' (854). Though this progression

[26] The protagonist of *Mankind* (c.1470). All quotations from *Mankind* are taken from Mark Eccles, ed. *The Macro Plays*, Early English Text Society (London: OUP, 1969).
[27] Anima is the protagonist (although with relatively few lines) of *Wisdom* (c.1470). References to this play are to Eccles.
[28] The protagonist of *Everyman* (c.1495). All references to this play are taken from A. C. Cawley, ed., *Everyman*, Old and Middle English Texts (Manchester: MUP, 1961, 1968).
[29] Infans is the protagonist of *The Worlde and the Chylde*, or *Mundus et Infans* (1522). All references to this play are taken from Clifford Davidson and Peter Happé, eds., *The Worlde and the Chylde*, Early Drama, Art, and Music Monograph Series (Michigan: Medieval Institute, 1999).
[30] Anima of course is representative of the human soul, rather than humankind.

as recognisable as the fitting into traditional 'seven ages of man' motifs,[31] as a dramatic character his essence is continually changing throughout the play, growing into a new name after phases of seven years, never grasping an identity of his own volition, only accepting every re-identification thrust upon him.

Belsey writes, "In the fifteenth century the representative human being has no unifying essence." She cites Mankind, "I haue my composycyon / Of a body and of a soull, of condycyon contrarye". (*Mankind*, 189-90) Man, Belsey tells us "*is* neither the one nor the other." He has a body made of earth / dust, and a soul that comes as a gift from God in heaven, a soul that is always looking to return. Thus, she claims, "the hero of the moralities is not the origin of action; he has no single subjectivity which could constitute such an origin; he is not a subject."[32] It may be objected that the allegorical characters that sin, become just such an "origin of action" in the act of sinning, that they have chosen sin over good. However, this choice is never enduring, spontaneous or unprompted, rather it is always made within the limits of allegorical function. It is not a choice made with the actual free will of a true subject.

There is, nonetheless, a progression from this protagonist, who functions as a medium for the psychomachia, the choice between good and evil, god and the devil (a choice that is driven by the other characters), through Marlowe's Dr. Faustus (whose choice is the same, though complicated by his more humanistic nature), to the more fully defined characters of Shakespeare's drama. They no longer (necessarily) choose between good and evil, God and the devil, but strive to assert themselves as individuals in a competitive world. In this world of the renaissance stage they, not unlike Infans, must reconcile themselves to continual re-identification by the

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[31] See John Burrow, *The Ages of Man* (Oxford: , 1988) 47-8.
[32] Belsey, 18.

characters that surround them as first this, then another kind of person, and must claim for themselves a suitable identity.

An important play, bridging (and in many ways embodying) the progress of the dramatic protagonist from allegory to subject is *The Enterlude of Godly Queene Hester* (1561[33]). The play recalls the biblical pageant tradition, in that it is a dramatization of the biblical *Book of Esther*, but it also contains four allegorical vice characters, Pryde, Ambition, Adulation,[34] and Hardy Dardy.[35] It also contains a character called Aman. Traditionally the evil counsellor, Haman, the change in spelling is significant and recalls the earlier allegorical protagonists, like Everyman and Mankind. The use of the allegory tradition is pointedly made by the repeated use of previous allegorical characters as concepts.[36] However, where the previous protagonists Everyman and Mankind refer to all humankind, Aman is more ambiguous. Mostly he is *a* specific *man*, but there is also a more general usage that is suggested punningly, things that are wrong in the world are generally *a man*'s (i.e. humankind's) fault.[37] The scene with the vice characters is of particular interest, for it

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[33] All references to *The Enterlude of Godly Queene Hester* are taken from W. W. Greg, ed., *A New Enterlude of Godly Queene Hester* (Louvain, A. Uystpruyst, 1904). Printed in 1561, it may have been written up to thirty years earlier. (Walker, 409).

[34] Flattery.

[35] Foolish Business.

[36] Here I have listed the line numbers from *Godly Queene Hester* where the name of an allegorical character from a previous allegory play is mentioned. Although these are of course not uncommon words, it should be clear that the extent of the list and the frequency of usage is uncommon and suggests deliberate reference to the earlier plays. This is particularly apparent with regard to "Tityvyllus", a minor devil not likely to be in common usage. Characters from *Wisdom*, "wysedome," 10, 70, 222, 227, 568, 581; "wisdome," 23, 26, 34, 259, 709, 718, 870; "wysdome," 39, 285, 296; "wisedome," 153, 695, 708; "wisdnme," 715; "minde," 138, 761, 1066; "mind," 167; "mynde," 170, 186, 211, 325, 829, 1124, 1160; "mynd," 302, 864, 1119; "wyll," (I have of course omitted instances of "wyll" where the verb is intended) 198, 584; "will," 819. Characters from *Everyman*, "everye man," (There are also references to "all men" and "each man," but these I have omitted) 534, 566; "euery man," 708; "streugth," 315; "strength," 709; "strengthe," 750; "goodes," 592, 763, 835, 841, 1060; "gooddes," 719. Characters from *Mankind*, "mischeffe," 997;"newe gyse," 578; "not," (nought) 409; "nought," 665, 674, 719; "tuta vilus," (Tityvyllus) 1030; "mercye," 182. Characters from *Magnyfycence*, "magnificence," 33; "magnyficens," 901; "measure," 320; "libertie," 303, 795, 879; "liberte," 743.

[37] Aman is to blame for the problems of the world. Humans are to blame for the problems of the world.

seems in many ways to be an epitaph, or farewell for the personification character.[38] The scene starts with the entrance of Pride, (337-8) who begins by lamenting that Aman has usurped his role, "For Aman that elfe, woulde no man but hym selfe, / Shoulde be proude in dede." (386-7) Adulation and Ambition follow suit and complain likewise that they have nothing to do any more, since Aman has taken over their roles. The three characters determine to make wills, or testaments in which they bequeath the elements of their allegorical functions to Aman (512-565) before adjourning to a tavern (580). This then to a large extent changes the focus from the general to the specific, from the notional to the subjective. In one way the vices cease to be allegorical figures (making a will) once they give up their roles to Aman. But more significantly their allegorical roles have been taken over by an individual. This change of focus is then made complete when we realize that Aman is in fact representative of a very specific man, Cardinal Wolsey.[39]

Though allegorical characters do not depart the scene entirely, this development makes room for characters like Richard III, Iago or Macbeth who contain not just one vice, but a whole litany of vices.[40] Perhaps one of the simplest

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[38] The use of allegorical figures, the allegory genre as a whole, does not in fact subside at this point, but continues to be evident in the later drama (Nature in Pickering's *Horestes*, Revenge in Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* immediately spring to mind, and Jonson's 'comedy of humors' is a variation of the genre). However, it ceases to be the dominant mode of dramatic representation, giving way to a more subject specific drama. I will examine *Horestes* and *The Spanish Tragedy* in detail in Chapter Five.

[39] "Aman is, on one level at least, intended as a figure for Wolsey, which allows plenty of scope for in-jokes at the expense of the ostentation of his houses and entourage, his prerogatives as a papal legate, and his origins as the son of an Ipswich butcher (see ll. 372-81, 424-45, and the punning upon 'wool', butchery, and papal bulls)." Walker, 409.

[40] I do not suggest that *Godly Queene Hester* makes this transition possible, rather that this play dramatises the process that is taking place. John Bale's *Kynge Johan* (1538) dramatises this process in a more subtle way. In the company of Dissimulation, the vice characters Sedition, Private Wealth and Usurped Power take on specific identities as the play progresses. Sedition becomes Stevyn Langton, the archbishop of Canterbury (p. 36) Private Wealth becomes Raymundus, (p.41) and Usurped Power becomes Pope Innocent III. (p. 38) References to *Kyng Johan* are to John Bale, *Kynge Johan*, ed. J. Payne Collier, Camden Society Old Series (London: AMS, 1968). The lines are not numbered so references are to page numbers.

(too simple perhaps, but illustrative) ways of looking at it is to say that allegorical vices are assimilated into subjective characters as 'tragic flaws'.

Although the characters of later English renaissance drama are more self-conscious and self-aware than their predecessors, they are still made up of the same contradictory elements. Hamlet's "What piece of work is a man!" (II, ii, 303-308)[41] speech directly corresponds to the division of man into soul and body, which Belsey sees as problematic for Mankind. "Consisting of 'a body and of a soull, of condycyon contrarye' [*Mankind*, 190], man *is* neither the one nor the other. The soul is immortal and looks upwards towards its true home; the transient body clings to the earth of which it is composed."[42] Hamlet, like Mankind, is a combination of these two seemingly contradictory elements, "like a god and at the same time a quintessence of dust."[43] Though he has grown in subjective awareness[44] he is not completely different; he is not Mankind, but he is a member of mankind.

In 1586, Timothy Bright, a serious medical treatise writer, is still concerned with explaining this facet of human nature. He attempts to reconcile this difference of soul and body in his *Treatise of Melancholy* (1586), when he likens the earthly part, or body, to a complex clock. The clock may seem to work on its own, to point with hands to the time, to "counterfet voice" and declare the time with noise (by striking a

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[41] All references to *Hamlet* are from the Arden edition; William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. Harold Jenkins, The Arden Shakespeare (London: Routledge, 1982, 1995).

[42] Belsey, 18. The protagonist of *The Worlde and the Chylde* complains of this condition when he has returned from his time in London with Folye, and been renamed Age. He has corrupted his soul (the divine part) with sinful living and his body is corrupted with age (and sin) and he despairs, "Alas the daye that I was borne. / For body and soule I haue forlorne, / I clynge as a clodde in claye." (784-6)

[43] Belsey, 27.

[44] It is worth mentioning that *Mankind* is not without its moments of subjective specificity. The clearest examples are when Tittivillus sends Nought to stir up trouble for one William Fyde (503), and he, New Gyse and Nowadays say that they will do likewise with Master Huntyngton of Sauston (505), Wylliam Thurlay of Hauston (506), Pycharde of Trumpyngton (507), Wyllyham Baker of Waltom (509), Rycherde Bollman of Gayton (510) and Wyllyam Patryke of Massyngham (513), but that they will spare Master Woode of Fullburn (511), Master Alyngton of Botysam (514) and Hamonde of Soffeham (515), all of whom, there is evidence to suggest, were actual prominent persons in the region the play was intended to be performed. (*Mankind*, 503-515). See Walker.

bell) and in some instances "you may finde all the motion of heauen with his planets counterfetted, in a small modill, with distinction of the time & season, as in the course of the heauenly bodies."[45] This animation is not however inherent in the machine, but is given to the machine by whomever first winds the spring. "So many actions diuerse in kinde rise from one simple first motion, by reason of variety of ioynts in one engine."[46] This machine corresponds to the human body, and the "one simple first motion" is the soul inspired by God at birth.[47]

Tamburlaine, who is in many ways the embodiment of self-definition,[48] also alludes to this seeming contradiction of body and soul occupying the same space. For him, though, the very tension of these conflicting parts seems to serve as a driving force pushing him towards his goal.

> Nature that fram'd us of foure Elements,
> Warring within our breasts for regiment,
> Doth teach us all to have aspyring minds:
> Our soules, whose faculties can comprehend
> The wondrous Architecture of the world:
> And measure every wandring plannets course:
> Still climing after knowledge infinite,
> And alwaies mooving as the restles Spheares,
> Wils us to weare our selves and never rest,
> Untill we reach the ripest fruit of all,

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[45] Bright, 67-8. The quotation is given in full in Chapter Two below, 100.
[46] Bright, 68.
[47] Bright describes the soul as the "breath of life…inspired from God". Bright, 37.
[48] W. Clemen describes Tamburlaine's speeches as, "self-expression and self-portrayal of exceptional and dynamic type". W. Clemen, *English Tragedy Before Shakespeare: The Development of Dramatic Speech*, trans. T. S. Dorsch (London: Methuen, 1961) 115.

That perfect blisse and sole felicitie,

The sweet fruition of an earthly crowne. (*Tamburlaine, part 1*, II. vii. 18-29)[49]

There is a certain disingenuity in Tamburlaine's finding unity here. For the soul's ambition should lead him to a heavenly goal, not an "earthly crowne". This ambition has been corrupted in him by the earthly part, whose natural imperfection (four unbalanced humours) teaches him to engage in warfare. He has taken his example from the warring, imbalanced earthly part, and with that example corrupted the divine ambition within himself to strive for that which it ought to shun in favour of heavenly "perfect blisse". Tamburlaine is *a man* who has taken upon himself the role that Ambition[50] bequeathed to *Aman*. A passage of Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* explains where Tamburlaine's ambition ought to lead him. The mind of man, he says, "which takes its flight farther than the stars, and cannot be confined by the limits of the world" (II. vii. 10)[51] is capable of thoughts "which towre above the clouds, and reach as high as Heaven it self" (II. i. 24).[52] The soul of man should normally tend upwards, towards heaven, God, good. As Bright says in his description of the clock "[O]ne right motion" of the soul (the "breath of life…inspired from God"[53]) should cause all of the different and various kinds of motion in the body of man. In Tamburlaine, this 'one right motion' has been turned aside by his corrupt earthly form, causing a corrupt earthly ambition. But Tamburlaine's earthly ambition, as we shall see, is not uncommon in renaissance courtly life.

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[49] All references to *Tamburlaine, part 1* are from Christopher Marlowe, *The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe*, vol. 1, ed. Fredson Bowers (Cambridge: CUP, 1973).

[50] Ambition here refers to the earthly vice of ambition rather than that divine ambition that strives to return to God.

[51] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 2 Vols., ed. Alexander Campbell Fraser (New York: Dover, 1959) vol. 1, 164. cit. Belsey, 84.

[52] Locke, vol. 1, 142. cit. Belsey, 84.

[53] Bright, 37.

Ambition & Dissembling

When John Skelton relocates allegorical drama from the world in general (or life in general) to the courtly sphere in *Magnyfycence* (1530)[54] he introduces vice characters specifically significant to the court life. Fansy is the means by which these vices gain access to the court of Magnyfycence. An idle imagination (or fancy) makes it possible for the disguises of these characters to fool Magnyfycence into believing that they are called Good Demeynaunce, Sure Surveyaunce, Sober Sadnesse and Lusty Pleasure; they are in fact Counterfet Countenaunce, Crafty Conveyaunce, Cloked Colusyon and Courtly Abusyon.[55]

Stephen Greenblatt writes, "in the sixteenth century there appears to be an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process."[56] Where Greenblatt sees 'self fashioning', Agnes Heller sees a tendency toward 'role-playing'. She sees this role-playing as a product of a society that demanded a competitive individualism in the hierarchical society of the renaissance court, and in "the whole range of human activity, from daily life to politics." It is also seen as contributing to the clarification of a perceived contradiction between what is external and what is internal. Further, that this role-playing

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[54] All references to John Skelton's *Magnyfycence* are taken from John Skelton, *Magnyfycence, a Moral Play*, ed. Robert Lee Ramsay, Early English Text Society (London: Kegan Paul, 1906). 1530 is the date of publication, but the play was most probably written in 1519-20. See Walker, 349.

[55] There is a similar occurrence in Prudentius' *Psychomachia* (fourth century A.D.) where Avaritia (Greed) disguises herself as Frugi (Thrifty) to assault the virtues by guile. (546-572) Significantly, her raging ("rabiem") and her fury ("furori") (561) are temporarily disguised and the virtues are bewildered ("perturbatisque"). (568) The location for this deception is in this instance the battle field of the human soul rather than the renaissance court. All references to *Psychomachia* are to the Loeb edition of Prudentius' works. Prudentius, *Works*, vol. 1, trans. H. J. Thomson, Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann, 1949).

[56] Greenblatt, 2.

> was almost a natural consequence of the competition for status among egoistic individuals and of the principle of 'success'. For when individuals struggle to win themselves a place in the world – and frequently do so *against* others – then in order to attain their goals they must often disguise their intentions; they must show themselves to others as something different from what they really are, they must 'play a role'.[57]

In *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, Greenblatt writes, "As a term for the action or process of making, for particular features or appearance, for a distinct style or pattern, the word had long been in use, but it is in the sixteenth century that fashion seems to come into wide currency as a way of designating the forming of a self."[58]

What Heller describes as the "struggle to win…a place in the world…*against* others" to attain courtly merit is perhaps at play in the court of Elsinore, in the public show of the fencing bout between Hamlet and Laertes. That pretence or role-play is an integral part of the society within the play is further evidenced by Polonius' conversation with Reynaldo. Polonius coaches him in how to play the part of incidental friend to Laertes in order to gain his confidence and thereby give Polonius an extra advantage over his son in exercising parental control. (*Hamlet*, II. i.) The same is evident in Malcolm's pretence of evil contrived to try the morality of Macduff. (*Macbeth*, IV. iii. 50-95) Heller describes dissembling as almost a requirement of the renaissance court. Dissembling, it seems, was not necessarily an immoral practice.

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[57] Agnes Heller, *Renaissance Man*, trans. Richard E. Allen (London: Kegan Paul, 1978) 207-8.
[58] Greenblatt, 2.

> Thus even in the Renaissance (especially during the sixteenth century) *there appeared what we may call the 'incognito', with two different sorts of content and purpose*. The offensive incognito was an active dissembler, toying with others in order to achieve its goals; the defensive incognito was not a dissembler or a hypocrite but sought, by barricading the self, to prevent others from toying with it.[59]

Hamlet's pretence of madness is of course the obvious and most extreme example of the 'defensive incognito' that Heller describes. Another Shakespearean 'offensive incognito', whose behaviour is by no means seen as dishonourable, is the Duke in *Measure for Measure*. The Duke of Milan (disguising himself as Friar Lodowick) must dissemble in order to weed out the corruption of his court. Hamlet must dissemble to protect himself in the court of his wicked uncle. Polonius must dissemble to protect his son from the luxurious life of Paris. Perhaps most of all Malcolm must dissemble in order to ensure that he has placed his faith in a good man in Macduff, so as to protect his country from the tyrant Macbeth. In his essay 'Of *Simulation* And *Dissimulation*', Francis Bacon explains the necessity to dissemble occasionally, and the dangers of dissembling too much.[60] There are, he says, "three degrees, of this Hiding, and Vailing of a Mans Selfe."[61] The first is Secrecy, which is important for two reasons, first because "*Nakednesse* is uncomely, as well in Minde, as Body;"[62]

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[59] Heller, 209.

[60] Francis Bacon, *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall*, ed. Michael Kiernan (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985). This essay was not included in editions prior to 1624 and is therefore predated by *Richard II*, *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. [see Kiernan's footnote; Bacon, 20] However, that Bacon explains the practice and variety of dissembling, does not mean that the ideas described in the essay come into being with its publication, but rather describe the contemporary practice as Bacon sees it.

[61] Bacon, 21.

[62] Ophelia may interpret Hamlet's seemingly mad, and uncontrolled outburst in Act III, scene i, in these terms when she says,

> O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
> The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword,

second because "the Discovery, of a Mans Selfe, by the Tracts of his countenance, is a great Weaknesse, and Betraying". An ability to learn something of others it seems requires an amount of dissimulation, both as a means of testing the hearts of others and so as to keep your- 'self' to your- 'self'. Keeping yourself 'close' is both a matter of self-preservation and decorum. Bacon goes so far as to say, "It is indeed, the Vertue of a Confessour; And assuredly, the *Secret* Man, heareth many Confessions; For who will open himselfe, to a Blab or a Babler."[63] The second form of dissembling is dissimulation, or pretending to be that which you are not.[64] This is necessitated, he tells us, by those who, with their questions, put pressure on people to disclose their minds "So that no man can be *secret*, except he give himselfe a little Scope of *Dissimulation*".[65] The third form of dissembling is simulation, which is when people pretend to be something they are not. This is a dangerous practice, it seems, and only to be used "in great and rare Matters."[66] Heller recognises two basic principles in Bacon's essay,

> The first: without a certain amount of dissimulation one cannot defend one's life and individuality. The second: if dissembling turns into a person's regular behaviour, if it becomes hypocrisy, then that person is lost once again, for he loses what is most important, his moral individuality. *Absolute sincerity and*

> Th'expectancy and rose of the fair state,
> The glass of fashion and the mould of form,
> Th'observ'd of all observers, quite, quite down!
> . . . .
> ...that noble and most sovereign reason
> Like sweet bells jangled out of tune and harsh,
> That unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth
> Blasted with ecstacy. (III. i. 152-6 & 159-162)

[63] Bacon, 21.

[64] Dissembling and dissimulation should not be confused. Bacon uses the terms 'dissemble' and 'dissembling' to cover all three forms, i.e. *Secrecy*, *Dissimulation*, and *Simulation.*

[65] Bacon, 22.

[66] Bacon, 22.

hypocrisy are the extreme forms of conduct. A 'mean' between them has to be sought.[67]

Being too open is imprudent and indecorous, and continual dissembling is dangerous to 'moral individuality'. Heller uses 'villains', for the most part, to illustrate those Shakespearean characters who make the best use of dissembling, and goes on to describe the victims that most often fall foul to those villains, the naïve hero.

> Beyond a doubt, Shakespeare depicted this type of hero with affection. The unsuspecting, honest psyche, untouched by the calculating intellect, incapable either of toying with people or of putting them to the test, was in and of itself the most attractive type of character in the eyes of the English dramatist. But he clearly saw – and to an ever-increasing degree – that that type of character was no longer for this world – not so much because it inevitably came to grief, but rather because, in its naïve trustfulness, it lent itself to the triumph of evil. …It is a common trait of character in Shakespeare's naïve figures that when they are deceived in their trust the whole world always collapses for them. [68]

One such 'innocent' is Ophelia, whose sanity as well as her world collapses. Ophelia, too open with her father (and the King and Queen), is forced to dissemble to Hamlet. Polonius instructs her to dissemble while acknowledging the wrong in it.

> Read on this book,

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[67] Heller, 210.

[68] Heller, 217-8. This is a far too simplistic conclusion to the produce of a long life's work, but an investigation of the effect that this inability to dissemble has on such figures as Heller suggests may be useful.

> That the show of such an exercise may colour
> Your loneliness. – We are oft to blame in this,
> 'Tis too much prov'd, that with devotion's visage
> And pious action we do sugar o'er
> The devil himself. (*Hamlet*, III. i. 44-8)

Too weak to oppose her father and the king and queen, Ophelia must dissemble against her will. Kenneth Branagh's 1996 film version of the play stages the subsequent encounter in a room wall-to-wall with mirrors, behind one of which Polonius and Claudius hide and observe, so that Hamlet finds himself almost face to face with Claudius, while staring at his own reflection, and demanding that Ophelia look at herself.[69] "God hath given you one face and you make yourselves another." (III. i. 144-6) The symbolism involved in this scene deserves some investigation as both the book and the mirror are recurrent symbols of subjectivity during (and for a long time prior to) the English renaissance.

Mirror & Book

The symbolic significance of the mirror may be explained by reference to developments made in psychoanalysis by Jacques Lacan. Terry Eagleton explains these developments in terms of what Lacan calls the 'mirror stage';

> If we imagine a small child contemplating itself in a mirror...we can see how, from within this 'imaginary' state of being, the child's first development of an ego, of an integrated self-image, begins to happen. The child, who is still

[69] *William Shakespeare's Hamlet*, dir. Kenneth Branagh, Castle Rock Entertainment, 1996.

> physically uncoordinated, finds reflected back to itself in the mirror a gratifyingly unified image of itself; and although its relation to this image is still of an 'imaginary' kind - the image in the mirror both is and is not itself, a blurring of subject and object still obtains - it has begun the process of constructing a centre of self.[70]

This mirror, however, which is clearly a very real mirror in psychoanalysis, transforms in literature from an existential moment of subjective awakening, to a universal symbol of subjectivity. Though we need no psychoanalyst to tell us the importance a mirror has as a symbol, Lacan's 'mirror stage' offers one explanation of how the mirror obtains its symbolic significance. This symbol however found itself in great use in the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth century (and indeed much earlier as we will see), long before Lacan or psychoanalysis. Cassius offers to act as Brutus' mirror, when he admits that he cannot see himself, "for the eye sees not itself / But by reflection, by some other thing." He explains very practically what use a mirror may be in terms of self-awareness,

> Therefore, good Brutus, be prepar'd to hear;
> And since you know you cannot see yourself
> So well as by reflection, I, your glass,

[70] Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983) 142-43. Eagleton's description is useful in its brevity, but as a result of that brevity he leaves unstated the fact that the child does not initially recognise itself until it can cross-check the images in the reflection with the other objects around himself. Up to that point his image also seems one of those 'other' objects. Another useful description of this process is to be found in Edward Peter Nolan's *Now Through A Glass Darkly*, "The child looks at the image of the self in the mirror and sees an Other. He then looks at the real other people and objects with him and sees them also in the mirror. This is patently a relationship of identity: the Others by his side are replicated in the virtual image of those Others in the mirror – except for one of those Others in the mirror. The shock of recognition comes with the realization that the remaining Other in the mirror not accounted for by the people and objects at his side must be himself." (Edward Peter Nolan, *Now Through A Glass Darkly: Specular Images of Being and Knowing from Virgil to Chaucer* (Michigan, U of Michigan P, 1990) 276.)

Will modestly discover to yourself

That of yourself which you yet know not of.

(*Julius Caesar*, I. ii. 51-2 & 65-9)[71]

Hamlet, who is described as the "glass of fashion", (*Hamlet*, III. i. 155) proposes that the actors should "hold a mirror up to nature" (*Hamlet*, III. ii. 22). A reservoir of source material for Shakespeare's plays which uses the mirror as its central image is William Baldwin's *The Mirror for Magistrates* (1559).[72]

A mirror may not always reflect what the viewer expects, and it is perhaps in such instances that a mirror is of most use. Aware of this possibility, Thomas Hoccleve, in his *Complaint*, goes to his mirror in order to see if what he feels is matched in his reflection.

And in my chambre at hoom / whan þat I was

Myself allone / I in this wyse wroghte:

I streighte vnto my mirour / and my glas

To looke how þat me / of my cheere thoghte,

If any othir were it / than it oghte;

For fayn wolde I / if it had nat been right,

Amendid it / to my konnynge and might.

Many a saut made I / to this mirour

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[71] All references to *Julius Caesar* are to the Arden edition. William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, The Arden Shakespeare, ed. T. S. Dorsch (London: Methuen, 1965, 1979).

[72] William Baldwin, *The Mirror for Magistrates*, 2 Vols. [1559] ed. Lily B. Campbell (Cambridge: CUP, 1938). Though the work was cumulative, in that the first part was published in 1559 and six subsequent editions between 1563 and 1587 added more material to make up the whole, the material that relates to *Richard II* is in the first chapters published. For this reason I have used the date of the first edition.

Thynkynge / 'If þat I looke / in this maneere

Among folk / as I now do / noon errour

Of suspect look / may in my face appeere.

This contenance / I am seur [sic] / and this cheere

If I foorth vse / is no thyng repreeuable

To hem þat han / conceites resonable.' (*Complaint*, 155-168)[73]

Where Bacon warns that allowing what is within to be evident on the outside is as uncomely as nakedness,[74] Hoccleve is afraid that his appearance will betray him by representing something that is not within him. He uses the mirror to mould his face to his emotion, so that the face resembles what is within, so that he looks like himself. He is trying to fashion his face to match his thought and emotion, and resolve the contradiction between his 'external' and 'internal' self. He notes shortly after that "Vpon a look / is hard men hem to grownde / What a man is / therby the soothe is hid". (*Complaint*, 211-2)[75] A little later in the *Dialogue* that follows his *Complaint*, Hoccleve praises Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester (youngest brother of Henry V) whose campaign against the French at Normandy 1417-1419 brought him fame. Hoccleve says he may be an example to others, "It is a greet [sic] auauntage / A man before him / to haue a mirour, / Therin to see the path vnto honour." (*Dialogue*, 607-9) The mirror may be a tool, both to see a truth evident in your reflection that you may otherwise have failed to see, but it is also a tool with which to mould yourself.

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[73] All references to Hoccleve are to Thomas Hoccleve, *Thomas Hoccleve's Complaint and Dialogue*, ed. J. A. Burrow, Early English Text Society (Oxford: OUP, 1999).

[74] See above, 18.

[75] Likewise in *Macbeth*, Duncan says "There's no art / To find the mind's construction in the face". (*Macbeth*, I. iv. 11-12) All references to *Macbeth* are to the Arden edition. William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. Kenneth Muir, The Arden Shakespeare (Surrey: Methuen & Co., 1951, 1984).

As a mirror is an important symbol of subjectivity, so too, Richard Hillman tells us, is the 'book' also derived from Lacan's theories,

> For Lacan figures the infant's induction into subjectivity according to a double process involving not only the well-known mirror-stage but also a subsequent entry into the exchange-relations of the symbolic order - that is, into language.[76]

Similarly Eagleton comments on Lacan's idea of the introduction of the child into language,

> In gaining access to language, the small child unconsciously learns that a sign has meaning only by dint of its difference from other signs, and learns also that a sign presupposes the absence of the object it signifies.[77]

The mirror image becomes a 'signified' image of the child 'signifier', the introduction to language comes with the recognition of difference. The child simultaneously recognises that the image (by virtue of the fact that it is not anything else around him) must be himself, and that it is not actually himself, but a representation of himself, a signifier of himself.

Mirrors & Penitential Literature

Again the reflexive symbolic significance of the book need not be explained by reference to the relatively modern terms of psychoanalysis. A significant symbolic

[76] Hillman, 19.
[77] Eagleton, 166.

mirror is also to be found as early as the "third quarter of the fourteenth century"[78] in a correctional book of moral guidance which introduces itself as *A Myrour to Lewde Men and Wymmen.*[79] This text is one of a multitude of exempla in the tradition of what Braswell refers to as 'penitential literature'.[80] Herbert Grabes' survey of works with 'mirror titles'[81] illustrates the tradition dating back to before the fourth century, out of which the use of the word 'speculum' in penitential literature stems.[82] A large percentage of the titles in the list covering works published prior to fifteen hundred have a religious subject matter, and are often exemplary mirrors of how to live a good life.[83] Though the range of literature that adopts the use of the 'mirror title' is vastly diverse, Grabes describes one particular branch that develops from the initial positive exemplary mirrors. "The mirror-metaphor was widely used in the titles of works which were not content with depicting positive models, but which also included abhorrent examples as negative reinforcement."[84] Such works (grouped by Braswell under the term 'penitential literature') intersperse sinful, often horrific tales with Christian doctrinal rules, invariably the Ten Commandments, the Articles of Faith, the Seven Sacraments and (most significantly) the Seven Deadly Sins. The point of these books is to provide a mirror of sins and breaches of religious rules, so that the reader will recognise in the exempla the image of his/her own sin. He/she will then be able to

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[78] Venetia Nelson, *A Myrour to Lewde Men and Wymmen*, 25.

[79] This title has been adopted from the introduction to the work, "...therfore þis writyng is made for lewed and menliche lettred men and wymmen in suche tonge as þei can best vnderstonde, and may be cleped a myrour to lewde men and wymmen..." *A Myrour to Lewde Men and Wymmen*, 71. The work is seen to be a prose counterpart to the *Speculum Vitae*, or 'Mirour of lyf'. Venetia Nelson, *A Myrour to Lewde Men and Wymmen*, 9.

[80] Braswell, 37. I shall discuss this in detail in the ensuing section.

[81] Works whose titles include the words, Speculum, Mirror or Glass.

[82] Herbert Grabes, *The Mutable Glass: Mirror-imagery in the titles and texts of the Middle Ages and English Renaissance*, trans. Gordon Collier (Cambridge: CUP, 1982). The Appendix is divided into two sections, Section A catalogues titles up to fifteen hundred and Section B runs from fifteen hundred to seventeen hundred. The first entry is just titled *Speculum* (or *Speculum Augustini*) and is credited as written by St. Augustine shortly before 430 A.D. (Grabes, 236)

[83] see Grabes, 48-61 ('Exemplary texts bearing mirror-titles').

[84] Grabes, 53.

complete a full and detailed confession, and to receive penance with a clear conscience.[85] This abundance of books with 'mirror titles,' and books that function as mirrors must surely have helped to transform the book into a kind of mirror in terms of gaining self knowledge, if such a significance is not already evident by way of the bible (with Christ and his Apostles providing the positive exempla).

When Hoccleve fails to find a matching 'signifier' of himself in the mirror, he turns to a book to stave off his sickness, to resituate himself in the world. This book functions as an alternative mirror which seems better able to reflect his impression of himself. The book has been identified as the *Synonyma* of Isidore of Seville,[86]

> This othir day/ a lamentacioun
> Of a woful man / in a book I sy,
> To whom wordes / of consolacioun
> Resoun yaf / spekynge effectually;
> And wel esid / my herte was therby,
> For whan I had a whyle / in the book red
> With the speeche of Resoun / was I wel fed. (*Complaint*, 309-15)

In this symbolic book Hoccleve recognises an image of himself, and a means of grounding (with the help of the allegorical "Resoun") his previously unrecognisable

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[85] Among the more significant texts in this area are Robert Mannyng of Brunne's *Handlyng Synne* (1303), *Of Shrifte and Penance* (thirteenth century), and *A Myrour to Lewde Men and Wymmen* (ca. 1400). *The Middle English Mirror: Sermons from Advent to Sexagesima* (late fourteenth century), *Speculum Virginum* (*Mirror for Virgins*), and John Gower's *Mirour de l'Omme (The Mirror of Mankind)* may also be included, though these three texts have other primary functions. *The Middle English Mirror* is clearly a later name given to a collection of sermons originally gathered under the title *Mirror*, in this case only the sermons that deal with shrift are of interest to my argument. The *Speculum Virginum* is a guidebook for the monastic life; it does however also share most of the features of the other titles in this list. Finally Gower's *Mirour de l'Omme* is essentially a religious book like the others, but written by a layperson.

[86] J. A. Burrow, footnote p. 119.

self. However at this point the symbolism of the book encounters a problem, for when Hoccleve proposes working on a translation of *Learn to Die* as a sort of treatment for his previous madness or sickness, his friend objects, citing the idea that 'too-much study' leads to melancholy and in extreme cases madness. His friend believes that it was his study that led to his sickness in the first place.

> 'Of studie was engendred thy seeknesse,
> And þ*a*t was hard / Woldest [thow] now agayn
> Entre into þ*a*t laborous bisynesse,
> Syn it thy mynde and eek thy wit had slayn?' (*Dialogue*, 379-382)

Again the mirror symbol is invoked, "'The smert of studie / oghte be mirour / To thee / let yit thy studie be forborn.'" (*Dialogue*, 409-10)[87] However, the book that Hoccleve chooses, *Learn to Die*, is perhaps not such a bad choice, since it is a preparatory book for making an account after death. The project of the book must then recommend that the reader examine the details of his life and thereby come to a better knowledge of himself.

Hoccleve's choice of penance may also return our attention to the allegorical plays, and the first of a litany of stage characters whose examination of a book is significant to this study. Everyman's journey's end must be a good death, and the presentation of his account book. But Everyman's book is in a bad state when the play begins. His condition is not unlike that of Hoccleve, he too is suffering from a form of madness, as Dethe explains to him "Eueryman, thou arte mad[]! Thou hast thy wyttes

[87] Hoccleve is however adamant that it is not study that has caused his illness; "Trustith right wel / þ*a*t neu*e*re studie in book / Was cause / why my mynde me forsook,..." (*Dialogue*, 424-5)

fyue, / And here on erthe wyll not amende thy lyue"[88] (168-9). It is only when Everyman attempts to read his book of Good Deeds that he comes to Knowledge of his sin (and of himself). Everyman is the first of a number of characters in early English drama who arrive on stage with a book, and are suffering or subsequently suffer from some form of madness. There are two possible reasons that the book thus comes to signify not only the inward search, but also to forewarn madness. The first may involve the need to search for the self within a (mirror-) book. Hoccleve's madness (which he perceives as a punishment/gift from God for the emendation of his sinful life) causes him to look for himself with the help of Isidore's book. Everyman's sinful life (described as madness) must be amended by the creation of a book of Good Deeds[89] in his journey to a good death. Thus, the carrying or reading of a book on stage may be taken to represent for an audience that that character has in some way lost touch with himself and therefore needs to search within a (mirror-)book to find himself. The second is what Hoccleve's friend assumes has caused Hoccleve's madness in the first place, too much study.

There is a precedent for the book of Good Deeds in the early fourteenth-century *Handlyng Synne* (1303) where the author relates a tale of a sergeant whose sloth is punished initially by a sickness, but as he continually refuses the advice of his king, to repent and shrive himself of his sins, the sickness leads to his death. (4369-4514) Naturally, he is allowed time enough to return and make an example of himself and to explain the manner of his death. Lying in his sickbed he is visited by two sets of visitors, first by two young men, "Þe feyrest[90] þat any man myghte se" (4434) who show him "a lytyl feyr boke" (4442) which contains his "owne dede[s]". (4444) This

[88] The text has "made" at 168, but it is clear that what is meant is "mad". Cawley also explains it "mad" in his glossary to the text.
[89] Though he does not physically create the book of Good Deeds, there is nothing to read until Everyman does a good deed. I will discuss this further below.
[90] Fairest.

is the book of his good deeds. The second pair of visitants are not so pleasant, "[b]lake þey were and foule stynkyng, / Wyþ glesyng e3en & mouth grennyng." (4459-60) These second visitants bring the biggest, most horrible book he has ever seen, bigger "þan yn a byble" (4474) containing every detail of everything he has had to do with sin. They proceed to skewer him through the head and feet with burning swords that meet at his heart, and they carry him to hell. Interestingly the sight of the two men who bring him the book of his sins is almost enough to drive him mad, "Me þoghte y wax nygh wode for dred." (4462) These two visitations with their accompanying books are effectively the moments at which the sergeant sees within himself. When he views his misdeeds, he fears he will go mad, but the message of the tale is that a simple confession would have saved both his life and more importantly his eternal soul. Had he searched within himself prior to their visitation he would have known to confess. For him self-knowledge has come too late, but he returns with a warning that the king whom he returns to (and of course the readers of Robert Mannyng's book) may come to self-knowledge in time.

Books & Introspection

Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* offers us another stage character who enters with a book, Hieronimo. (III. xiii.) Hieronimo is reading Seneca's plays.[91] Kyd thus replaces the book of moral guidance with a book of revenge. This is significant in

[91] Hieronimo proceeds after his entry to read lines from Seneca, "Per scelus semper tutum est sceleribus iter" (III. xiii. 6) is taken from Seneca's *Agamemnon* (115), "Fata si miseros juvant, habes salutem; / Fata si vitam negant, habes sepulchrum" (III. xiii. 12-3) from *Troades* (511-2) and "Remedium malorum iners est" (III. xiii. 35) from *Oedipus* (515). All references to *The Spanish Tragedy* are taken from Thomas Kyd, *The Works of Thomas Kyd*, ed. Frederick S. Boas (Oxford: Clarendon, 1955). All references to Seneca in this thesis will be to the Loeb edition of his works except where specified. *Oedipus* and *Agamemnon* in Seneca, *Seneca's Tragedies*, vol. 1, ed. & trans. John G. Fitch, Loeb Classical Library (London: Harvard UP, 2004); *Troades* in Seneca, *Seneca's Tragedies*, vol. 2, ed. & trans. John G. Fitch, Loeb Classical Library (London: Harvard UP, 2002). Part of this increasing subjectivity in renaissance tragedy must surely come from the humanist promotion of classical literature. I intend to discuss this influence in greater detail in Chapters Five and Six, so it will suffice to say at this point that Seneca's influence in this regard in renaissance revenge tragedy is substantial.

a play that retains one allegorical character but that otherwise moves away from allegory towards a more subjective drama. The traditional vices and virtues are gone, and only Revenge remains;[92] Christian morality must share the stage with a secular courtly morality. Hieronimo of course is the most famous mad man of pre-Shakespearean renaissance tragedy.[93] Hamlet also enters with a book. The subject matter (if Hamlet is to be trusted) seems to concerns old men, for it says "that old men have gray beards, that their faces are wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber and plumtree gum, and that they have a plentiful lack of wit" (II. ii. 196-9) but it is not immediately clear what book he is reading.[94] Ophelia, as we have seen, is also set to reading on a book. In this instance it is to colour her loneliness with "devotion's visage".[95] (III. i. 47) The pattern ought to be becoming clear at this stage. Everyman's sin (evident in the empty book of good deeds) is madness, Hieronimo's quest for revenge drives him to madness, Hamlet's reading is perhaps part of his pretence of madness and the treatment Ophelia receives from Hamlet in the scene in which she pretends to read may be a contributory factor in her later madness. Marston's *Antonio's Revenge* (1601) parodies the traditions of revenge tragedy, and specifically *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Hamlet*. The arrival of Antonio on stage dressed in black

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[92] Bel Imperia, of course, means 'beautiful empire', and her name is surely not insignificant, but as J. R. Mulryne quite nicely puts it in his introduction, "*The Spanish Tragedy* stands at the turning-point between a drama of statement and a drama of experience (or exploration)". Characters remain "typical" rather than "individual" figures. (Mulryne, xxix) The characterisation in the play is nonetheless vastly advanced beyond simple allegory when it comes to the characters other than Revenge.

[93] The focus on the madness of his character is attested by the inclusion of a sub-title on the title page of the 1614 edition, which reads, "The Spanish Tragedie: or, Hieronimo is mad again." (The page is reprinted in Arthur F. Kinney, ed., *Renaissance Drama: An Anthology of Plays and Entertainments* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1999) 46. I have not included *The Shearmen and the Tailor's* Herod here, as he is pre-renaissance both in terms of the dates I have chosen to limit the period and in terms of subjective complexity. I will nonetheless come back to Herod later in this chapter.

[94] I will look at this again in Chapter Four.

[95] Jenkins suggests in the Arden edition that a woman carrying a book is symbolic of devoutness, from the tradition of the inclusion of a book in pictures of the Annunciation. (See footnote, Jenkins.) According to Philip Edwards the "book is obviously a prayer-book". (William Shakespeare, *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, ed. Philip Edwards, New Cambridge Shakespeare (Cambridge: CUP, 1985) (footnote) 157. Again, I will discuss this in greater detail in Chapter Four.

and carrying a book, (s.d. II. ii. 1)[96] forewarns an ensuing madness that is as (intentionally) muddled as every other traditional revenge motif in the play. Antonio (like Hamlet, although not quite) adopts the disguise of a fool, while it is given out that (like Ophelia) "distraught and raving" he has drowned himself. (IV. i. 201-9) If hiding behind an arras is foolhardy, you would have to be mad to stand on a renaissance stage reading a book.

Confessions of a Dramatic Subject

Given the reflective powers that the book attains, it is no wonder then, that Montaigne declares at the outset of his book of essays, "I myself am the subject of my book".[97] Heller sees this stated project as being indicative of the age, "It bears witness to the evolution and deepening of subjectivity."[98] She cites St. Augustine's *Confessions of a Sinner* as "the first true autobiography",[99] but explains that there is a difference between Augustine's *Confessions* and the 'confessions'[100] of the Middle Ages:

> For above all Augustine was not simply a man who, having previously ignored the accepted laws of God and Christ, or having deviated from them, 'returns' to his Lord and Saviour – rather he was a man *seeking the truth for himself*

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[96] John Marston, *Antonio's Revenge: The Second Part of Antonio and Mellida*, ed. G. K. Hunter, Regents Renaissance Drama Series (London: Edward Arnold, 1966).
[97] All references to Montaigne's *Essays* are taken from, Michel de Montaigne *The Complete Essays*, trans. M. A. Screech, Penguin Classics (London: Penguin, 1987, 2003). Montaigne, lix.
[98] Heller, 240.
[99] Heller, 231.
[100] It is the exempla (anecdotal examples of sinful deeds to avoid) that are an integral part the penitential literature that she refers to.

> amid a welter of countless other equally accepted, 'official' truths and courses of conduct.[101]

The format that St. Augustine's *Confessions* takes is significant, as Linda Georgianna explains,

> "I have become a problem to myself," Augustine wrote at the end of his *Confessions*, the book that most eloquently demonstrated to the postclassical world that Christianity could provide both a reason and a method for examining one's personal history, the collection of unique though mundane experiences that make up an individual's life.[102]

She suggests that rather than limiting the modes of self-expression, the church's insistence on a detailed internal search for sin prior to and during confession at this point in its history becomes the best reason to become self aware, almost necessitates a greater self awareness. In twelve hundred and fifteen, the Fourth Lateran Council decreed that annual confession was to become mandatory, and that the sacrament of communion should not be received until that obligation was fulfilled. Georgianna recognises a certain significance in the title of Peter Abelard's, *Scito te ipsum* (or *Know Thyself*). This work delineates what she calls "Abelard's theory of intentionality", which involves a "systematic argument that sin is defined not by external actions but by personal intentions". This treatise thus "shifts the burden of responsibility from the Church to the individual, who alone can recognize and

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[101] Heller, 235.
[102] Linda Georgianna, *The Solitary Self: Individuality in the Ancrene Wisse*, (London: Harvard U. P., 1981) 1.

articulate the motivations and desires that define his moral life." Implicit in this responsibility is an inner self unknown to the outside world (specifically the Church and the confessor) who must judge within and for himself the state of his soul. This "new sacrament", Georgianna tells us, "encouraged and even demanded of every Christian the continual self-exploration and attention to minute details of everyday life first demonstrated in Augustine's *Confessions*."[103] For Mary Flowers Braswell, Abelard is also a crucial figure both in terms of confession and in the development of the individual character in fiction.[104] This is not only in terms of what Georgianna calls "Abelard's theory of intentionality," that lays the importance on the motive and intention of sinning as opposed to on the act itself, but Braswell also finds in Peter of Abelard's work a beginning to individuality of character that will develop in the fiction of the next few hundred years. "The idea that man is a free individual, both a part of humanity and separate from it, permeates all his work and greatly influenced the later Middle Ages."[105] Braswell suggests that the representations of the sinner in the penitential literature that developed from the so-called 'confession controversy'[106] spawned the development of a new more self-aware type of character in the literature of the late Middle Ages.

> Unlike the saints and the questers for the Holy Grail, the sinner is concerned with matters of this world and those things which are forbidden to him. Unlike the antagonist, with whom he necessarily shares certain distinctive features,

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[103] Georgianna, 2-3.
[104] Mary Flowers Braswell, *The Medieval Sinner: Characterization and Confession in the Literature of the English Middle Ages* (London: Associated University Press, 1983) 12.
[105] Braswell, 32.
[106] The 'confession controversy' refers to the literature produced before and after the fourth Lateran council of 1215 that argues a number of issues concerning confession. Some of the issues involved are, the required frequency of confession (which the council resolved by requiring annual confession), to whom one could / should confess (whether a lay-person could hear confession or not), and the role of the confessor.

> the sinner alone came to possess a real knowledge of sin – its definitions, its causes, and its circumstances – and he was able to articulate these things with a depth of motive and a self-awareness that his predecessors and contemporaries did not possess. The sinner was born of a more educated concept of man, his frailties and his limitations, which had evolved for centuries, and which culminated in the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 and the decree of mandatory confession.[107]

However, the sinner's value as a literary character is limited. When he has completed a full and perfect confession and penance, his will is subjugated to the will of God and he loses his individuality. This can also be observed in drama.

The earliest recipients of the sacrament of penance that we find in English drama are the converted Jews in *The Play of the Sacrament* (1520). The Jews of the play set out to test the Eucharist for the presence of Christ by a series of tortures, which mirror the injuries of the Crucifixion. The premise is that if Christ is present in the Eucharist, then he will react to the torture inflicted. He does appear to them and they are converted. Primus Vexillator, (the first flag-bearer, 'banns') explains;

> Thus in our lawe they wer made stedfast;
> The Holy Sacrement sheuyd them grette fauour;
> In contrycyon thyr hertys wer cast
> And went and shewyd ther lyues to a confesour. (49-52)[108]

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[107] Braswell, 12.
[108] *The Play of the Sacrament* in Norman Davis, ed., *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments*, Early English Text Society (London: OUP, 1970).

The Play of the Sacrament ends with the conversion and incorporation of the offending Jews into the community of the Church. At this point the Jews of the play cease to be of interest, their will subjugated to the will of God. It is their previous sinfulness that is of interest. In fact they cease to be Jews, and as characters they suffer a virtual erasure, their defining characteristic is cleansed along with their sin. As Braswell puts it,

> Paradoxically, then, the reformed penitent can be an interesting literary character only in a retrospective way – we are interested in what he *did*, not what he *will* do – for the very egotism that fosters characterization is forbidden by the Church. The egotistical character can exist only so long as some part of him rebels against God's laws – so long as he remains a sinner.[109]

In acknowledging the 'frailties' and 'limitations' of humankind, the Church had also to allow for the possibility of forgetful sinners or worse still sinners who commit the mortal sin of suppressing a sin in confession. "Anticipating problems of this nature, the council was careful to advise the priest that part of his duty as a confessor lay in the diligent investigation into all circumstances of sin."[110] The sinner in fiction then is generally accompanied by another new character.

> Of crucial importance to the penitent is the one who hears his sins…So like his counterpart in reality, the fictional sinner is always provided with some character who serves as his confessor, generally a priest in the earlier works,

[109] Braswell, 41. For Braswell 'egotism' seems, if not to be synonymous with individuality, at least a necessity for the kind of individuality that makes for interesting characterisation. This does not mean that the development of the character from a state of sin to repentance is not of interest, merely that once he has returned to the straight and narrow he ceases to be unusual, interesting.
[110] Braswell, 27.

> but later on a lay figure whose function can be determined by the appropriateness of the words he speaks and the responses he elicits from others.[111]

The practice of confessing to laymen is according to Georgianna the legacy of a "pseudo-Augustinian treatise" of the eleventh century entitled, *De vera et falsa poenitentia*, which contained a chapter on the subject. Georgianna is careful to stress that confessing to a layperson was not considered sacramental, but explains, "the shame aroused in confessing is itself a large part of the satisfaction God requires for sins."[112] The development of the inclusion of confession to a layperson paves the way for the secularisation of the process that will eventually take place in literature. The penitent or the character that has developed from this early prototype must have some help in being brought to a full and contrite confession. In *Everyman*, the process is displayed in the very plain action of the allegory. Everyman recognizes his sinfulness when he tries to read his good deeds, and finds that he cannot. Good Deeds is sick. This leads him to the *knowledge* of his sinfulness. Here the character Knowledge enters.[113] Knowledge brings him to visit Confession in the "hous of saluacyon",(540) where he must kneel and ask for mercy. A number of factors are important in this scene. Everyman comes with knowledge to confession. Confession knows his "sorowe well". (554) (He is contrite.) The penitent must know his sins, and be sorry for them, and once he comes with the knowledge of his sinfulness to confession, it is in confession that he will come to a more detailed knowledge of all his sins.

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[111] Braswell, 13-14.
[112] Georgianna, 94.
[113] Knowledge here works on two levels. 1. In his sinful state, Everyman did not have knowledge. (This idea will recur a number of times. In this instance Everyman's sin is equated with ignorance or folly, but more generally sin is madness.) 2. Recognition of the fact that Good Deeds is sick gives him the knowledge that he has sinned.

Confession gives him a "precyous iewell", (557) called "penaunce", (558) the "scourge of penaunce". (571) In using the scourge of penance (which is represented as a literal scourge to mortify the flesh) Everyman earns the "oyle of forgyuenes". (572) Once this is done knowledge reminds him to wear the coat of "Contrycyon", (645) the "garment of sorowe". (643) It is important that the penitent be seen to be sorry. Finally it is vital that throughout this confession scene Everyman be "'seker of mercy". (568) "Aske God mercy, and he wyll graunte truely", (570) says Confession. Only once he has made a full confession can Everyman receive the sacrament of communion from Presthode. (750-772)

The character of Everyman is clearly a very two-dimensional one. He is a very simple character with a very simple message. It is the verbal artistry that the other characters evoke and the intricately worked process of leading Everyman through confession that is of most interest, rather than the character or personality of Everyman. However, as we shall see the character that evolves from the sinner/penitent is not necessarily this simple.

> Because the thirteenth-century doctrine of sin was complex and because the thoughts and actions that sinning entailed were diverse, the characters that emerged from the confessional were naturally rich and intricate ones. In the lists of the major sins and their various manifestations were infinite possibilities for a literary author; there was no need for stereotypes. The interrogation of the penitent entailed a psychological minuteness that focused on the individual, not the group. And the very concept of the penitent involved a sense of change and growth from within. All these elements are essential to

> effective characterization; confession became a reservoir from which poets could draw.[114]

These two characters, the penitent and the confessor/guide, emerge as completely secularised characters in Hoccleve's *Complaint* and *Dialogue*. In the *Complaint* Hoccleve 'confesses' his madness to the reader. At the beginning of the *Dialogue* we find that he has confided this 'confession' to a friend, who now takes on the role of confessor. Hoccleve's use of the language of confession may initially seem out of place. He is, after all, complaining of an illness. However, the complaint is laden with the language of guilt. He is contrite for his way of life prior to his illness. Hoccleve believes that his madness was a punishment from God,

> Thurgh Goddes iust doom / and his iugement
> And for my beste / now I take and deeme,
> Yaf þat good lord / me my punysshement.
> In welthe I took of him / noon heede or yeeme
> Him for to plese / and him honure and queeme,
> And he me yaf a boon / on for to gnawe
> Me to correcte / and of him to haue awe. (*Complaint*, 393-9)

In the same way that a sinner would relate the taints upon his soul to his confessor, Hoccleve now relates his madness to the reader and his friend. His friend however does not probe in the same way that a confessor would. Instead, he advises Hoccleve

[114] Braswell, 59. The reservoir that Braswell refers to here consists of the sins extracted from the penitent during confession. That the character development that she speaks of here leads to a character that we have said ceases to be of interest, does not mean that the development that brings the character from sin to adherence is not of interest.

to keep hidden the tale of woe that he has just read. But Hoccleve is steadfast in his decision. "In feith, freend / make I thynke an open shrifte / And hyde nat / What I had of his [God's] yifte." (*Dialogue*, 83-4) Again it is the language of confession that Hoccleve uses to argue for the publication of his work. His confession is even complete with penance, though again his friend tries to dissuade him from his choice of penitential act. Hoccleve says he intends to translate a Latin poem, *Learn to Die*, by Suso.[115]

> 'And þat haue I / purposid to translate,
> If God his grace / list therto me lene,
> Syn he of helthe / hath opned me the yate;
> For wher my soule is / of vertue al lene
> And thurgh my bodyes gilt / foul and vnclene,
> To clense it / sumwhat by translacioun
> Of it shal be / myn occupacioun.' (*Dialogue*, 211-7)

Hoccleve's *Complaint* and *Dialogue* are clearly the progeny of the penitential literature of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. There is however a new facet to Hoccleve's *Complaint* that is of interest to our discussion. Hoccleve is very much concerned with his 'self', and more importantly his loss of 'self'. As he begins to describe his illness he says,

> Witnesse vpon / the wylde infirmitee

[115] "Suso's chief theme is the danger of being spiritually unprepared for the sudden coming of death....Suso warns that sinners should confess and repent while they still have time, mental capacity and physical strength to do so, for all three may be lacking on one's deathbed." J. A. Burrow, footnote p 94.

Which þat I hadde / as many a man wel kneew,

And which me out of myself / caste and threew. (*Complaint*, 40-42)

Hoccleve describes his sickness or madness as a separation from his 'self.'[116] Likewise his cure he figures as a return,

But now myself / to myself haue ensurid

For no swich wondrynge / aftir this to mourne

As longe as my lyf / shal in me soiourne. (*Complaint*, 304-6)

Everyman and Hoccleve are each sent a messenger who is to correct their path of sin. Death himself comes to Everyman, and Hoccleve is given his sickness or madness, which comes as messenger on behalf of death,

'Rial might and eerthely magestee,

Welthe of the world / and longe & fair*e* dayes

Passen / as dooth the shadwe of a tree;

Whan deeth is come / ther be no delayes.

The worldes trust / is brotil at assayes;

The wyse men / wel knowen this is sooth,

They knowen / what deceit to man it dooth.

'Lond / rente / catel / gold / honour / richesse,

[116] So too, Richard will in turn forget himself (*Richard II*, III. ii. 82-4), Hamlet will claim to have been taken away from himself in his distraction (*Hamlet*, V. ii. 225-30) and Macbeth will describe the fit he seems to have (upon the appearance of Banquo's ghost) as "self abuse". (*Macbeth*, III. iv. 141) Clearly to lose yourself is to go mad.

Þat for a tyme lent been to been ouris,

Forgo we shole / sonner than we gesse.

Paleses / maners / castels grete & touris

Shul vs bireft be / by deeth þat ful sour is;

Shee is the rogh besom / which shal vs alle

Sweepe out of this world / whan God list it falle.

And syn þat shee shal of vs make an ende

Holsum is hire haue 'ofte' in remembrance

Or shee hir messager seeknesse vs sende. (*Dialogue*, 274-290)

Their messengers eventually lead each of them to Confession.[117]

Another of the dominant conventions in the penitential literature is the elaborate listing of the seven deadly sins.[118] It is this precedent that gives rise to Gower's use of the trope in his *Mirour de l'Omme*. In it Gower uses the device of a marriage ceremony in which the World is married by the devil to the seven daughters of Sin (the seven deadly sins). This procession of the seven daughters of Sin and of the five daughters that the world engendered upon each sin takes up a huge portion of the text (ll. 841-9715). God complains in the beginning of *Everyman*, that 'the people', "vse the seuen deedly synnes dampnable, / As pryde, coueytyse, wrath, and

[117] Virtue characters of this type, who lead the protagonist to an awareness of sin, and to eventual repentance, are still quite plainly evident even as late as *Dr. Faustus* in the figures of the good angel and the Old Man. These characters are, of course, juxtaposed with characters that recall the traditional vices of allegory (like Mischief and Titivilus in *Mankind*) in the form of the evil angel and Mephistophilis.

[118] "In analysing the extant English penitential literature of the thirteenth century, one is struck by its conventional character. It might be said without exaggeration that authors avoided originality like a pestilence. Therefore, certain ideas recur with regularity: the emphasis on the contrition of the penitent, for example, and on the exact nature of the sorrow that is felt; also the list of the seven deadly sins with their numerous offspring, often entailing a great degree of elaboration." Braswell, 37.

lechery". (*Everyman*, 36-7)[119] This tradition then translates into a distraction that Lucifer uses to waylay Faustus in Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*. In this use of the procession of the seven deadly sins as a diversion, the penitential literature is inverted. Where traditionally such a procession would be depicted to aid the sinner to make a full and educated confession, Lucifer here uses it to distract Faustus from making a confession at all.

A Yorkshire Tragedy (c.1605) is a very interesting later play in terms of both the transmission of the rhetoric of shrift into early seventeenth-century tragedy and in terms of the progression from allegorical to subjective drama.[120] Roughly contemporary with *Macbeth*, and part of the Shakespeare apocrypha,[121] it owes much to the allegorical tradition, but tells the true story of a notorious murderer, Walter Caverley. The characters of the play are not given names, but denoted by the speech prefixes Husband and Wife and so on. The play is not a religious moral allegory, but a domestic tragedy. However, the play is still suffused with the rhetoric of Christianity and more precisely penitence. To begin with the wife relates the lamentable tale of her husband's debauchery, and asks "Are these the virtues that his youth did promise: / Dice, and voluptuous meetings, midnight revels, / Taking his bed with surfeits, ill beseeming / The ancient honour of his house and name?" (ii, 6-9) This is bad enough. However, what is worst of all is that he is unrepentant, and here Wife's reminder of the relationship between sin and madness is significant.

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[119] The list is of course missing envy, sloth and gluttony.

[120] For a play written so late in the period of this study it owes a great deal to the allegorical tradition.

[121] A. C. Cawley's introduction recognises four pieces of "very strong external evidence" which recommends the belief that Shakespeare was the author, "(1) it was entered by Thomas Pavier in the Stationers' Register on 2 May 1608 as a play by Shakespeare; (2) Shakespeare's name appears as author on the title-page of the first (1608) and second (1619) quartos; (3) the play was attributed to Shakespeare in the transfers of copyright entered in the Stationers' Register on 4 August 1626 and 21 August 1683; and (4) it was included in the third and fourth folios." Against this evidence is offered the "dubious reputation of Pavier", and the omission of the play by Heminge and Condell from the first (1623) and second (1632) Shakespeare folios. A. C. Cawley & Barry Gaines eds., *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, The Revels Plays (Manchester: MUP, 1986) 2-3. All subsequent references to the play are taken from this edition.

[T]hat which kills me most,

When he recounts his losses and false fortunes,

The weakness of his state so much dejected,

Not as a man repentant but half mad

His fortunes cannot answer his expense,

He sits and sullenly locks up his arms;

Forgetting heaven, looks downward, which makes him

Appear so dreadful that he frights my heart;

Walks heavily, as if his soul were on earth,

Not penitent for those his sins are past,

But vexed his money cannot make them last –

A fearful melancholy, ungodly sorrow! (ii, 10-21)

Husband is "half mad" because he is unrepentant. Like Everyman before him he has forgotten heaven,[122] and "walks heavily, as if his soul were on earth". His soul of course is that divine part of him that ought to strive upwards to its true home in heaven, but Husband's submission to earthly and fleshly sins has corrupted his soul. The ensuing interview between them makes things worse still, as he vents his wrath on her, blaming her for all his miseries. When he exits she again makes reference to the division between body and soul, and perhaps most significant of all is the reference to his 'self'; "both beggary of the soul / As of the body. And so much unlike / Himself at first, as if some vexed spirit / Had got his form upon him." (ii. 36-9) 'Form' is an important factor, as wife later says, "his deserts / Are in form uglier than

[122] Death says to Everyman at the beginning of the play, "Thoughe thou haue forgete hym here, / [God] thynketh on the in the heuenly spere". (*Everyman*, 94-5)

an unshaped bear". (iii. 17-8) Not only are his 'deserts,' or merits made beastly (rather than human) but worse still are like an 'unshaped', or improperly formed beast.[123] The sinful protagonist, like those of the allegories of previous years, is given the opportunity to repent of his sinful ways. The Master of the college where his brother studies divinity visits him, and plays the part in the tradition of virtue character, like the Old Man in *Dr. Faustus*.[124] He chides the husband for having ruined his brother, who is held in bond for the protagonist's debts,

> O, you have killed the towardest hope of all our university; wherefore, without repentance and amends, expect ponderous and sudden judgments to fall grievously upon you. Your brother, a man who profited in his divine employments, might have made ten thousand souls fit for heaven, now by your careless courses cast in prison, which you must answer for. And assure your spirit it will come home at length. (iv, 14-21)

The rhetoric of the cleric signifies both on the level of earthly debt and judgment, and on the higher level of divine doom that carries over from the morality plays. In the latter case what is recalled is not so much the protagonists of earlier allegorical drama as the vice characters. Husband has not simply strayed from the path, he is now the one who is diverting souls from their progression towards heaven. This fact is not lost on the husband, who responds,

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[123] This refers to the traditional idea that bears are brought into the world withot form and it is only after that their mothers lick them into shape. "For Avicen seith that the bere bryngeth forth a gobet of fleissh unparfyte and yvel yshape and the moder likketh that lumpe and schapeth the members with likkynge'. *John Trevisa's Translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus's On the Properties of Things*, ed. M. C. Seymour (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975) Vol. 2, 1260.

[124] All references to *Dr. Faustus* are to Christopher Marlowe, *The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe*, vol. 2, ed. Fredson Bowers (Cambridge: CUP, 1973). Guiding characters in the allegorical tradition that is recalled include Mercy in *Mankind*, Knowledge in *Everyman*, Conscyence in *The World and the Child* (*Mundus et Infans*).

> Sir, you have much wrought with me; I feel you in my soul. You are your art's master. I never had sense till now; your syllables have cleft me. Both for your words and pains I thank you. I cannot but acknowledge grievous wrongs done to my brother, mighty, mighty, mighty wrongs. (iv, 32-7)

Though this may sound like the rhetoric of repentance, the words are empty. The ambiguity of the word 'sense' is crucial. What he seems to say is that he never understood or felt the wrong done to his brother until the cleric had reproached him for it. But we know of course that the other physical 'sense' is something he is all too familiar with, his sins being *sensual*. Once he has appeased the divine with this false contrition and the promise to redeem the fault with finance he does not possess, he soliloquises,

> O, thou confused man, thy pleasant sins have undone thee, thy damnation has beggared thee! That heaven should say we must not sin and yet made women; gives our senses way to find pleasure, which being found confounds us. Why should we know those things so much misuse us? O, would virtue had been forbidden! We should then have proved all virtuous, for 'tis our blood to love what we are forbidden. (iv, 55-62)

In the ensuing scenes he proceeds to slaughter two of his children, wounds his wife and is stopped short of killing his youngest child by an accident of chance.[125] His wife

[125] The unlikely stumble of the horse on "such plain even ground", may suggest divine intervention. (viii, 6) This fall perhaps suggests Saul's fall on the road to Damascus and his subsequent conversion. (Acts 9:4) The Husband of *A Yorkshire Tragedy* is not, however, enlightened by his fall.

is perplexed at his inhuman behaviour, "What is it has beguiled him of all grace / And stole away humanity from his breast?" (vii, 32-3) A Gentleman blames his sins, "Great sins have made him impudent." (viii, 26) And the Knight to whom the task of Judge is left tries to encourage penitence,

> *Knight.* O, in a cooler blood you will repent it.
>
> *Husband.* I repent now that one's left unkilled,
>
> My brat at nurse. O, I would full fain have weaned him!
>
> *Knight.* Well, I do not think but in tomorrow's judgement
>
> The terror will sit closer to your soul,
>
> When the dread thought of death remembers you.
>
> To further which, take this sad voice from me:
>
> Never was act played more unnaturally. (ix, 19-26)

The judgment that he must face is twofold; he must of course face the secular legal judgment of the knight. And he must also face the divine judgment of his sinful soul. The play represents only the secular judgment, but its language continually suggests the more crucial divine one. The play seems to conclude that his actions are caused by demonic possession. He manages to overthrow a servant whose speech prefix includes the descriptive 'lusty'. (v. 34) The only possible reason for this extra detail is to stress the unnatural strength of the possessed man. When he is being led to trial, he passes his convalescent wife, and her endurance, constancy and patience in the face of his diabolical behaviour seems to win through.

> …now glides the devil from me,

Departs at every joint, heaves up my nails.

O, catch him new torments that were ne'er invented;

Bind him one thousand more, you blessed angels,

In that pit bottomless. Let him not rise

To make men act unnatural tragedies,

To spread into a father and, in fury,

Make him his children's executioners;

Murder his wife, his servants, and who not?

For that man's dark where heaven is quite forgot. (x. 18-27)

His wife is led to exclaim, "O my repentant husband!" (x. 28) and his response is ambiguous, "My dear soul, whom I too much have wronged, / For death I die, and for this have I longed." (x. 29-30) It may be that the 'dear soul,' 'too much wrong'd' is his wife, or equally possible is that he means his own soul, wronged by the sins that his flesh has committed. Nonetheless when he addresses the corpses of his murdered children his contrition is fulfilled,

O, were it lawful that your pretty souls

Might look from heaven into your father's eyes,

Then should you see the penitent glasses melt

And both your murders shoot upon my cheeks.

But you are playing in the angels' laps

And will not look on me

Who, void of grace, killed you in beggary.

O, that I might my wishes now attain,

I should then wish you living were again,

Though I did beg with you, which thing I feared.

O, 'twas the enemy my eyes so bleared!

O, would you could pray heaven me to forgive

That will unto my end repentant live.

. . . . . .

I'll kiss the blood I spilt and then I go;

My soul is bloodied, well may my lips be so.

Farewell, dear wife, now thou and I must part;

I of thy wrongs repent me with my heart. (x. 36-54)

In his final lines he holds himself up as an example of a sinful life to all husbands and fathers, "Let every father look into my deeds, / And then their heirs may prosper while mine bleeds." (x. 59-60) He thus makes himself an exempla in the tradition of the exemplum in penitential literature. At the end his wife seems to prepare to sue for his soul with prayer, "Heaven give my body strength, which yet is faint / With much expense of blood, and I will kneel," (x. 66-7) but in completing the sentence it is clarified that she will kneel to *secular* justice to spare his life, "Sue for his life, number up all my friends / To plead for pardon – my dear husband's life!" (x. 68-9) The play must remain secular though the rhetoric is spiritual.

The Nativity of Madness

The first English stage madman is Herod, of *The Shearmen and Tailors' Play*, of the Coventry cycle. His enormous pride is evident from his opening lines, "*Qui statis* in Jude et Rex Iseraell, / And the myghttyst conquerowre *tha*t eyuer walkid on

grownd; / For I am evyn he thatt made bothe hevin *and* hell, / *And* of my myghte powar holdith vp *thi*s world rownd." (486-9)[126] From the outset he sacrilegiously claims to have completed the work of the first week of Genesis. He is quick to extend his claim of divine power to Greek mythology, claiming to be Atlas. He proceeds then to make himself Jove, "I am the cawse of this grett lyght and thund*e*r; / Ytt ys throgh my fure *tha*t the[y] soche noyse dothe make. / My feyrefull contenance *th*e clowdis so doth incu*m*bur / *Th*at oftym*is* for drede *the*r-of the verre yerth doth quake." (493-6) Perhaps the most striking claim he makes is that he is Satan, "prynce am I of purgatorre *and* cheff capten of hell". (503) If his pride is not immediately evident in his outrageous claims of omnipotence, or his "gorgis araye" (511) or even his claim to be descended from "Jubytor" and "cosyn to the grett God" (517) then, at least by claiming to be "cheff capten of hell" his sin is immediately recognisable as that of Satan's first sin of Pride.

The scene where Herod actually goes mad is a rather comical caricature of madness which allows the actor playing his part plenty of scope to ad-lib. Having heard of the deception of the three kings who have returned another way, avoiding Herod's court, he rages,

> I stampe! I stare! I loke all abowtt!
> Myght I them take, I schuld them bren at a glede!
> I rent! I rawe! *and* now run I wode!
> A! thatt these velen trayturs hath mard *thi*s my mode!
> The[y] schalbe hangid yf I ma cu*m* them to!
>
> *Here Erode ragis in* the *pagond* and *in the strete also.*

[126] All references to *The Shearmen and Tailors' Play* are taken from, *Two Coventry Corpus Christi Plays*, ed. Hardin Craig, Early English Text Society, (London: OUP, 1902, 1967).

E! (779-85)

He rages again briefly, when the two soldiers who he sends to commit the slaughter of the innocents initially object, "A rysyng! Owt! owt! owt! / (*There Erode ragis ageyne and then seyth thus:*) / Owt! velen wrychis, har apon you I cry!" (801-2)

From this first appearance on the English stage it is clear that there is a close relationship between sin and madness. This is a relationship that also exists in other literature. Hoccleve, for instance, as we have seen, believes his madness to be a "punysshement" (*Complaint*, 395) and a "yifte" (*Dialogue*, 84) from God to correct his sins. *A Myrour of Lewde Men and Wymmen*, a mirror in the penitential tradition, calls the second branch of pride (pride being the "roote of alle wikkednes"[127]) "woodnes", which ordinarily means madness. Again on the stage, Everyman is described as mad by Dethe, "Everyman, thou art mad[]! Thou hast thy wyttes fyue, / And here on erthe wyll not amende thy lyue". (*Everyman*, 168-9)

The book, initially a symbol of subjective awareness (akin to a mirror), as we have seen, metamorphoses in the English stage tradition to be a warning of an ensuing madness. The symbolism of the book gains some of its subjective significance from the mirror tradition of the penitential variety with its elaborate descriptions of the seven deadly sins, and exemplary tales. This again feeds into the link between sin and madness. In the next chapter I will show that Shakespeare's *Richard II* engages the tension that exists between the need to dissemble in a turbulent court environment and the sins inherent in the act of dissembling. Richard will be shown to be tenuously balanced between the needs of early-modern court life and the moral judgements of medieval ideas of sin.

[127] *A Myrour of Lewde Men and Wymmen*, 104.

Chapter 2: *Richard II* - A Mirror for Madness

Ham. The King is a thing –

Guild. A thing, my lord?

Ham. Of nothing. (*Hamlet*, IV. iii. 27-9)

If the late medieval subject is evident in the tug of war of the psychomachia of medieval moral allegory, the passive protagonist Mankind or Everyman in difficulty over the decision between the advice of the good and bad characters, virtues and vices (even as late as *Dr. Faustus* in the good and bad angels), then Richard II is the embodiment of the humanist subjective equivalent.[1] As we have seen in Chapter One, there is a progression from the earlier protagonist concerned solely with the psychomachia, the choice between good and evil, god and the devil, through Marlowe's Dr Faustus (whose choice is the same albeit complicated by his more humanistic nature), to the fully-defined characters of Shakespeare's plays. Richard II's choice is no longer between good and evil, God and the devil, but one self or another. On all sides it is demanded of Richard that he must be one person or another and all the while be King (as demanded by the divine right of kings).[2] He, like Infans in *The Worlde and the Chylde*,[3] is continually re-identified by the characters that surround him, as first this then another kind of ruler, kind of person, and is faced with the dilemma of claiming a sustainable identity. The question is now one of subject (isolated individual self, 'I') or ruler (body politic, 'We'). Richard finds this an

[1] This is necessarily an oversimplification of allegory plotting. For a more detailed discussion of this idea see Chapter One.

[2] I shall discuss the 'divine right of kings' and the 'body politic' a little later in this chapter.

[3] He is first of all named 'Infans' by the speech prefix, then 'Dalliance' by his mother, 'Wanton' by the World before being renamed 'Lust-and-Liking', 'Manhood', 'Shame', 'Age', and 'Repentance'. Infans is a curious example because he does have the self-awareness to decide to change his name, but not to choose a name for himself. He is afraid of being recognised and so decides to change his name from Manhood, but it is another character, Folly who chooses the name 'Shame' for him.

impossible task. Ultimately, it is his failure to make decisions, (like the earlier protagonists of the moralities who follow every guiding hand indiscriminately, good or bad[4]) within this new renaissance world in which protagonists proclaim themselves, even at the most arduous of moments, to be themselves, that serves to destabilise his mind. Richard fails to claim a self. He is not a single unified self. Richard in fact chooses nothing,[5] and in the end recognizes that the only option left for him is to be 'nothing'. "Ay, no; no, ay; for I must nothing be." (IV. i. 201) The Duchess of Malfi can claim, "I am Duchesse of *Malfy* still" (*Duchess of Malfi*, IV. ii. 131)[6] when all the actual power of that position is gone.[7] She can still hold madness at bay, though it inhabits the whole realm of the play. Mark Anthony can likewise claim, "I am / Anthony yet." (III. xiii. 90)[8] Richard is completely lost. He cannot claim a 'self' in the way that these characters can. Even Faustus proclaims himself and his own greatness in his opening scene, though he is preparing to sell his soul.[9]

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[4] Again this is a simplification of the facts, but compared to the more self-assured protagonists of later renaissance drama it will serve for the present.

[5] The first choice that Richard must make in the play is how to resolve the dispute between Bolingbroke and Mowbray. Though Richard chooses a peaceful resolution, he fails to enforce that choice and must submit to their demand for trial by combat, "We were not born to sue, but to command; / Which since we cannot do to make you friends, / Be ready, as your lives shall answer it,..." (I. i. 196-8) If we consider him to have chosen to allow the trial by combat, this choice he also fails to follow through when he throws down his warder to stop the combat before it has begun in earnest. (I. ii. 118) His banishment of both parties effectively negates the choice between them, he fails to decide who is in the right, and punishes both as guilty.

[6] All references to *The Duchess of Malfi* are from John Webster, *The Works of John Webster*, vol. 1, eds. David Gunby, David Carnegie, Anthony Hammond, and Dereen DelVecchio, note and transcription of music Peter Walls (Cambridge: CUP, 1995).

[7] It may be argued that this is a claim to a title rather than an identity independent of that title. Nonetheless, that title has been the means by which the duchess has grasped individual identity throughout the play. What precedes the statement is a discussion with Bosola, who is disguised as a madman. She asks him if he can identify her (as a test of the extent of his supposed madness), "Who am I?...Am not I, thy Duchesse?" (IV. ii. 115 & 124) It is worth noting that his response includes an explanation of the dichotomy of soul and body and a reference to a mirror, "Didst thou ever see a Larke in a cage? Such is the soule in the body: this world is like her little turfe of grasse, and the Heaven ore our heades, like her looking glasse, onely gives us a miserable knowledge of the small compasse of our prison." (IV. ii. 120-123)

[8] All references to *Anthony and Cleopatra* are taken from William Shakespeare, *Anthony and Cleopatra*, ed. M. R. Riley, The Arden Shakespeare (London: Methuen, 1954, 1986). See Belsey, 35-39.

[9] As a man, a composite body and soul, he is in fact preparing to sell the portion of his 'self' that is inclined towards heaven; his 'better half', as it were.

Undoubtedly Richard's difficulty stems in part from the events that precede the opening scene of Shakespeare's play, and cause the dispute between Mowbray and Bolingbroke.[10] The fight between Bolingbroke and Mowbray at the opening of Shakespeare's play is, in fact, the result of a power struggle that goes back to the beginning of Richard's twenty-two year reign. Upon the death of Edward III (1377), Richard (the only surviving son of Edward, Prince of Wales, or The Black Prince) succeeded to the throne at the young age of ten. Richard's early reign was thus a protectorate. It was not, however, ruled for him by his three surviving uncles, John of Gaunt, Thomas of Woodstock (Gloucester) and Edmund of York, but by a council appointed by parliament. By 1386, at the age of nineteen, he had apparently achieved some level of autonomy, having bestowed the titles of marquess of Dublin and duke of Ireland on favourites, Michael de la Pole and Edward de Vere respectively. He was rebuked by his youngest uncle, Thomas of Woodstock, for misgovernment and de la Pole was impeached. A new council was set to rule affairs of state, but Richard responded the following year by appointing a group of judges led by Sir Robert Tresilian[11] to condemn these actions as treasonable.

A group of five then formed in opposition to the young king, Thomas of Woodstock, Warwick and Arundel and a little later Bolingbroke and Mowbray. They raised an army and defeated Richard's forces led by de Vere. What followed has become known as the 'Merciless Parliament of 1388'. The five 'Lords Appellant' executed Tresilian for treason and de Vere and de la Pole (both already fled) died in exile. The 'Lords Appellant' ruled for a year before Richard, now twenty-two, announced that he would rule on his own. Perhaps surprisingly, he then ruled in

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[10] These events Saccio says, "Shakespeare alludes to sparsely and unclearly." Peter Saccio, *Shakespeare's English Kings: History, Chronicle, and Drama* (Oxford: OUP, 1977) 18. For the following details of Richard's early reign I have relied heavily on Saccio, 17-35.

[11] The first story in *The Mirror for Magistrates* is that of Robert Tresilian. Baldwin, 73-80.

relative peace for the following seven years with the assistance of a royal council including John of Gaunt (recently returned from unsuccessful conquest on the continent) and some of the former 'Lords Appellant'. The motivations behind what then happened in 1397 are vague, but the three senior members of the former 'Lords Appellant', Thomas of Woodstock (Gloucester), Arundel and Warwick were convicted of treason under charges laid by Aumerle, Norfolk, Exeter, Surrey and Wiltshire among others. John of Gaunt was hereditary lord high steward, Bushy (who had become a favourite of Richard's over the seven peaceful years, along with Bagot, Green and Scrope) was speaker of the commons. Warwick was exiled, Arundel beheaded and Thomas of Woodstock imprisoned in Calais (under guard of Mowbray) where he died in suspicious circumstances.

The two remaining 'Lords Appellant' were Mowbray and Bolingbroke. Presumably rattled by the recent action taken against the other 'Lords Appellant', the two men broke into a quarrel. This is effectively the point at which Shakespeare opens his play. Bolingbroke charged Mowbray with treason. He further accused Mowbray of misappropriation of crown funds and of complicity in the death of Thomas of Woodstock.[12] This final addition to the charge of treason undoubtedly touched Richard in no small degree.[13] As Saccio says, "Richard's murder of [Gloucester], suggested obliquely but never doubted, creates the moral weakness of the king's position in Acts I and II."[14]

Shakespeare's audience are not likely to have missed the significance of those oblique suggestions, the prehistory of his play being available to them from a number

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[12] Holinshed reports the charge as read to the king on Bolingbroke's behalf by a third party, "…by his [Mowbray's] false suggestions and malicious counsel, he hath caused to die and to be murdered your right deere uncle, the duke of Glocester, sonne to king Edward." (Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, vol. 3 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960, 1966) vol. III, 390.)

[13] Holinshed writes, "The king herewith waxed angrie,…" (Bullough, vol. III, 390)

[14] Saccio, 24.

of sources.[15] Shakespeare's main source was probably Holinshed, but the material was also available in *The First Fowre Bookes of the Civile Wars Between the two Houses of Lancaster and Yorke* (1595) by Samuel Daniel,[16] and perhaps the most significant source for the playgoer is the earlier anonymous play, *Thomas of Woodstock*, referred to by its editors as *Richard II, part one*, which details the earlier part of Richard's reign and portrays Gloucester as the benevolent counsellor to an unruly and eventually treacherous young king.

Richard's reign is thus no unified reign by one man, but a reign in which many factions (often at odds with each other) have a hand. The country was first ruled by a protectorate council appointed by parliament; next Richard seems to have taken some level of control before the intervention of Gloucester and the appointment of a second protectorate council. Richard again asserted control and was again (and most seriously) suppressed (perhaps briefly deposed) by the five 'Lords Appellant' who then ruled for a year before Richard again asserted his authority which this time held, with the support of a royal council including Gaunt. Thus before the point at which Shakespeare's play begins Richard's reign has in fact been ruled by three separate protectorate councils and one royal council who retained a large degree of control for

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[15] It is not my intention to discuss all the various source materials that seem to have been used in the writing of the play at length, merely the ones that are of interest to my argument. The suggested sources are Holinshed's *The Historie of England* (1586), John Eliot's *Ortho-Epia Gallica* (1593), Samuel Daniel's *Civil Wars* (1595) and Sylvester Du Bartas' *Deuine Weekes and Workes* (1605) extracts of which are included in the appendices to the Arden edition (Ure, 181-207). Bullough also includes extracts from Holingshed and Daniel and a section from Edward Hall's *The Union of the Two Noble Famelies of Lancastre and Yorke* (1548), segments of *The Chronicle of Froissart translated out of French by Sir John Bourchier, Lord Berners* (1523-25), and segments of *Chronique de la Traison et Mort de Richart Deux Roy Dengleterre* (n.d.) (ed. & trans. Benjamin Williams (1846)). (Bullough, vol. III, 1966) 353-491) The details of Richard's early reign are dealt with in detail in *The Mirror for Magistrates* (1559) a small section of which is reprinted in Bullough (vol. III, 415-22), and in the anonymous play *Thomas of Woodstock* (1591-5) most of which is reprinted in Bullough (vol. III, 460-91. In references to this play within this thesis, I have used Peter Corbin & Douglas Sedge, eds., *Thomas of Woodstock or Richard the Second, Part One*, The Revels Plays (Manchester: MUP, 2002). For a discussion of the probable source material used in the play, see Ure, xxx-li and Bullough. (Vol. III, 353-82)

[16] Sections of *The Civil Wars* relevant to Shakespeare's play are reprinted in Bullough. (Vol. III, 434-60)

the remainder of his reign. Effectively Richard has not ruled on his own at any stage prior to the opening of Shakespeare's play.

Richard's failure to take decisive action in the quarrel between Mowbray and Bolingbroke surely stems in part from this earlier enforced reliance on others to make decisions for him. He still consults a council (including John of Gaunt) in concluding the sentences on both those lords.[17] His indecision is complicated further by the fact that he has surrounded himself with sycophants who tell him what they think he wishes to hear about himself. Richard finds himself (and I use the term lightly) daunted by the task of being a person consistent with the various assumptions and demands made on his person.[18]

In addition to this is the further difficulty of the concept of the body politic. Edmund Plowden's *Commentaries, or Reports* (1578) (reports from law courts of Elizabeth I's reign) explains some of the elements of the theory of the 'King's two bodies,'

> For the King has in him two Bodies, *viz.*, a Body natural, and a Body politic. His Body natural (if it be considered in itself) is a Body mortal, subject to all Infirmities that come by Nature or Accident, to the Imbecility of Infancy or old Age, and to the like Defects that happen to the natural Bodies of other People. But his Body politic is a Body that cannot be seen or handled, consisting of Policy and Government, and constituted for the Direction of the People, and the Management of the public-weal, and this Body is utterly void

[17] cf. I. iii. 119-123 & 233-5. All references to *King Richard II* are taken from William Shakespeare, *King Richard II*, ed. Peter Ure, The Arden Shakespeare (London: Methuen, 1956).

[18] Even the Queen is drawn to comment on the ease with which he is forced to submission in the final act and presses him to assert himself once before his end, "What, is my Richard both in shape and mind / Transform'd and weak'ned? hath Bolingbroke depos'd / Thine intellect? hath he been in thy heart? / The lion dying thrusteth forth his paw / And wounds the earth, if nothing else, with rage…" (V. i. 26-8)

> of Infancy, and old Age, and other natural Defects and Imbecilities, which the Body natural is subject to, and for this Cause, what the King does in his Body politic, cannot be invalidated or frustrated by any Disability in his natural Body.[19]

Shakespeare's King Richard II is more like Everyman than it may at first seem. Everyman is representative of the multitude that is humankind, but has a single physical presence on the stage; and, as is the case with all humankind, is made up of an earthly corruptible part and a divine soul. Richard is one man made up of a corruptible body and a divine soul. King Richard II is also made up of a body and a soul, but King Richard II's body, consists of crown, sceptre and land, his soul is made up of twenty thousand souls, "Is not the king's name twenty thousand names?" (III. ii. 85)[20] Though a King in the tradition of 'fall of princes' tragedies, Shakespeare's Richard is still representative of the multitude that make up England in the same way that Everyman is representative of the multitude that make up humankind.

Names & Allegory

To the Allegorical protagonists definition is most simply found in the names they are given. There are many instances in *Richard II*, where characters toy with the equation of names or titles with self. When Richard is faced with defeat and Bolingbroke demands that his banishment be revoked, Richard is driven to wish, "O that I were as great / As is my grief, or lesser than my name!" (III. iii. 136-7) After

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[19] Edmund Plowden, *Commentaries, or Reports*, 2 vols (London: S. Brooke, 1816) vol. 1, 212a. Cit. Ernst H. Kantrowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Surrey: Princeton U.P., 1957, 1981) 7.

[20] There may be an echo here of Mark 5:9, where Jesus asks the possessed man his name and receives the response, "My name is Legion – there are so many of us!" See also Matthew 8:28-34 & Luke 8:26-39.

Northumberland has asked Richard to "[r]ead o'er" the articles of his deposition, effectively asking him to confess, he attempts to interrupt Richard's tirading response, "My lord - ". But Richard cuts him short and continues his tirade by playing with that title,

> No lord of thine, thou haught insulting man;
> Nor no man's lord. I have no name, no title;
> No, not that name was given me at the font,
> But 'tis usurp'd. Alack the heavy day,
> That I have worn so many winters out,
> And know not now what name to call myself! (IV. i. 253-9)

This is the culmination of a dialogue that has continued throughout the play, that suggests that in courtly life the name is more than a mere signifier, but is in part the thing itself. Richard is, of course, warned of this much earlier in the play by York, when Richard moves to disinherit Bolingbroke (Herford);

> Take Herford's rights away, and take from time
> His charters, and his customary rights;
> Let not to-morrow then ensue to-day:
> Be not thyself. For how art thou a king
> But by fair sequence and succession? (II. i. 195-199)

Time is a huge factor, as Richard's failure to respect succession and time augurs ill for him. Bolingbroke refers to this defilement of his own name in his accusations against the captured Bushy and Green;

> Myself – a prince by fortune of my birth,
> Near to the king in blood, and near in love,
> Till you did make him misinterpret me –
> Have stoop'd my neck under your injuries,
> And sigh'd my English breath in foreign clouds,
> Eating the bitter bread of banishment,
> Whilst you have fed upon my signories,
> Dispark'd my parks and fell'd my forest woods,
> From my own windows torn my household coat,
> Rac'd out my imprese, leaving me no sign,
> Save men's opinions and my living blood,
> To show the world I am a gentleman. (III. i. 16-27)

In confiscating Bolingbroke's estates Richard has effectively confiscated a significant part of Bolingbroke's identity. But Bolingbroke's strength and self-awareness is most clearly displayed in his response to York's charge that he has ignored the sentence of banishment. Bolingbroke is capable of using his name and persona in a moment of 'self-fashioning' the like of which Richard proves incapable of,

> As I was banish'd, I was banish'd Herford;
> But as I come, I come for Lancaster.

And, noble uncle, I beseech your grace

Look on my wrongs with an indifferent eye.

You are my father, for methinks in you

I see old Gaunt alive. Oh then, my father,... (II. iii. 112-7)

Bolingbroke here effects/affects a feat of acrobatics with nomenclature that would be unthinkable for the earlier allegorical protagonist.[21] He chooses between his titles as suits his purpose. Richard never shows himself capable of manipulating his identities as Richard and King Richard II, as body natural and body politic.[22]

In this speech Bolingbroke not only re-identifies himself, but his uncle also, manipulating York into substitute paternity. "You are my father, for methinks in you / I see old Gaunt alive." (II. iii. 116-7) It is of course Old Gaunt who first performs such a conjuring trick with his name and identity. As he rails, on his death-bed, against Richard's avaricious and wasteful rule, Richard enters and asks, "how is't with aged Gaunt?" provoking Gaunt to respond,

O, how that name befits my composition!

Old Gaunt indeed, and gaunt in being old.

Within me grief hath kept a tedious fast,

And who abstains from meat that is not gaunt?

For sleeping England long time have I watch'd,

Watching breeds leanness, leanness is all gaunt.

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[21] There are a set of characters who come close in Skelton's *Magnyfycence*. Appropiately enough they are the courtly vices, Counterfet Countenaunce, Crafty Conveyaunce, Cloked Colusyon and Courtly Abusyon who pretend that they are in fact called Good Demeynaunce, Sure Surveyaunce, Sober Sadnesse and Lusty Pleasure. See above, 15.

[22] Richard once comes close to this kind of identity manipulation in the scene at Flint castle (III. iii.) but, as I will show later in this chapter, the quality of that manipulation is vastly different.

The pleasure that some fathers feed upon
Is my strict fast – I mean my children's looks,
And therein fasting hast thou made me gaunt.
Gaunt am I for the grave, gaunt as a grave,
Whose hollow womb inherits nought but bones. (II. i. 72-83)

Here Gaunt makes himself almost allegorical, for he is what his name says. This sort of toying with a name is common practice in allegorical drama. The difference is that Gaunt is neither virtue nor vice. There is, however, an analogous figure in the morality plays, whose name is neither virtue nor vice. That figure is Death. Death comes to Everyman to remind him that his life is not his own, but merely borrowed. Like Death to Everyman, Gaunt (and his use of the imagery of death is not insignificant) tries to remind Richard that he must one day repay what he has borrowed, and tries to show him that he is ill. But Richard will not hear, or cannot understand. Gaunt after all is just an old man, an individual. Why should he represent anything else? This is not, after all, a morality play.

Rich. Can sick men play so nicely with their names?
Gaunt. No, misery makes sport to mock itself:
Since thou dost seek to kill my name in me,
I mock my name, great king, to flatter thee.
Rich. Should dying men flatter with those that live?
Gaunt. No, no, men living flatter those that die.
Rich. Thou now a-dying sayest thou flatterest me.
Gaunt. Oh no, thou diest, though I the sicker be.

Rich. I am in health, I breathe, and see thee ill.

Gaunt. Now He that made me knows I see thee ill,

Ill in myself to see, and in thee, seeing ill. (II. i. 84-94)

Richard's illness is worse by far than Everyman's, for he has not only wasted the life that was lent him, but he has also pawned a kingdom that is lent to him. As Gaunt ought to be recognised as a guidance figure (and as support figure in his role on the royal council that has facilitated Richard's reign[23]) so also King Richard II must be recognised as England (twenty thousand English souls). As England, King Richard II should heed the warnings of Gaunt and recognise his flatterers as vice figures, and as Gaunt tries to show him this he again invokes his name, or reputation.

Thy death-bed is no lesser than thy land,
Wherein thou liest in reputation sick,
And thou, too careless patient as thou art,
Commit'st thy anointed body to the cure
Of those physicians that first wounded thee:
A thousand flatterers sit within thy crown,
Whose compass is no bigger than thy head,
And yet, incaged in so small a verge,
The waste is no whit lesser than thy land. (II. i. 95-103)

This has been a part of Richard's problem throughout. He is not a character in a morality play, and yet many of the traditions, and perhaps even rules of the morality

[23] See above, 53-5.

play exist within the realm of the play. He is a character out of time. He fails to reconcile the old and the new that collide within the bounds of the play. He seems so often to be aware that he has been an actor, and yet has never been able to figure out what kind of play it is, or what role he ought to have played. As Richard's performance nears its end York describes his passage through the streets to Pomfret, and Bolingbroke's subsequent march of triumph,

> As in a theatre, the eyes of men,
> After a well-grac'd actor leaves the stage,
> Are idly bent on him that enters next
> Thinking his prattle to be tedious
> Even so, or with much more contempt, men's eyes
> Did scowl on Richard. (V. ii. 23-8)

If Richard has taken the stage after Everyman's exit, his performance is still loaded with the rhetoric of sin and the psychomachia.

Sin

A further reason for Richard's disordered state may be found in *The Mirror for Magistrates*, recognized as one of a number of sources for the detail of the play.[24] The use of the *Mirror for Magistrates* as a source for *Richard II* raises certain questions of authority. There were up to a possible eight different authors involved in the production of *The Mirror for Magistrates*.[25] To complicate things even further the

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[24] See above, 55.

[25] Baldwin of course as the interlocutor is one confirmed author, and along with him George Ferrers is also confirmed. Also involved were probably Thomas Chaloner (credited with the chapter on the history of Richard II) and Thomas Phaer. We know that originally "the printer secured the promise of

authors refer to the histories of Fabyan and Hall, which they have used as their own source material.[26] In the Dedication to the work Baldwin writes,

> For here as in a loking glas, you shall see (if any vice be in you) howe the like hath bene punished in other heretofore, whereby admonished, I trust it will be a good occasion to move you to the soner amendment....I most humbly beseche you, fauourably to accepte this rude myrrour, and diligently to read and consider it. And although you shall finde in it, that sum haue for thei vertue been enuied and murdered yet cease not you to be vertuous, but do your offices to the vttermost: punish sinne boldly, both in your selues and other, so shall God (whose lieutenauntes you are) eyther so mayntayne you, that no malice shall preuayle, or if it do, it shal be for your good, and to your eternall glory both here and in heaven, which I beseche God you may covet and attayne.[27]

The Mirror for Magistrates is thus a book that functions as a symbolic mirror, "...whiche might be as a myrrour for al men as well noble as others, to shew the slyppery deceytes of the waueryng lady, and the due rewarde of all kinde of vices."[28] This presentation of Richard's rule is already fragmentary in nature by virtue of the variety of source material it uses and its multiple authorship. It is, however, once more divided by the fact that Richard's rule is presented first as the story of Robert

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co-operation from a group of gifted men, seven in number, who met to consider the enterprise." Campbell, *Mirror for Magistrates*, 9.

[26] "This tragicall example [of Lord Mowbray's fall] was of all the company well liked, how be it a doubte was founde therin, and that by meanes of the diuersity of the Chronicles: for where as maister Hall whom in this storye we chiefely followed, maketh Mowbray accuser, and Boleynbroke appellant, mayster Fabian reporteth the matter quite contrary, & that by the reporte of good authours,..." Baldwin, 110. Relevant sections of *The Union of the Two Noble Famelies of Lancastre and Yorke* (1548) by Edward Hall are reprinted in Bullough. (vol. III, 383-7)

[27] Baldwin, 65-7.

[28] Baldwin, 68.

Tresilian, "chiefe Iustice of England"[29], then Roger Mortimer, "heyre apparaunt to the crowne"[30], then Thomas of Wudstocke "vncle to king Richarde"[31], next Lord Mowbray, "earle of Notyngham, / And Marshall of the realme,"[32] before even coming to the King himself.[33] These stories are related in the first person, each character becoming for a brief spell the protagonist in the history of Richard's reign, in a way that is already suggestive of dramatic practice.[34]

The nature of the enterprise, being to provide examples of misgovernment, with each speaker giving an account that stresses the folly, vice, sinfulness of his own actions, is reminiscent of the exempla of penitential mirrors.[35] Through this fragmented relation of the story of Richard II it would be little wonder that the character suggested would be at odds to find unity of self. Even the author who steps forward to write Richard's part finds it the part of a confused man. Baldwin tells us, "I would (quoth one of the company) gladly say sumwhat for king Richard. But his personage is so sore intangled as I thinke fewe benefices be at this day".[36] The eventual portrait of the king is decidedly simplistic,

> I am the Kyng that ruled all by lust,
>
> That forced not of vertue, right or lawe,

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[29] Baldwin, 73.
[30] Baldwin, 86.
[31] Baldwin, 91.
[32] Baldwin, 102.
[33] Here we may think of the 'multiplying glass' that it seems Bushy has in mind when he counsels Isabel, "Each substance of a grief hath twenty shadows, / Which shows like grief itself, but is not so. / For sorrow's eye, glazed with blinding tears, / Divides one thing entire to many objects,.." (II. ii. 14-17)
[34] Dramatic, in the sense that each man speaks his own part. Though I do not wish to engage in a discussion of the relative value of the various texts that might be sources, it is impossible to agree with Peter Ure, who is dismissive of *The Mirror for Magistrates* in his introduction to Shakespeare's play, "Shakespeare's view of Richard is of course a good deal more subtle and sympathetic than this grotesque rubbish,...and any of his audience who was thinking on the lines laid down in *The Mirror* may have had a surprise. There is not, I think, much indication that Shakespeare supplemented his other sources with any material facts from the very eclectic histories in *The Mirror*." (Ure, xli.)
[35] See Chapter One above, 24-9.
[36] Baldwin, 110.

But alway put false Flatterers most in trust,
Ensuing such as could my vices clawe:
By faithful counsayle passing not a strawe.
When pleasure pryckt, that thought I to be iust.
I set my minde, to feede, to spoyle, to lust,
Three meales a day could scarce content my mawe,
And all to augment my lecherous minde that must
To Venus pleasures alway be in awe.[37]

Baldwin's Richard is by his own admission "the Kyng that ruled all by lust," surrounded by flatterers, "alway put false Flatterers most in trust," and is characterized as gluttonous, "Three meales a day could scarce content my mawe". Perhaps if little else *The Mirror for Magistrates*, in its focus on sin and its use of the exemplum tradition, ought to refract our attention towards the borrowed rhetoric and symbolism of the penitential mirror-books described in Chapter One, and remind us of the seven deadly sins.[38]

Envy

The Duchess of Gloucester invokes the image of a tree with seven branches early on to represent the seven sons of Edward III in her argument with John of Gaunt, "Edward's seven sons, whereof thyself art one, / Were as seven vials of his sacred blood, / Or seven fair branches springing from one root." (I. ii. 11-13). Peter Ure suggests that the use of the tree imagery here suggests the family tree device. He

[37] Baldwin, 113.
[38] The order of the seven deadly sins usually runs, Pride, Envy, Wrath, Avarice, Sloth, Gluttony and Lechery. In discussing them below I have chosen rather to order them as suits the development of my argument. It should be remembered, however, that pride is ordinarily listed first because it is the root of all other sin.

cites the Tree of Jesse as the most common example,[39] but if a family tree is recalled then it is a family tree on which one of the branches may be Envy, for the Duchess concludes, "One flourishing branch…/…/ Is hack'd down,…/ By envy's hand, and murder's bloody axe." (I. ii. 18-21). A common device in the penitential literature is the representation of the seven deadly sins as seven branches on the tree of vice, (see fig. VII) such as is the central metaphor of the *Myrour to Lewde Men and Wymmen.* In this case Richard is taken to be Envy by the Duchess, but no member of the royal family may escape the implications of this imagery, if indeed Richard is a branch on the family tree.

Lechery

The portrait of the king in *The Mirror for Magistrates*, begins with a sin that is not one that we immediately associate with Shakespeare's Richard, "I am the Kyng that ruled all by lust",[40] but is alluded to by Bolingbroke in his accusation against Bushy and Greene,

> You have misled a prince, a royal king,
> A happy gentleman in blood and lineaments,
> By you unhappied and disfigured clean;
> You have in manner, with your sinful hours,
> Made a divorce betwixt his queen and him,
> Broke the possession of a royal bed,
> And stain'd the beauty of a fair queen's cheeks

[39] Ure (footnote, I. ii. 13-21).
[40] Baldwin, 113.

With tears, drawn from her eyes by your foul wrongs (III. i. 8-15)[41]

Although the general suggestion is that Richard is kept from his queen by his flatterers in feasting late into the night, the terms "divorce" and "stain'd" are more suggestive of lechery than gluttony. Bolingbroke's rhetoric may hint towards the fact that Isabel is his second wife, or indeed to the fact that historically Isabel was a child when she was married to Richard.[42] Nor is it necessarily Baldwin's *Mirror* alone that might have suggested the sin of lechery, Ure notes a similar reference in Holingshed, "…there reigned abundantlie the filthie sinne of leacherie and fornication, with abhominable adulterie, speciallie in the king, but most cheefelie in the prelacie…"[43] Bolingbroke's rhetoric notwithstanding it is the King and his flatterers' late feasting that is actually referred to.

Gluttony

The *Myrour to Lewde Men and Wymmen* describes the second branch of gluttony (one of the sins of the mouth), focussing on the misuse of time,

> Also, right as a man may synne in ouererliche etinge & drinkynge, right so he may synne in ouerlate soupers; wherfore þilke men & women þat vseþ to soupe late and longe to wake on þe nyght and waste þe tyme in ydelnes & vanitee, wast & nycete, late goþ to bedde & late aryseþ, þei synneþ in many maneres.

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[41] The phrase 'disfigur'd clean' is an unusual one. The sense is clearly, 'completely disfigured', but using the word clean suggests that what is left is like a blank, or smooth surface, suggesting, appropriately enough, a face erased. This is perhaps echoed a few lines later in the assertion that while Bolingbroke suffered banishment they have pawned his family lands and "[r]ac'd out [his] imprese, leaving [him] no sign, /…/ To show the world [he is] a gentleman." (III. i. 25-7)

[42] Aged seven when they married in 1396, (Saccio, 22) Shakespeare's queen in clearly more mature.

[43] Bullough, 409. cit. Ure, footnote p. 91.

> First for þei wasteþ the tyme in grete ryot & foly & turneþ the tyme a3enst kynde, þat is to seie þe nyght into þe day & þe day into the nyght: suche men God curseth by the prophetes mouth.[44]

These lines are most pertinent in the scene of Richard's return from Ireland,[45]

> So when this thief, this traitor, Bolingbroke,
> Who all this while hath revell'd in the night,
> Whilst we were wand'ring with the Antipodes,
> Shall see us rising in our throne the east,
> His treasons will sit blushing in his face,
> Not able to endure the sight of day,
> But self-affrighted tremble at his sin. (III. ii. 47-53)

Richard initially proclaims himself to be the sun to end Bolingbroke's night, but as the scene progresses and news of Bolingbroke's overwhelming success becomes clear to Richard he must begin to realize that it is not Bolingbroke who should worry about the punishment for his night-revels, but Richard's own sin which has turned "the tyme ayenst kynde, that is to seie the nyght into the day & the day into the nyght" almost directly echoed in Richard's final line of the scene, "From Richard's night, to Bolingbroke's fair day"(III. ii. 218).[46]

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[44] *A Myrour to Lewde Men and Wymmen*, 207.
[45] As of course they are in the general theme of time wasted and misused, that culminates in the "Jack o'the Clock" speech at the end of the play (V. v. 41-60).
[46] It may be worth noting, in relation to this image, the closing lines of Hall's passage on the exile of Bolingbroke, "As who saie that when he departed, the onely shelde, defence & comfort of the commen people was vadid and gone, as though the sunne had fallen out of the spere, [sic] or the moone had lapsed from her proper epicircle." (Bullough, 387)

If Bolingbroke seems to confuse the sins of lechery and gluttony in his rebuke to Richard's flatterers with the use of the words "divorce" and "stain'd" he does not do so without precedent. Also recalling the "sinful hours" of night-revellers the *Myrour to Lewde Men and Wymmen* uses a similarly mingled rhetoric to describe the first branch of gluttony;

> The firste branche is *ouertymeliche*, þat is whan a man for his *luste* wole noght abide þe *rightful tyme* of etynge & drinkyng. And þat is a foule manere in an hole man and comeþ of a grete *lecherous luste*, as doth a beest þat is wiþoute resoun; & so semeþ þat he is þat so doth.[47]

This gluttonous beast "wiþoute resoun" may also be recalled in Gaunt's rebuke, in his illness, of Richard's over-indulgence, "With eager feeding food doth choke the feeder; / Light vanity, insatiate cormorant, / Consuming means, soon preys upon itself." (II. i. 37-9)[48] It is not, however, essentially gluttony that Gaunt warns of, but rather avarice.

Avarice

When King Richard II is said to consume himself, he is glutting himself on the wealth of England and his body politic. This is never more apparent than when Ross, Northumberland and Willoughby are left alone to discuss the siezure of Bolingbroke's estates to provide for Richard's Irish wars,

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[47] *A Myrour to Lewde Men and Wymmen*, 206. My italics.
[48] A little later, and in opposition to the cormorant image, Gaunt compares him to a young pelican that is revived with its mother's blood. (II.i.126) The reference relates to Richard's part in his uncle Gloucester's murder.

Ross. The commons hath he pill'd with grievous taxes,

And quite lost their hearts. The nobles hath he fin'd

For ancient quarrels and quite lost their hearts.

Will. And daily new exactions are devis'd.

As blanks, benevolences, and I wot not what – (II. i. 246-50)

If Richard's avaricious actions have made him lose favour with some branches of the nobility, his inactions have also caused his realm to become polluted with less noble members of the state.

Sloth

The tree metaphor used by the Duchess of Gloucester (I. ii. 11-21) and central to the *Myrour to Lewde Men and Wymmen* is picked up more directly by Shakespeare in the famous Garden scene. Richard has failed to tend his kingdom and root out the flatterers of his court. The Gardener explains where Richard has let himself be tainted,

Gard. He that hath suffered this disordered spring

Hath now himself met with the fall of leaf.

The weeds which his broad-spreading leaves did shelter,

That seem'd in eating him to hold him up,

Are pluck'd up root and all by Bolingbroke -

I mean the Earl of Wiltshire, Bushy, Greene. (III. iv. 48-53)

Bolingbroke has plucked up the flatterers that surrounded Richard in his reign. The Gardener's assistant is surprised, "What, are they dead?" and the Gardener again calls attention to Richard's wastefulness,

Gard. They are; and Bolingbroke
Hath seiz'd the wasteful king. O, what pity is it
That he had not so trimm'd and dress'd his land
As we this garden! We at time of year
Do wound the bark, the skin of our fruit-trees,
Lest, being over-proud in sap and blood,
With too much riches it confound itself;
Had he done so to great and growing men,
They might have liv'd to bear, and he to taste
Their fruits of duty. Superfluous branches
We lop away, that bearing boughs may live;
Had he done so, himself had borne the crown,
Which waste of idle hours hath quite thrown down. (III. iv. 54-66)

Richard's trees have never been allowed to bear fruit; he has failed to attend to them. The sloth of this "wasteful king" has let the flatterers thrive in his court. His trees are covered with "[s]uperfluous branches" and leaves only, and may be compared to the great sin of flattery or 'losengrie' as we find it described in *A Myrour to Lewde Men and Wymmen.*

> For ye schal vnderstonde that a wikked, fayre spekynge tunge is the tree that oure Lord Ihesu Crist cursed for he fond theron no fruyt but alle leues. By leu[e]s may be vnderstonde evil wordes, for as yuel as it is to telle and nombre alle the leues of a tree, as yuel it is to telle and nombre the synnes that cometh of yuel tunge.[49]

This sin of flattery then is what has caused Richard to lose right orientation. For this sin is evil in the extreme in that not only is it a sin in itself, but it causes sin in others;

> þei þat vseþ [flattery] may be cleped þe deueles norices þat 3eueþ his children souke & fedeþ hem wiþ glosyng & flateryng & makeþ hem longe ligge in her synne; and suche enoynteþ þe wey to helle as it were wiþ swete hony for thei scholde þe hardiloker goo þerforth; as men þat wole cacche þe bere leyeþ hony in his wey where [þai] wole cacche him forto he falle in a put or he be war. Right so þese losengeres ledeþ men þorgh her losengrie into þe way of veynglorie whiche ledeþ euen to þe put of helle.[50]

It is noteworthy that flattery is here said to cause vainglory, a branch of pride, a sin that is no stranger to Richard.[51] Flattery may be seen also to completely deceive the

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[49] *A Myrour to Lewde Men and Wymmen,* 211. cf. Mark 11:12-25. Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* uses the same image of the tree in relation to flattery when Bosola says of the Cardinal and the Duke, "He, and his brother, are like Plum-trees (that grow crooked over standing-pooles): they are rich, and ore-laden with fruite, but none but Crowes, Pyes, and Catter-pillers feede on them: Could I be one of their flattring Panders, I would hang on their eares like a horse-leach, till I were full, and then droppe off". (*The Duchess of Malfi*, I. i. 48-52)

[50] *A Myrour to Lewde Men and Wymmen*, 213.

[51] Holingshed also notes the flattery of Richard's peers when he tells of York's discontent, "...he [York] considered that the glorie of the publike wealth of his countrie must needs decaie, by reason of the king his lacke of wit, and want of such as would (without flatterie) admonish him of his dutie". (Bullough, 395)

senses and judgment of the hearer, for though he may see and feel the truth, they lead him to believe only that which he hears from them;

> The þrid party of losengry is whan a losenger or a flaterer þorgh slye wordes and faire semblant makeþ a man wene þat he haue in himself many vertues whiche þat he haþ noght. And þerefore suche losengeres beþ cleped charmeres, for þei charme a man so sleyliche þorgh slygh wordes þat he leueþ more hem þan himself, & bettir troweþ þat he hyreþ þan þat he seeþ or feleþ.[52]

Perhaps this is also suggested by Bolingbroke in his rebuke of the flatterers who have "unhappied and disfigured" Richard "clean". (III. i. 10)[53] Having told us of the great sins of the mouth, gluttony and flattery the author explains that there is one thing that can defend us,

> And þus haue I tolde þe synnes þat longeþ to þe mouþ; and firste þe synne of glotony þat falleþ to þe þrote, and on þat oþer side þe synnes of wikked tunge and of þe ten branches þat comeþ þerof; whiche two synnes þe 3ifte of wisdom putteþ awey and settiþ in þat stede þe noble vertu of sobernesse and of temperance.[54]

The "3ifte of wisdom" is what can defend us from flattery. As we have seen Richard does not have that with which to defend himself from flattery.

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[52] *A Myrour to Lewde Men and Wymmen*, 213-4.
[53] See above, 67.
[54] *A Myrour to Lewde Men and Wymmen*, 221.

Wrath

Gaunt was Richard's best source of wisdom, but Richard responds with wrath when he ought to listen to the wisdom of his guidance, calling him "A lunatic lean-witted fool, / Presuming on an ague's privilege, / Darest with thy frozen admonition / Make pale our cheek, chasing the royal blood / With fury from his native residence." (II. i. 115-9) Gaunt rebukes his wrath, fashioning himself into a prophet figure traditional in Greek tragedy, like Cassandra,[55] capable only of curses and impotent prophecy;

> Methinks I am a prophet new inspir'd,
> And thus expiring do foretell of him:
> His rash fierce blaze of riot cannot last.
> For violent fires soon burn out themselves;
> Small showers last long, but sudden storms are short;
> He tires betimes that spurs too fast betimes; (II. i. 31-6)

The image of the fire consuming itself is a potent one that is used once more a few lines on, "England, that was wont to conquer others, / Hath made a shameful conquest of itself." (II. i. 65-6)

[55] Tiresias is another such figure, as in George Gascoygne and Francis Kinwelmershe's *Jocasta* (1566), whose prophecy is greeted with the accusation of treasonous deception. (III. i. 134-228) I will discuss this play at length in Chapter Five. All quotations from *Jocasta* are taken from J. W. Cunliffe, ed., *Early English Classical Tragedies* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1912).

Pride

At the foot of the tree of vice is pride, the first sin of Lucifer and the cause of all other sins, the "roote of alle wikkednes".[56] Though the play's frequent references to wasted and misused time have obvious suggestions of sloth, they also recall the second branch of pride as it is described by the author of the Myrour, "The secounde branche [of pride] is woodnes, þat is when a man spendith amys all þe tyme þat God haþ 3eve him boþe of 3ougþe & elde, of whiche tyme he mote 3elde rekenynge at þe day of dome."[57] This is a rather curious use of the term 'woodnes', meaning madness. It might seem a strange term to use as a heading for "a man [who] spendith amys all þe tyme þat God haþ 3eve him", but it is not without its more recent analogue. Death has said the same of Everyman, "Eueryman, thou arte mad[]! Thou hast thy wyttes fyue, / And here on erthe wyll not amende thy lyue; / For sodeynly I do come." (*Everyman*, 168-170) Richard, like Everyman, must come to the realization that his time in this life is almost at its end, and that he has wasted his rule and his life in the madness of sin.

Seven Deadly Sins

In the penitential literature, like the *Myrour to Lewde Men and Wymmen*, the seven deadly sins are listed and explained so that the reader may know what sins he is guilty of and how to avoid them in the future. Repentance and confession ought to follow. The conclusion of the Garden scene hints at this, as the gardener in pity for the departed queen says, "Here did she fall a tear; here in this place / I'll set a bank of rue, sour herb of grace. / Rue, even for ruth, here shortly shall be seen, / In the remembrance of a weeping queen." (III. iv. 104-7) Significantly, the gardener calls

[56] *A Myrour to Lewde Men and Wymmen*, 104.
[57] *A Myrour to Lewde Men and Wymmen*, 105.

rue the "herb of grace", so called because rue means repentance (coming from God's grace).[58] But he then strips the flower of that signification and replaces it with ruth, or pity. To draw attention to the repentance meaning of the flower by calling it "herb of grace," only to then replace it must signify the absence of repentance in Richard and his Queen.

The seven deadly sins are also often listed in Morality plays, to help the audience become aware of their sins, as in *Mundus et Infans*, where the world introduces Manhode (formerly known as Infans) to seven powerful earthly kings,

> One of them is the kynge of Pryde;
> The kynge of Enuy, doughty in dede;
> The kynge of Wrathe, that boldely wyll adyde,
> For mykyll is his myght;
> The kynge of Couetous is the fourt[h]e;
> The fyfte kynge he hyght Slouthe;
> The kynge of Glotony hath no iolyte
> There pouerte is pyght;
> Lechery is the seuenth kynge,
> All men in hym haue gret delytynge,...(*Mundus et Infans*, 170-181)

However, the protagonist of the morality play must remember always that life is lent to him only. As Conscyence says to Shame (formerly Manhode) "Men thynke not on the grete iugement / That the sely soule shall haue at the last; / But wolde God, all men wolde haue in mynde / Of the grete daye of dome, / How he shall gyue a grete

[58] See Ure, footnote, 123.

rekenynge / Of euyll dedes that he hath done." (*Mundus et Infans*, 727-732) Richard seems almost to become aware of his impending judgement as bad news arrives to him on his return from Ireland;

> Let's talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs,
> Make dust our paper, and with rainy eyes
> Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth.
> Let's choose executors and talk of wills.
> And yet not so – for what can we bequeath
> Save our deposed bodies to the ground?
> Our lands, our lives, and all, are Bolingbroke's,
> And nothing can we call our own but death;
> And that small model of the barren earth
> Which serves as paste and cover to our bones. (III. ii. 145-154)

This scene may remind us of the scene in *The Enterlude of Godly Queene Hester*, where the vice characters Pryde, Adulation and Ambytion bequeath their allegorical functions to Aman. (338-580) Pryde complains that Aman "woulde no man but hym self / Shoulde be proude in dede. / For as men say, all pryde he taketh away" (386-8) Adulation complains that "Aman doeth…//…take up al flatteres, and al crafty clatterers / That dwell fourtye myle aboute." (393-6) Ambytion, the legal clerk, complains that Aman "Handelles all thynge so / That every office and fee, what so ever it bee, / That maye bee sene and fonde: / By his wit he wyl it featche, and or it fal, he wil it catche, / That never commeth to the grounde." (489-93) What these vice characters have to bequeath to Aman are their allegorical functions, but having lost all

to Bolingbroke, all that Richard and his flatterers (being but men) can bequeath are their bones.

Having come to this realisation, that worldly things are fleeting, that death and judgement will soon come, the protagonist of a medieval moral allegory would repent his sinful life and prepare to die a good death. Richard is unable to do so.

Penance

After the pronouncement of their banishment, Bolingbroke turns the language of shrift[59] to Mowbray,

> *Bol.* Confess thy treasons ere thou fly the realm;
> Since thou hast far to go, bear not along
> The clogging burthen of a guilty soul.
> *Mow.* No, Bolingbroke, if ever I were traitor,
> My name be blotted from the book of life,
> And I from heaven banish'd as from hence! (I. iii. 198-203)

Mowbray has already pointed out in the opening scene that he has already confessed to the appropriate person, the king, and has been pardoned;

> Once did I lay an ambush for your life,
> A trespass that doth vex my grieved soul;
> But ere I last receiv'd the sacrament,

[59] "...dialogues that include such words as *absolve*, *repent*, *guilt*, *shame*, *grope*, *confess*, and *intent* force the reader to recall penance. Also important are words that denote the circumstances – who? what? where? why? how? – particularly if they are used together or are spoken by a character acting as a priest." Braswell, 70.

I did confess it, and exactly begg'd

Your grace's pardon, and I hope I had it. (I. i. 137-141)

The rhetoric here signifies on two levels; the clear intention is to suggest legal and capital 'treason', 'confession', and 'pardon'. However in drawing attention to 'the clogging burthen of a guilty soul', a 'vexed' and 'grieved soul', banishment from heaven and the receipt of the sacrament, Mowbray and Bolingbroke are also alluding to the doctrine of shrift. Mowbray shows himself to be aware that, in doctrinal terms, if he has not fulfilled his penitential duties his soul is in the direst peril. As Braswell explains "...if he [the penitent] did not confess, he was not eligible to receive the sacrament of the Eucharist. Thereupon, he was excommunicated and shunned by the faithful. Upon death, he was denied a Christian burial, which precluded future resurrection."[60] Furthermore, "[b]ecause penance was now a prerequisite for the Eucharist, the most important of the sacraments, its satisfactory performance was essential to the well-being of every Christian."[61] The sacrament that Mowbray refers to is the sacrament of the Eucharist. Without a full and clean confession at least once a year a parishioner was not allowed to receive the Eucharist. Mowbray has clearly made his confession and believes that as far as that sin is concerned the king is bound to consider him shriven. Though the king is confessed to in legal terms, Mowbray's rhetoric takes a more literal approach to him as God's anointed. Within this spiritual and confessional rhetoric he assumes the role of confessor figure.

The discussion between the Duchess of Gloucester and her brother in law John of Gaunt in the second scene makes explicit the problem of a corruptible man in the post of God's anointed representative. The Duchess questions Gaunt's capitulation in

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[60] Braswell, 27.
[61] Braswell, 29.

spite of the murder of his brother, "Ah, Gaunt, his blood was thine! that bed, that womb, / That mettle, that self mould, that fashioned thee / Made him a man". (I. ii. 22-4) But Gaunt explains the problem and again the rhetoric is distinctly spiritual though the immediate sense is legal,[62]

> *God's* is the quarrel – for *God's* substitute,
> His deputy *anointed* in His sight,
> Hath caus'd his death; the which if wrongfully,
> Let *heaven* revenge, for I may never lift
> An angry arm against His *minister*.[63] (II. i. 37-41)

In spiritual, doctrinal terms, when a sin cannot be addressed to the confessor / god's anointed, then the complaint must be made straight to God.[64] Richard should see this incident as a warning. By demanding an open confession from Norfolk in this early scene, Bolingbroke is already attempting to usurp Richard's role, legal and spiritual as confessor figure.

Richard toys with this rhetorical role and the image of himself as priest at the beginning of his abdication scene, "God save the king! Will no man say amen? / Am I both priest and clerk? well then, amen. / God save the king! although I be not he; / And yet, amen, if heaven do think him me." (IV. i. 172-5) He toys with the role of priest, but acknowledges the fact that Bolingbroke has wrested that role from him, and at the last refers to his divine right to that role. As he disrobes and relinquishes the tokens of his role as king, he grants one final absolution in his last act as rhetorical

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[62] Categorically legitimising Richard's claim to the role of confessor.
[63] My italics.
[64] "*Duch.* Where then, alas, may I complain myself? / *Gaunt.* To God, the widow's champion and defence." (I. ii. 42-3)

confessor figure, "With mine own tongue [I] deny my sacred state, / With mine own breath release all duteous oaths;…/…/…/ God pardon all oaths that are broke to me,…" (IV. i. 209-14) It is then that Richard is called on to confess. Richard having abdicated, Bolingbroke assumes the role and the rhetoric of confessor figure. Northumberland asks Richard to read the articles of his sin, "read / These accusations, and these grievous crimes / Committed by your person and your followers / Against the state and profit of this land; / That, by confessing them, the souls of men / May deem that you are worthily depos'd." (IV. i. 222-7) But Richard will not confess, rather he responds,

> Mine eyes are full of tears, I cannot see.
> And yet salt water blinds them not so much
> But they can see a sort of traitors here.
> Nay, if I turn mine eyes upon myself,
> I find myself a traitor with the rest.
> For I have given here my soul's consent
> T'undeck the pompous body of a king;
> Made glory base, and sovereignty a slave;
> Proud majesty a subject, state a peasant. (IV. i. 244-52)

He uses the language of confession and contrition. He looks inward, and is contrite, confesses treason against himself, but refuses to confess to the *legal* articles that Northumberland proposes, or to treason against the state. When Richard shatters the mirror, Bolingbroke, half mockingly and half to comfort him says, "The shadow of your sorrow hath destroy'd / The shadow of your face." (IV. i. 292-3) Richard's

response is a mockery of the appropriate role of Confessor, to help the penitent to look inward, and examine his soul, and to teach him how properly to express and display his contrition.

> 'Tis very true, my grief lies all within,
> And these external manners of lament
> Are merely shadows to the unseen grief
> That swells with silence in the tortur'd soul.
> There lies the substance. And I thank thee, king,
> For thy great bounty, that not only giv'st
> Me cause to wail, but teachest me the way
> How to lament the cause. (IV. i. 295-302)

Once he has completely wrested Richard's role from him, Bolingbroke settles more comfortably into that role. This is seen most effectively in the scene of Aumerle's confession. (V. iii. 23-144) Richard had failed to extract honest confession from his subjects Mowbray and Bolingbroke in the opening scenes, but Bolingbroke has no such problem. The rhetoric and staging of the scene make it very clear that Bolingbroke represents a confessor figure in a more than secular sense. It is the capital crime of treason that is at issue, but as Aumerle and both his parents kneel before the king, their language is of "prayers"[65] and with the pronoucement of his pardon, the Duchess calls Bolingbroke a "god on earth".[66] (V. iii. 134) In this scene, it

[65] In the space of sixty-five lines variations of 'prayer' are used twelve times. (V. iii. 80, 81, 95, 99, 101, 102 ["with heart and soul"], 105, 107, 108, 125, 143, 144)

[66] This is not an unusual description of a king, but is all the more significant in light of the rhetoric and staging. In his dedication to the Mirror for Magistrates, Baldwin writes, "Ye be all Gods, as many as haue in your charge any ministracion of Iustice". (Baldwin, 65)

is not the crime that is confessed, but the intention to commit it.[67] "The role of intention in the act of sinning was of primary concern", Braswell tells us. A mortal sin must be preceded by a period of reflection during which the sinner must understand that the act will be sinful. "This period of reflection precedes all grave sins and is sinful within itself, for one may be judged according to those sins he planned to carry out whether he actually performed them or not. The awareness of the individual, therefore, is essential to the sinful act."[68] It may be argued that York's determination to betray his son is what drives Aumerle to confess, and that therefore it is not a true confession.[69] But even though he is brought to confession by fear, his confession is not in doctrinal terms invalidated as a result. Ideally, the penitent will be brought to confession by his own conscience and sorrow at the act, but this is not entirely necessary.

> Therefore, true sorrow can originate from other sources as well: fear of hell or of the loss of heaven; disgust with the filth of sin. These motives, provided that they are not accompanied by any love of sin and that the sinner sincerely desires a reconciliation with God, can also lead to absolution. This imperfect contrition, or "attrition," must be accompanied by works of charity.[70]

There is no immediate sentence or penance. There are no prescribed 'works of charity', or enforced penitential acts imposed on Aumerle, but throughout the play the standard act of penance has been pilgrimage. This is in keeping with the time setting of the play;

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[67] Indeed the distinction is Bolingbroke's first concern, "Intended or committed, was this fault?" (V. iii. 32)
[68] Braswell, 30.
[69] This is York's objection, "Fear, and not love, begets his penitence." (V. iii. 54)
[70] Braswell, 33-4.

> It is no mere accident that the poet [Chaucer] chose the pilgrimage framework to serve as a moral touchstone for his poem [*The Canterbury Tales*] and to alert his worldly-wise audience at the court of Richard II of more penitential motifs to come. The pilgrimage had been a favourite form of satisfaction for sin since the sixth century. Throughout the years, it gained steadily in popularity, and in the fourteenth century, when travelling conditions had greatly improved, it reached a zenith. There can be little doubt that many of Chaucer's audience had undertaken such a journey themselves.[71]

Pilgrimage is a penance enforced, or recommended for many of the characters in the play. Richard banishes Mowbray and Bolingbroke. Gaunt recommends that Bolingbroke think of his banishment as six years travel, but he responds, "My heart will sigh when I miscall it so, / Which finds it an inforced pilgrimage." (I. iii. 262-4) Mowbray turns his banishment into the harshest form of pilgrimage by joining the crusades. As Richard's resolve gives way and it has become apparent that he has no strong enough defence he fancies that he will give up his role as king and make a pilgrimage,

> What must the king do now? Must he submit?
> The king shall do it. Must he be depos'd?
> The king shall be contented. Must he lose
> The name of king? a God's name, let it go.
> I'll give my jewels for a set of beads;

[71] Braswell, 103.

My gorgeous palace for a hermitage;

My gay apparel for an almsman's gown;

My figur'd goblets for a dish of wood;

My sceptre for a palmer's walking staff;

My subjects for a pair of carved saints,

And my large kingdom for a little grave,

A little little grave, an obscure grave, (III. iii. 143-154)

Bolingbroke imposes a harsher travel on Exton for the murder of Richard, "The guilt of conscience take thou for thy labour, / But neither my good word nor princely favour; / With Cain go wander thorough shades of night, / And never show thy head by day nor light." (V. vi. 41-4) These words echo those used by Mowbray on his banishment, "Then thus I turn me from my country's light, / To dwell in solemn shades of endless night." (I. iii. 176-7)

The play concludes with Bolingbroke imposing confession and penance on himself for his part in the death of Richard,

Lords, I protest my soul is full of woe

That blood should sprinkle me to make me grow.

Come mourn with me for what I do lament,

And put on sullen black incontinent.

I'll make a voyage to the Holy Land,

To wash this blood off from my guilty hand.

March sadly after; grace my mournings here

In weeping after this untimely bier. (V. vi. 45-52)

The sprinkled blood that makes him grow recalls the image of the pelican (II.i.126) and draws an iconographic link between these final pronouncements of banishment on Exton and his own intention to 'voyage to the Holy Land' and the purgation of sins. Traditionally the pelican represents the crucifixion and cleansing of humanity's sins.[72] The two are thus rhetorically connected as a kind of penitential act, Exton's is permanent, the king's temporary.

Mowbray's importance in relation to the kings of the play must be mentioned at this point. Richard's proposed pilgrimage is never more than a fancy. Bolingbroke's intention to make a pilgrimage and crusade will be frustrated by the outbreak of domestic strife.[73] Mowbray by contrast turns his banishment into a continual and ultimately fatal pilgrimage, without ever declaring any intention to do so. We must remember that Mowbray's initial reaction to his banishment was to view it as something of a subjective nightmare. He sees his banishment in terms of his imminent dislocation from the community that language has allowed him access to,

> The language I have learnt these forty years,
> My native English, now I must forgo,
> And now my tongue's use is to me no more...
>
> . . . . .
>
> Within my mouth you have engaol'd my tongue,

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[72] "The pelican feeding her young from her own breast and the phoenix rising from the flames,...are both Christian symbols, of the Crucifixion and Eucharist and the Resurrection, and may be seen at Belchamp Walter, Essex." E. Clive Rouse. *Medieval Wall Paintings* (Dyfed: Shire Publications, 1968, 1991) 48.

[73] The intention to engage in a crusade is reiterated (in a historically inaccurate manner) in the opening scene of *1Henry IV*. (I. i. 18-33) However news of the Welsh assault on Mortimer and the men of Herefordshire instantly halts the planned pilgrimage, "It seems then that the tidings of this broil / Brake off our business for the Holy Land." (I. i. 47-8) All references to *1Henry IV* are to the Arden edition. William Shakespeare, *King Henry IV, part 1*, ed. David Scott Kastan, The Arden Shakespeare (London: Thomson Learning, 2002).

Doubly portcullis'd with my teeth and lips,

And dull unfeeling barren ignorance

Is made my gaoler to attend on me. (I. iii. 159-61 & 166-9)

If language is what gives access to society, names are a large part of what make individuals identifiable. As we have seen, for many of the characters in the play, names are more than merely a means of identification, but are almost seen to actually be their identity. Mowbray too makes this evident with reference to the composite nature of man as body and soul, and it seems that for him soul and reputation are interchangeable. Made from dust or clay, the earthly body is nothing without a name.

The purest treasure mortal times afford

Is spotless reputation – that away,

Men are but gilded loam, or painted clay.

A jewel in a ten-times barr'd-up chest

Is a bold spirit in a loyal breast. (I. i. 177-181)

The initial antipathy that Mowbray has to his banishment is turned to the reconstruction of that good name under the banner of pilgrimage and crusade. His penance (to fight in the crusades) serves to cleanse completely the name that has been tarnished by banishment. The Bishop of Carlisle recounts his honourable end;

Many a time hath banish'd Norfolk fought

For Jesu Christ in glorious Christian field,

Streaming the ensign of the Christian cross

Against black Pagans, Turks, and Saracens;

And, toil'd with works of war, retir'd himself

To Italy; and there at Venice gave

His body to that pleasant country's earth,

And *his pure soul* unto his captain Christ,

Under whose colours he had fought so long. (IV. i. 92-100)[74]

Even Bolingbroke takes part in the praise of his sometime enemy by concluding, "Sweet peace conduct his sweet soul to the bosom / Of good old Abraham!" (IV. i. 103-4)[75] Bolingbroke's words ought perhaps to ring out as deception and duplicity, but in the world of the court it is rather prudent public relations.

Dissembling / Self-fashioning

If Bolingbroke is at times duplicitous, Richard by contrast is sometimes all too honest. The scene of Richard's return from Ireland shows him oscillating wildly between despair and proud resilience. At times he seems ready to grasp the dual nature of his kingship, calling on the very land to come to his defence, "Feed not thy sovereign's foe, my gentle earth, /…/ This earth shall have a feeling, and these stones / Prove armed soldiers ere her native king / Shall falter under foul rebellion's arms." (III. ii. 12 & 24-6) But as news reaches him of his forces fled amidst his rumoured death, he begins to waver, feeling the great loss to his body politic as a human body feels the loss of blood, "But now the blood of twenty thousand men / Did triumph in my face, and they are fled; And till so much blood thither come again, / Have I not reason to look pale and dead?" (III. ii. 74-9) Aumerle tries to bolster his spirit,

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[74] My italics.
[75] Cf. Luke, 16:19-22.

"Comfort, my liege, remember who you are." Richard's response is perhaps more honest than a king should allow, "I had forgot myself, am I not king?" (III. ii. 82-4) Richard is defined and redefined repeatedly throughout the play, sometimes by flatterers who would have him a great king,[76] sometimes by kinsmen turned enemies who see him as a man tainted by flattery,[77] sometimes by those who see him as a madman.[78] All the while Richard must struggle with himself to find definition. He does not assert his identity in the face of adversity the way other renaissance characters do,[79] he cannot say "I am Richard still!" the way that the Duchess of Malfi or Mark Anthony do. Even Thomas of Woodstock can say "I speak my heart, I am Plain Thomas still." (*Woodstock*, IV. ii. 153) though he is about to be taken by force to Calais and his death. Richard by contrast admits to forgetting himself. Part of Richard's problem undoubtedly lies in the fact that he is not just one man, but as king represents an entire kingdom. As Francis Bacon writes in his essay, 'Of Wisdome for a Mans selfe', "in a Soveraigne / Prince...*Themselves* are not onely *Themselves*; But their Good and Evill, is at the perill of the Publique Fortune."[80] Thus when Aumerle says, "my *liege*, remember who you are", Richard ought to remember himself as the King, in the plural ('the royal we' as it were). But Richard responds in the singular, "*I* had forgot *my*self, am *I* not king?"

In the time of Richard II's reign,[81] the problem of choosing and maintaining a public image should not have been such an issue. As in the morality plays Richard, as

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[76] e.g. Carlisle's insistence that his God-given right to the crown, gives him the power to maintain it, "Fear not, my lord. That Power that made you king / Hath power to keep you king in spite of all." (III. ii. 27-8)
[77] e.g. Northumberland, "The king is not himself, but basely led / By flatterers". (II. i. 241-2)
[78] e.g. Northumberland, "Sorrow and grief of heart / Makes him speak fondly like a frantic man;..." (III. iii. 184-5)
[79] See above, 50.
[80] Bacon, 73-4.
[81] 1377-1399.

a man, is made up of a soul and a body.[82] Correctly, Richard's soul (that part of humankind that is divine) should strive to emulate Christ's example. Richard's body, or flesh would be subjected to earthly temptations. The only choice for the fourteenth-century human is whether or not to succumb to these earthly, base temptations, and having sinned to confess and reform or to continue in sin and risk damnation. This dichotomy, of soul and flesh, is still acknowledged in the renaissance, but there are now further complications. Now there is an expectation (most particularly for rulers)[83] to contrive and present a self for public show in the way that Bolingbroke publicly mourns the fate of his enemy Mowbray. This necessity and expectation, requires a certain amount of simulation and dissimulation in order to maintain an outward show and equilibrium within.[84] Other parties within the play show themselves capable of using these courtly necessities to sound and test each other in a way that Richard is

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[82] e.g. "I haue my composycyon / Of a body and of a soull, of condycyon contrarye". (*Mankind*, 189-90) see pages 8-14 above.

[83] Machiavelli writes, "[A Prince] ought to entertain the people with festivals and spectacles at convenient seasons of the year; and as every city is divided into guilds or into societies, he ought to hold such bodies in esteem, and associate with them sometimes, and show himself an example of courtesy and liberality; nevertheless, always maintaining the majesty of his rank, for this he must never consent to abate in anything." Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. W. K. Marriot, intro. Herbert Butterfield (London: Dent & Sons, 1958) 127-8.

Erasmus provides a cynical parody of the standard pageantry and symbolism of rule, in *Praise of Folly* (1512),

> ...we feigne now the image of some one prince, suche as not seeldome hath been, a man (for example) vnskilled in the lawes, enemie in a maner to the commen weale, geuin onely to his peculier profite, addicted all to voluptuousnesse, an hater of learnyng, an hater of libertee, and of the trueth, caryng nothyng lesse than for the aduauncement of his countrey, but rather appliyng all thynges to his owne pleasure and commoditee. And now (on gods name) geue hym a chayne about his necke, for token that all vertues shoulde agreablie be enchayned in hym: geue hym also a crowne frette with perle and stone, in signe he ought to excelle others in all princely vertues: than a sceptre in his hand betokennyng iustice with an vpright mynde on all sydes: lastly a Robe of purpre, whiche signifieth zeale and feruent affection towarde his subiectes: This maner apparaile (I saie) if that prince shulde duely conferre with his liuyng, I wene he wold be ashamed to weare it, fearyng lest some fine expositor myght tourne all his pompe and solemnesse of royall robes into a derision: namely whan he hath no maner part of a prince in hym, sauyng onely the clothing.

Desiderius Erasmus, *The Praise of Folie*, trans. Thomas Chaloner [1549], ed. Clarence H. Miller, Early English Text Society (London: OUP, 1965) 93-4.

[84] "Thus even in the Renaissance (especially during the sixteenth century) *there appeared what we may call the 'incognito', with two different sorts of content and purpose*. The offensive incognito was an active dissembler, toying with others in order to achieve its goals; the defensive incognito was not a dissembler or a hypocrite but sought, by barricading the self, to prevent others from toying with it." Heller, 209. See Chapter One above, 15-19.

not;[85] he is unable to distinguish between honesty and flattery. This ability to sound the true nature of others,[86] requires us first to have an adequate knowledge of ourselves, but Richard never shows himself capable of grasping a persona, or maintaining a consistent identity.[87]

This necessity to dissemble in order to prosper and survive in court life is at the heart of Richard II's problem. Chapter One discussed what Heller refers to as 'Bacon's two principles of defensive dissimulation': "The first: without a certain amount of dissimulation one cannot defend one's life and individuality."[88] In his failure to maintain the level of dissimulation and detached show that are required to project a strong ruling image and in his failure to 'test' Bolingbroke and his other followers, Richard fails to see and deal with the approach of danger. All too late Richard comes to realise that he has also fallen foul of Bacon's second principle, "if dissembling turns into a person's regular behaviour, if it becomes hypocrisy, then that person is lost once again, for he loses what is most important, his moral individuality."[89] Richard's courtly duty to dissemble, to continually 'show' for the court, (albeit a show that he cannot convincingly maintain) has made him lose "what

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[85] e.g. Ross is able to confidently encourage Northumberland to speak openly. "Be confident to speak, Northumberland: / We three are but thyself, and, speaking so, / Thy words are but as thoughts". (II. i. 274-6)

[86] This is what Hamlet catches Guildenstern attempting to do after the 'mouse-trap' play. It seems that Guildenstern is perhaps not very good at it, and that it is a device that Hamlet finds unpleasant to say the least,

> Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me. You would play upon me, you seem to know my stops, you would pluck out the heart of my mystery, you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass; and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ, yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe? (*Hamlet*, III. ii. 354-61)

[87] Not that consistency is always the key. In fact, it is Bolingbroke's flexibility that makes him such a force in the play. The difference is control, Bolingbroke controls the manipulation of his identity, Richard is manipulated. Bolingbroke is flexible, Richard is malleable.

[88] Heller, 210. The principle is most clearly articulated in Bacon, in two lines, "For the Discovery, of a Mans Selfe, by the Tracts of his Countenance, is a great Weaknesse, and Betraying;" (Bacon, 21) and "…no man can be secret, exept he give himselfe a little Scope of Dissimulation; which is, as it were, but the Skirts or Traine of Secrecy." (Bacon, 22)

[89] Heller, 210. Bacon writes, "…a generall Custome of *Simulation*…is a Vice, rising, either of a natural Falsenesse, or Fearefulnesse; Or of a Minde, that hath some maine Faults; which because a man must / needs disguise, it maketh him practice *Simulation*, in other things, lest his Hand should be out of ure." (Bacon, 22)

is most important, his moral individuality", his soul, his 'self'.[90] His self-image has become so entangled with his body politic that the loss of his crown seems to him the loss of his self.

When Richard and Bolingbroke meet in act three, Richard's entrance on the battlements might be his moment of glory, all eyes turned towards him;

North. See, see, King Richard doth himself appear,
As doth the blushing discontented sun
From out the fiery portal of the East,
When he perceives the envious clouds are bent
To dim his glory and to stain the track
Of his bright passage to the occident.
York. Yet looks he like a king. Behold, his eye,
As bright as is the eagle's, lightens forth
Controlling majesty; alack, alack for woe
That any harm should stain so fair a show!
Rich. [*To North.*] We are amaz'd, and thus long have we stood
To watch the fearful bending of thy knee,
Because we thought ourself thy lawful king (III. iii. 62-74)[91]

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[90] Heller, 210.

[91] The sun image is transformed a little later, when Richard's vain attempt to assert his authority has failed, "Down, down I come, like glist'ring Phaeton, / Wanting the manage of unruly jades." (III. iii. 178-9) Phaeton stole his father Appollo's sun-chariot, but was unable to control the horses, and only narrowly avoided destroying the earth by steering too close to it. The story is told in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (c.7AD) (I. 750-79 & II. 1-400). Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, I-VIII, vol. 1, trans. Frank Justus Miller, Loeb Classical Library (London: Heinemann, 1916, 1977). Interestingly, this runs close to a chastisement that Woodstock makes to Richard and his flatterers in *Thomas of Woodstock*,

Shall England that so long was governèd
By grave experience, of white-headed age,
Be subject now to rash unskilfull boys?
Then force the sun run backward to the east,
Lay Atlas' burden on a pigmy's back,
Appoint the sea his times to ebb and flow
And that as easily may be done as this. (*Woodstock*, II. ii. 147-53)

However, even at this moment when Richard comes closest to claiming the kind of identity required of a king all rhetoric informs against him. York seems to enthuse, and yet Richard only 'looks' to him 'like a king'. It is too obviously a show for their benefit. Richard seems to assert himself for once, (using the plurals 'we' and 'ourself') and yet he can only say he 'thought' himself Bolingbroke's 'king'. He cannot be sure anymore.

This scene sees a shift, from beginning to end, of Richard's mode of referring to himself. His initial lines in the scene are in the plural, "*We* are amaz'd, and thus long have *we* stood / To watch the fearful bending of thy knee, / Because *we* thought *ourself* thy lawful king". (III. iii. 72) This does not last though, and he soon becomes singular, "my head" (III. iii. 89), "My precious crown" (III. iii. 90), "my land". (III. iii. 92) In an aside to Aumerle he seems to remember his plurality, "*We* do debase *ourselves*, cousin, do *we* not, / To look so poorly, and to speak so fair?" (III. iii. 127-8) In these lines he shows himself to be aware that he is performing, but also that he is unable to carry the performance. He is dissembling, but is not in full control. As he begins to despair again, he slips once more into the singular, "O that *I* were as great / As is *my* grief, or lesser than *my* name! / Or that *I* could forget what *I* have been! / Or not remember what *I* must be now!" (III. iii. 136-9) Richard then proceeds to rhetorically undo himself further, beginning to refer to himself in the third person, "What must *the king* do now? Must *he* submit? / *The king* shall do it. Must *he* be depos'd? *The king* shall be contented. Must *he* lose / The name of king?" (III. iii. 143-6) He has effectively begun to step back (as Richard) and detach himself from the show that is King Richard II. His dual nature has begun to come apart, as Richard is unable to maintain the unity of the 'king's two bodies.' After this unnaming, (which takes place both in the rhetorical device, saying he is losing "the name of king", and

in a linguistic ploy that removes the way that the king refers to himself, i.e. "we") Richard ceases to refer to himself in the plural, and adds one final indignity by once again referring to himself in the third person, but no longer as "the king" (that role has now been usurped by Bolingbroke), but as "Richard"; "What says King Bolingbroke? Will his Majesty / Give *Richard* leave to live till *Richard* die?" (III. iii. 173-4) The separation is complete. Richard, unable to maintain the spectacle that is the King, rhetorically steps out of the mantle and hands it to Bolingbroke. Richard is now alone.

In his request for a mirror at the last, he is both exposing the effect of this regular (if ineffectual) dissembling on his 'individuality', and also recognising that his 'role' as king is over. Richard is now ready to 'see' himself again in the mirror. He is no longer the plural king, but a singular self. Or at least this is what he expects, until he is shown a mirror that does not reflect what he feels it ought to.

A Mirror and a Book for the Magistrate

The two symbols of subjectivity discussed in Chapter One, the book and the mirror[92] are merged in this abdication scene, when Richard, awaiting the arrival of the mirror says, "I'll read enough / When I do see the very book indeed / Where all my sins are writ, and that's myself." (IV. i. 273-5)[93] But like Hoccleve, he discovers that his reflection does not match his self-image. Hoccleve uses a mirror to change his face to match his mood, to match his self to the image reflected. Richard takes a more direct approach; instead of trying to change his facial expression he changes the mirror. He smashes it. Peter Ure understands the shattering of the mirror to be an act

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[92] See above, 20-29.

[93] It would be very tempting to see this reference as pointing specifically to either *The Mirror for Magistrates* or to *A Myrour to Lewde Men and Wymmen*, where Richard's sins are indeed written, but it is more likely that the reference is to the negative exempla mirror-book tradition in a more general way. Nonetheless, the debt to this rhetoric and symbolism of this tradition has not, to my knowledge, been suggested before.

of symbolic violence by Richard against himself, "Repudiation of the past self may also be a mere destruction of the self, unless the penitent has the power to contrive a new being. There is no sign that Richard possesses this power."[94] Ure's description of Richard as penitent is inspired. Richard has been called upon to confess, and although he has seemingly refused to confess to Bolingbroke, what Richard does is to destroy the image of his former sinful self. Hillman also grasps this moment as the crucial one, "A single broken mirror, however, actually becomes many - a fact that Richard himself makes hard to miss: 'For there it is, crack'd in an hundred shivers'" [IV. i. 289].[95] When Richard first sees the image in the mirror what he sees is a single unified image of himself, but Richard has not been able to maintain the unity of the king's two bodies. This is why when he sees the image he exclaims, "O flatt'ring glass, / Like to my followers in prosperity, / Thou dost beguile me." (IV. i. 279-281) Richard's flatterers have attempted to persuade him throughout the play that he has the entire power of the body politic in his control. But he has been unable to maintain the unity of the realm and of his two bodies, and under Bolingbroke's intervention his realm has come apart, and with it so too has his composite identity. A "hundred shivers" do not reflect a hundred Richards, but a hundred shattered pieces of a dismantled ruler and a divided kingdom.

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[94] Ure, lxxxiii. This shattering of the self image seems to be figured by Ure as an act of violence against the self. This adumbrates a similar scene in *The Duchess of Malfi* where the Duke Ferdinand falls upon and attacks his own shadow. (*Duchess of Malfi*, V. ii. 31-40) Indeed at this very moment Richard and Bolingbroke discuss shadows in the same terms; Richard shatters the mirror and says, "...there it is, crack'd in an hundred shivers. / Mark, silent king, the moral of this sport - / How soon my sorrow hath destroy'd my face." Bolingbroke corrects him, "The shadow of your sorrow hath destroy'd / The shadow of your face." And Richard responds,

> Say that again.
> The shadow of my sorrow? ha! let's see -
> 'Tis very true, my grief lies all within,
> And these external manners of lament
> Are merely shadows to the unseen grief
> That swells with silence in the tortur'd soul. (IV. i. 289-298)

[95] Hillman, 109. I have altered the act, scene, line references to conform to the edition that I am using.

At this stage, though Richard seems to have refused to confess, he has become remarkably like the penitential character, as Braswell describes him, in the process of reform,

> The truly contrite individual will discover his own lack of self-worth, and his self-esteem, which has constituted his personality from the beginning, will be shattered. His grandiose ideas about his own importance in the universe will be replaced by the Christian assertion that man is a lowly, inglorious creature who should sorrow perpetually for his misdeeds rather than strut upon the stage of life. It is not merely chance that most of the sinners are guilty of pride. Like the Poenitens, they must be brought low before any radical character change can take place. So their "confessors" methodically attack each of those attributes the sinners are proudest of and reduce them to nothing. This is the way the penitent acquires self-knowledge.[96]

At this point Braswell says that the work must either end or the reformed penitent must "disappear from the work." Once aligned with the will of God, he is no longer interesting as a character.[97] As Ure puts it Richard is unable to "contrive a new being". Both are in a way correct, King Richard II has left the stage, has disappeared, but Richard has still one more scene. Richard, alone, stripped bare of titles and pomp, remains to question whether or not he has any other existence outside of his former role as king.

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[96] Braswell, 69-70.
[97] Braswell, 70.

For the medieval sinner the way to come to self-knowledge is to make a full and open shrift. Richard has refused to confess to Bolingbroke, but he has nonetheless gone through some of the procedures of penance. He sheds tears, expresses sorrow for his actions and engages in a public show of self-negation. Richard does not vanish, though. As he sits alone in gaol he begins to re-establish an identity. When the penitent has effaced his former sinful self, he must endeavour to recreate himself in the image of Christ, to follow the ultimate exempla. Richard begins at the beginning, Genesis,

> My brain I'll prove the female to my soul,
> My soul the father, and these two beget
> A generation of still-breeding thoughts,
> And these same thoughts people this little world,
> In humours like the people of this world; (V. v. 6-10)

He begins creation once more within himself, his soul becomes Adam, his brain becomes Eve, and soon enough he has recreated the whole of humanity within himself, he is Everyman again. But this world, repopulated with his thoughts, the product of his brain, cannot be a happy one, "For no thought is contented" and though he has within him the "better sort…/…thoughts of things divine" that cite the word of Christ, "'Come, little ones'", he also has contrary thoughts that point to seeming contradictions, "'It is as hard to come as for a camel / To thread the postern of a small needle's eye'". (V. v. 11-17) Worse still, he has more courtly thoughts, "tending to ambition" (V. v. 18) and other thoughts "tending to content", that "flatter themselves"

(V. v. 23) and as evolution continues in his internal genesis he realises that his world must ultimately fail, for it is the product of his ethereal soul and his material brain. His earth-bound brain cannot forget the court, and consequently he cannot forget Bolingbroke,

> Thus play I in one person many people,
> And none contented. Sometimes am I king,
> Then treasons make me wish myself a beggar,
> And so I am. Then crushing penury
> Persuades me I was better when a king;
> Then am I king'd again, and by and by
> Think that I am unking'd by Bolingbroke,
> And straight am nothing. (V. v. 31-8)

Though he begins to refashion himself in a Christian genesis, time, succession and determinism drive the attempt to his inevitable deposition and impending death. His ambitious soul, the initial 'father' Adam, strives for majesty, but in reproducing with his corruptible, bodily brain, 'the female' Eve, the union causes treason (against God), beggary, and expulsion from the heavenly court of Eden. His thoughts prove his downfall, as the initial sin in Eden has been the first of the many sins of mankind. Both lead back to this point of deposition, the actual deposition of King Richard II that has just occurred in the play and the mental one that is now taking place in Richard's brain. Both have been caused by sin. Adam and Eve ate from the fruit of the forbidden tree and Richard has been guilty of the madness of sin. His 'follies' have fought against his 'self' (I. ii. 182); he has talked "idly" (III. iii. 170-1); "Sorrow and

grief of heart / [have made] him speak fondly like a frantic man." (III. iv. 184-5); he has undone himself (IV. i. 202), but Richard has never at any stage been quite mad enough to be simply mad. He does not "stampe", "stare", "loke all abowtt!" He does not "rent", "rawe" and run "wode!" (*Shearmen and Tailors' Play*, 779 & 781) Herod is mad and wicked. Richard is not. But Richard is guilty of "woodnes, þat is when a man spendith amys all þe tyme þat God haþ 3eve him".[98] Richard like Adam has been tempted to vice by flattering tongues and his time of reckoning is upon him.

Time has been a huge factor throughout the play, and as a strain of music is heard he proceeds to envisage himself as part of time's elaborate clock,

> Ha, ha! keep time – how sour sweet music is
> When time is broke and no proportion kept!
> So is it in the music of men's lives.
> And here have I the daintiness of ear
> To check time broke in a disordered string;
> But for the concord of my state and time,
> Had not an ear to hear my true time broke:
> I wasted time, and now doth time waste me;
> For now hath time made me his numb'ring clock;
> My thoughts are minutes, and with sighs they jar
> Their watches on unto mine eyes, the outward watch,
> Whereto my finger, like a dial's point,
> Is pointing still, in cleansing them from tears.
> Now sir, the sound that tells what hour it is

[98] *A Myrour to Lewde Men and Wymmen*, 105.

> Are clamorous groans which strike upon my heart,
> Which is the bell – so sighs, and tears, and groans,
> Show minutes, times, and hours. But my time
> Runs posting on in Bolingbroke's proud joy,
> While I stand fooling here, his Jack of the clock. (V. v. 42-60)

In this description of himself as a part of Time's elaborate clock Richard may recall Timothie Bright's attempt to reconcile the coexistence of the soul and the body in humankind. This is a natural progression from the two elements that have made up his thoughts, that is, his soul and his brain. Bright explains that through the complexity of the body, "one right and straight motion" of the soul's inspiration causes all the complex and diverse motions of the human body,

> We see it euident in automaticall instrumentes, as clockes, watches, and larums, howe one right and straight motion, through the aptnesse of the first wheele, not only causeth circular motion in the same, but in diuerse others also: and not only so, but distinct in pace, and time of motion: some wheeles passing swifter then other some, by diuerse rases: nowe to these deuises, some other instrument added, as hammer, and bell, not only another right motion springeth therof, as the stroke of the hammer, but sound also oft repeated, and deliuered it at certaine times by equall pauses; and that either larume or houres according as the partes of the clocke are framed. To these if yet moreouer a directorie hand be added; this first, and simple, and right motion weight or straine, shall seeme not only to be author of deliberate sound, & to counterfet voyce, but also to point with the finger as much as it hath declared by sound.

> Besides these we see yet a third motion with reciprocation in the ballance of the clocke. So many actions diuerse in kinde rise from one simple first motion, by reason of variety of ioynts in one engine. If to these you adde what wit can deuise, you may finde all the motion of heauen with his planets counterfetted, in a small modill, with distinction of time & season, as in the course of the heauenly bodies.[99]

Bright figures the human body as a clock, moved by "one right and straight motion" of the soul ("breath of life…inspired from God"[100]). Richard's speech may recall this piece from *A Treatise of Melancholy*,[101] but as Richard speaks it becomes evident this body does not represent Richard's body, but rather the body politic. He was once the head of that body, but, as such, Richard had failed to keep time in the body politic. He had failed to hear the 'disordered spring' that jarred his rule. If this were an allegorical drama Richard would have been led to mend his ways, to confess his sins and reform, to set the clock aright. This is, however, rather a fall of kings tragedy, more in the manner of the *Mirror for Magistrates* than the *Myrour to Lewde Men and Wymmen*. So it is that Richard has simply become a smaller less crucial element (the ornamental jack) part of the clock, and now the workings of the clock madden him, "This music mads me. Let it sound no more; / For though it have holp mad men to their wits, / In me it seems it will make wise men mad." (V. v. 61-3.) The music 'mads' him because the musicians seem to him to be unable to keep time. The truth of the matter is that Richard is the one who was unable to keep time. He wasted his time in rule and he has failed to keep that rule and hence the authority that the regent has over time.

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[99] Bright, 67-8.
[100] Bright, 37.
[101] It is my contention that it does. Shakespeare will use this imagery again in *Hamlet* as I will illustrate in Chapter Four. I do not believe this debt has been previously recorded.

Chapter 3: To Define True Madness

In a search of the contemporary renaissance medical literature, we find a distinct lack of texts dealing directly with madness as the main topic. There are various 'anatomies,'[1] and 'treatises,'[2] and 'discourses'[3] on other subjects, but there is no *Anatomy of Madness*, no *Treatise on Madness*, and no *Discourse Concerning Madness*. This, however, does not mean that we can know nothing of madness in the period. A number of texts write about elements of madness that relate to their actual chosen topic.[4] There are four texts that prove to be more useful than any of the others. Timothy Bright's *A Treatise of Melancholie* (1586); M. Andreas Laurentius'

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[1] i.e. Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (Oxford, 1621); Simion Grahame, *The Anatomie of Humors* (London, 1609); Thomas Rogers, *A Philosophicall Discourse, Entituled, the Anatomie of the Minde* (London, 1576); Thomas Vicary, *The Anatomie of the Bodie of Man* (London, 1548).

[2] i.e. Timothy Bright, *A Treatise of Melancholie* (London, 1586).

[3] i.e. M. Andreas Laurentius, *A Discourse of the Preservation of Sight: of Melancholike Diseases; of Rheumes, and of Old Age* (London, 1599); Edward Jorden, *A Brief Discourse of a Disease Called the Suffocation of the Mother* (London, 1603); Henoch Clapham, *An Epistle Discoursing Upon the Pestilence* (London, 1603).

[4] Laurentius', Bright's and Burton's main topic is melanancholy, but each author must deal with madness at various stages in his text, where it is caused by or related to melancholy. e.g. "...madnes is caused of an humour, as blacke as that which causeth melacholie, for the humour called blacke choler, is altogether blacke and glistning like pitch, and therefore can make blacke the spirits and braine, as well as the other. But we see it falleth out, that mad men are nothing fearefull, but rather bolde and furious, not taking acknowledgement of any danger, as appeareth in their headlong casting of themselues into the deuouring fire, and vpon the murtherous knife." (Laurentius, 90); "...both wayes hit or misse, he is distracted so long as his Ambition lasts, hee can looke for no other but anxiety and care, discontent & griefe in the meane time, madnesse it selfe, or violent death in the end." (Burton, vol. 1, 282); "...The dayly experience of phrensies, madnesse, lunasies, and melancholy cured by this heauenly gift of God, [i.e. reason]..." (Bright, 'The Epistle Dedicatorie'. There are no page numbers to 'The Epistle Dedicatorie'.) Boorde's stated purpose is to recommend a healthy diet, but he takes the time at a number of stages to make recommendations for the treatment of madness, e.g. "There is no man the which have any of the kinds of madness but they ought to be kept in safeguard, for divers inconvenience that may fall,...I do advertise every man the which is mad, or lunatic, or frantic or demoniac, to be kept in safe guard in some close house or chamber, where there is little light...And see that the mad man have no girdle, except it be a weak list of cloth (to prevent) hurting or killing him self." (Boorde, 51-52) Wright's main purpose is to explain the passions, but he must deal with madness when discussing passions that overwhelm reason. e.g. "He that should see Hercules raging, Orestes trembling, Cain ranging, Amnon pining, Dido consuming, Archimedes running naked would little doubt that Passions mightily change and alter the quiet temper and disposition of the Mind." (Wright, 141)

A Discourse of the Preservation of Sight: of Melancholike Diseases; of Rheumes, and of Old Age (1599); Thomas Wright's *The Passions of the Mind in General* (1601); and Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621). I have taken these texts to be exemplary of the 'medico-scientific' literature of the early-modern period, being the best known to modern readers. There is much written in these texts (and others) that refers specifically to madness. In the fourth chapter, I will argue that *Hamlet* may in some way be seen to serve as an *Anatomy of Madness*. I will show that the play engages the mode of discourse used by the medico-scientific texts abundant in the early-modern period to explore the condition of madness.

These medico-scientific treatises that come closest to dealing with madness share a certain set of features.[5] The first common element will be referred to hereafter as 'the excellencie of man'.[6] It is standard procedure in such a medico-scientific text to include a passage commending the most marvellous of God's creations.[7] The passage most often cited as the source for Hamlet's "quintessence of dust" speech, (II. ii. 303-9) is to be found in Timothy Bright's *Treatise of Melancholie*. Some critics have found that the character of Hamlet is indebted to Bright's description of a

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[5] There are many elements that these treatises have in common. Some of these commonalities may be seen in two or three of the texts only, but the five particular traits I have selected to focus on are generally present in the medical texts. They are 1. The wonder of God's creation and in particular his most excellent creation: man. 2. The nature of the soul. 3. Causes. 4. Cures or treatments. 5. A diversion on old age. A text without each of these traits is the exception. When these common features are compared to *Hamlet* in the next chapter it will become evident that the play engages this mode of discourse by observing these same procedures in setting up its investigation of madness.

[6] This phrase is taken from Bright's 'The Epistle Dedicatorie'.

[7] The relevant passage in Bright is in 'The Epistle Dedicatorie' (see below); in Burton it is the opening lines of the *Anatomy* proper (after introductory material) under the subsection heading 'Mans Excellency, Fall, Miseries, Infirmities, The causes of them' (Burton, vol. 1, 121); in Laurentius it is also at the opening of the section on melancholy (being the second discourse in a tripartite work on sight, melancholy and old age) under the sub-heading, 'That man is a diuine and politike creature, endued with three severall noble powers, as Imagination, Reason and Memorie'. (Laurentius, 72)

melancholic.[8] Though the evidence certainly suggests that Shakespeare made use of the *Treatise*, I am not convinced that Hamlet's character is modelled on Bright's description of a natural melancholic, but that his melancholy characteristics are caused by his situation.

Though the order inevitably varies, as the subject and the focus of each text is different, these standard tropes exist in almost all of these tracts. The commendation of man and the excellence of his mind is more often than not the opening chapter of such a treatise. In Timothy Bright's *Treatise of Melancholie* (1586), the corresponding passage is to be found in the dedicatory epistle.[9] A few phrases are of particular importance. The first concerns the excellence of the mind, "Of all other practise of phisick, that parte most commendeth the excellency of the noble facultie,...the instrument of reason, the braine"; the second, the excellence of man, "...the excellencie of man appeareth aboue all other creatures:..."; the third concerns the power of the mind to devise cures for the infirmities of man, "...The dayly experience of phrensies, madnesse, lunasies, and melancholy cured by this heauenly gift of God,..."; and finally a matter to please the learned students of philosophy,

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[8] Aubrey C. Kail alludes to this, saying, "There have been suggestions that Shakespeare had some acquaintance with Bright's *Treatise*, and that he drew on the information in this book to create his psychological delineations." He does not, however, provide a source for this 'suggestion'. (Kail, 39) Irving I. Edgar cites a number of critics who make this argument including, Richard Leoning, Dr. Curt Deunscheit, William Blades and Mary I. O'Sullivan. (Irving I. Edgar, *Shakespeare, Medicine and Psychiatry: An Historical Study in Criticism and Interpretation* (London: Vision Press, 1971) 141.) Mary I. O'Sullivan writes, "That Shakespeare used Dr. Timothy Bright's *A treatise of melancholie* was suggested in 1894 by Richard Loening in support of his theory of Hamlet's physiological melancholy; and in 1899, apparently from independent observation, by Dowden in his edition of Hamlet (p.77)." (Mary I. O'Sullivan, 'Hamlet and Dr. Timothy Bright,' *PMLA*, XLI, 667-79.) Carol Falvo Heffernan also credits O'Sullivan with illuminating Hamlet's temperament with a comparison of the two texts. (Carol Falvo Heffernan, *The Melancholy Muse: Chaucer, Shakespeare and Early Medicine*, (Pittsburgh: Duquesne UP, 1995) 122.) However, she is ready to point out Hardin Craig's reluctance to credit Bright as a source in his introduction to the Facsimile Text Society edition of the *Treatise*. (Heffernan, 125) Craig writes, "In *Hamlet* and in the sonnets [sic] there are a number of fairly close verbal echoes. But the question is not easily solved, since a good deal of the phraseology is current medical language and since the knowledge which Shakespeare possessed was also available in a number of other works". Bright, introduction, xvi.

[9] See Appendix I for 'The Epistle Dedicatorie' in full.

"discourse of reason".[10] We may recall that the use of reason to combat the madness of sin is a standard feature of the penitential literature (and indeed the literature that arises from that tradition) investigated in the first chapter. The use of reason to combat the madness of sin is not dismissed in the more scientific texts of this period, but rather the element of sin becomes less important (though it is still ever present) as reason is used to combat madness of any kind.

In M. Andreas Laurentius' *Discourse of Melancholike Diseases*[11] the section on the 'excellence of man' begins with the author citing Abdalas the Saracen who has praised the adaptability and flexibility of man. Man is like a Proteus or a chameleon he says.[12] The wise men of Egypt he says call him "a mortall God", and Mercury, he says, calls him "fellow companion with the Spirits aboue."[13] Pliny, he tells us, calls him "the ape or puppie of nature, the counterfeit of the whole world, the abridgement of the great world."[14] Perhaps most significantly of all, he tells us that the "Diuines" (he does not specify), "haue called him, euery maner of creature, because he hath intercourse with euery maner of creature; he hath a being, as haue the stones; life, as haue the plants; and sence or feeling as the beasts; and vnderstanding, as haue the Angels." He concludes,

> In briefe, this is the chiefe and principall of Gods worke, and the most noble of all other creatures. But this his excellencie, whereby he is more glorious then

[10] Bright, 'The Epistle Dedicatorie'. I will discuss the significance of Shakespeare's use of the phrase, 'discourse of reason' in *Hamlet* (I. ii. 150) and in *Troilus and Cressida* (II. ii. 116) in the next chapter. All references to *Troilus and Cressida* are to the Arden edition. William Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, ed. David Bevington, The Arden Shakespeare (London: Thomas Nelson, 1998).

[11] The full title is *A Discourse of the Preservation of Sight: of Melancholike Diseases; of Rheumes, and of Old Age*. As there are clearly four parts to the work, and the section on melancholic diseases is the part that is of most interest to this thesis I have abbreviated the title.

[12] Laurentius, 72. See Appendix II for this section of Laurentius in full.

[13] Laurentius, 72.

[14] Laurentius, 73.

> all the rest, is not in respect of his bodie, although the shape thereof bee more exquisite, better tempered, and of more comely proportion then any other thing in the world,...This noblenes (I say) commeth not of the bodie, which consisteth of matter and is corruptible: ...It is the soule alone whereby he is so renowmed, being a forme altogether celestiall and diuine, not taking his originall from the effectuall working of any matter, as that of plants and beasts doth.[15]

Robert Burton has a suspiciously similar opening to his *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), and indeed he repeats many of the same quotations. "Man," he explains, is "the most excellent, and noble creature of the World". Pliny, he tells us, calls him the "sole Commander and Governour of all the creatures in it [the world] ... farre surpassing all the rest, not in body only, but in soule; *Imaginis Imago*, created to Gods owne *Image*, to that immortall and incorporeall substance, with all the faculties and powers belonging unto it;..."[16] Burton's passage, however, discusses more the previous excellence of man, explaining that "this most noble Creature,...O pittifull change! is fallen...and so much obscured by his fall that (some few reliques excepted) he is inferiour to a beast."[17] This change he tells us comes from Adam's original sin, and humankind's continued sinfulness.[18] In this the relationship to the medieval understanding of sin as madness is most apparent. The corruption of man, and man's mind, does not come from the soul, but from the earthly body.

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[15] Laurentius, 73. Laurentius' italics.
[16] Burton, vol. 1, 121. Burton's italics.
[17] Burton, vol. 1, 122.
[18] See Appendix III for a fuller quotation of this opening passage of Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*.

Thomas Wright's *The Passions of the Mind in General*[19] does not fit the pattern as well as the other treatises in regard to 'the excellencie of man'. In his introductory passages, rather than commending the marvel of God's creation, he takes a more patriotic stand and defends the reputation of Englishmen against apparent accusations of stupidity from other nations, namely Italians and Spaniards.[20] He names a number of leading British intellectuals concluding, "we may glory in this, that our Country hath afforded most of the masters, and of the chiefest Wits".[21] In place of an introduction commending God's creation, man, he chooses to recommend an intimate knowledge of the passions in order to avoid the sins that taint God's creation. Each particular nation he has seen to excel, as it were, in one particular vice; "...for as I have seen by experience," he tells us "there is no Nation in Europe that hath not some extraordinary affection either in pride, anger, lust, inconstancy, gluttony, drunkenness, sloth, or such like passion."[22] Wright tells us of the dangers of passions "I myself have seen some, Gentlemen by blood and Noblemen by birth, yet so appassionate in affections that their company was to most men intolerable;..."[23] He promotes the understanding of passions saying, "in fine, every man may by this come

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[19] First published in 1601. A manuscript copy seems to have been circulated as early as 1597. In his introduction, Newbold cites a letter Wright sent to Anthony Bacon, dated 17th October 1597, discussing matters prior to his imprisonment in the Gatehouse prison in September 1597 (for his open Catholicism), "I had finished a book of the passions of the mind wherein I have declared the nature, number, causes, effects, and proprieties [sic] of all the passions and affections, how they may be discovered, what prudence and policy may be used in them." (Newbold's Introduction. Wright, 12) Wright proceeds to explain that the book was in the possession of the Bishop of London at this time and requests Bacon's intercession to secure its return. Further, in the preliminary letter to the 1601 printing Wright explains that he had assumed that it had been neglected during his confinement (of varying degrees between 1595-1603, from house arrest with the Dean of Westminster to the Clink) only to find on his eventual release that it had been "taken up, entertained, and dispersed abroad" during his imprisonment. (Wright, 79)

[20] See Appendix IV for the full text of the opening chapter of Wright's *Passions of the Mind in General*.

[21] Wright, 81.

[22] Wright, 92. It is worth noting here that Wright himself owes something to the penitential literature, discussed in the first chapter, in the preliminary listing of the seven deadly sins (though of course they have been somewhat emended; envy replaced by inconstancy; and avarice replaced by drunkenness), to illustrate to the reader what excesses must be avoided. See Chapter One above, 24-9.

[23] Wright, 92.

to a knowledge of himself, which ought to be preferred before all treasures and riches."[24]

Of the Soul

The next common element in the medico-scientific literature is a discussion of the soul, for as Laurentius tells us, the "noblenes" of man does not come from the body, "which consisteth of matter and is corruptible", but from the soul, "being a forme altogether celestiall and diuine".[25] The crux of this section revolves around an age-old philosophical problem whose origin is to be found in a difference of opinion between the Stoic (following Aristotle and Zeno) understanding of the physical pneuma (or spirit) a subtle, fiery element that moves the body and Platonic dualism, which holds that the soul is imprisoned in the body.[26] That the rational soul is that which distinguishes men from plants and animals is commonly held to be true by all the medical treatise writers. Burton says that man is "the most excellent, and noble creature of the World,...farre surpassing all the rest, not in body only, but in soule".[27] Of the soul, Laurentius says, "It is created of God, and commeth downe from heauen to gouerne the bodie, so soone as the members thereof are made: the effects thereof doe sufficiently proue vnto vs, the worthines of the same."[28] Wright says "The natural Philosopher contemplating the natures of men and beasts' sensitive souls (for Passions are common to both) consequently enter into discourse about the actions and operations thereof;..."[29] Wright's statement that the sensitive soul is common to both

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[24] Wright, 89. The debt to the penitential literature is perhaps most pronounced at this point. In the penitential literature, searching and discovering his sins brings the reader to knowledge of himself, in Wright (having briefly listed the sins) searching and discovering his passions brings the reader to knowledge of himself.
[25] Laurentius, 73.
[26] See Harvey, 4-6.
[27] Burton, vol. 1, 121. Burton's italics.
[28] Laurentius, 73.
[29] Wright, 90.

men and beast, implies that the rational soul is not. Thus, though Wright does not directly state it, it is implicit that he believes a rational soul to distinguish men from beasts. Without the rational soul, the use of reason, man would be no better than a beast. Bright writes,

> For the instrument of reason, the braine, being either not of well tempered substance: or disordered in his parts: all exercise of wisedome is hindred: and where once vnderstanding lodged, wit, memorie, & quick conceit, kept residence, and the excellencie of man appeareth aboue all other creatures: there vnconsiderate iudgement, simplicitie, & foolishnes make their seat, and as it were dispossessing reason, of her watch tower, subiecteth the nature of man vnto the annoyance of infinite calamities, that force vpon vs in the course of this fraile life, & baseth it farre vnder the condition of brute beasts.[30]

The disagreement arises over whether the soul of man is mortal or whether it survives after the body dies. There are several positions on this issue.[31] Very basically the early medical treatise writers, (i.e. Galen and Avicenna) follow the Stoics in believing the soul to be substantial.[32] This stands in direct contrast to the Christian belief in an immortal soul. It is thus no wonder that the soul becomes an issue of debate in the

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[30] Bright, 'The Epistle Dedicatorie'.

[31] E. Ruth Harvey gives a detailed account of the varying arguments. Harvey, 31-48. Harvey explains that the Stoics and the medical followers believed in a *pneuma*, which was a physical substance, which equated to a soul. (Harvey, 31) In contrast Plato and Christian thought distinguished between body and soul, the soul being "a divine and deathless incorporeal substance". (Harvey, 32) The differences of opinion then that arise when Christian writers engage the matter of the soul in medical treatises is inevitable when this is taken into account.

[32] As Harvey says, "The Stoic view was based on the proposition that everything which moves something else is material. A living body contains something which moves it, something which is not present when the body is lifeless, but which endows a living body with sensation and movement, and therefore this moving element must, in the Stoic view, be material…Thus Stoicism was at the outset sharply differentiated from Platonic dualism: to the idea of man as an immaterial soul imprisoned in a material body [as] opposed [to] the monist conception of man all made of elements, with his life itself, his breath and mover, as a subtler element." (Harvey, 5)

writing of medical treatises by Christians in the renaissance. Hardin Craig tells us that "Bright was a student of divinity as well as medicine. He gave up the cure of bodies for the cure of souls, and on June 8, 1591, we find him installed as rector of Methley, in Yorkshire."[33] Thomas Wright was a Roman Catholic priest, jailed for his religious publications.[34] Laurentius had two brothers in the Roman Catholic Church also.[35] It is also probable that Robert Burton was a cleric at the church of St. Thomas's in a suburb of Oxford.[36] As Christians they were bound by their faith (Protestant or Catholic) to believe in the soul's immortality, but as physicians they had to reconcile this with the medical theories of the time that had until recently accounted the soul a substantial thing.[37]

Another common question arising with regard to the soul involves the idea that the human mind (and hence the soul) was incapable of correctly contemplating

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[33] Craig, intro., xii-xiii.

[34] Cf. Newbold's 'General Introduction' to the *Passions*. (Wright, 3-50)

[35] Sanford V. Lackey writes, in his introduction to the text, "He had considerable influence at court [of Henry IV of France] and was able to advance the fortunes of his family, two of his brothers being made archbishops." (Laurentius, vii)

[36] In his Introduction to Burton's *Anatomy*, J. B. Bamborough writes, "In 1616 he was nominated by the Dean and Chapter to the college living of St. Thomas's, in what was then a western suburb of Oxford. Presumably he discharged the duties of parish priest himself; unfortunately all the records have been lost, and the only evidence of his curacy is his family arms, the three talbots' heads, placed in 1621 on the south porch of the church." (Bamborough, vol. 1, xiv-xv.)

[37] Bright proposes to address this mistake of the earlier physicians, saying of medicine's success in curing people, "The notable fruit & successe of which art in that kinde, hath caused some to iudge more basely of the soule, then agreeth with pietie or nature, & haue accompted all maner affection thereof, to be subiect to the phisicians hand, not considering herein any thing diuine, and aboue the ordinarie euents, and naturall course of thinges: but haue esteemed the vertues them selues, yea religion, no other thing but as the body hath ben tempered, and on the other side, vice, prophanenesse, & neglect of religion and honestie, to haue bene nought else but a fault of humour…I haue layd open howe the bodie, and the corporall things affect the soule, & how the body is affected of it againe:…" (Bright, 'Dedicatorie Epistle'). Laurentius likewise explains, speaking of the reason for the quality of man, "This nobleness (I say) commeth not of the bodie, which consisteth of matter and is corruptible: no, the extract thereof, or that which is indeede excellent therein, is further fetcht: It is the soule alone whereby he is so renowmed, being a forme altogether celestiall and diuine, not taking his originall from the effectual working of any matter, as that of plants and beasts doth." (Laurentius, 73) Robert Burton discusses the argument with reference to previous medical authorities including Hippocrates, Galen and Avicenna (Burton, vol. 1, 155-7) and concludes, with reference to the three parts of the soul (the vegetative, the sensitive and the rational), "all three Faculties make one *Soule*, which is inorganicall of it selfe, although it be in all parts, and incorporeall, using their Organs, and working by them." (Burton, vol. 1, 157)

celestial beings.[38] Laurentius believed this to be incorrect, "…[man] hath a being, as haue the stones; life, as haue the plants; and sence or feeling as the beasts; and vnderstanding, as haue the Angels."[39] As E. Ruth Harvey more clearly explains, "The soul is that part of man which connects him with the beings on the next rank above him in the universe: it is through this that he is related to the immaterial and intellectual creation."[40] Discussing the work of Nemesius, Harvey says, "In his chapter on the soul he takes his discussion from the old pagans: Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics; and he constructs from their arguments a synthesis which is in accord with Christian doctrine, and with the Neo-Platonic atmosphere of his time."[41] If our souls are immortal, then they are not bounded by the physical limitations of the brain, so that the soul may indeed be capable of contemplation on a higher level.

Bright observes that in cases of a humoral aberration it is the brain and not the soul that is at fault in madness,

> By that which hitherto hath bin shewed, it appeareth these humours only affect the organ and corporall part, & nothing come nigh the mind and soule: which in the meane time of these stormes and tempests of passion, these delusions, feares, false terrours, and poeticall fictions of the braine, sitteth quiet and still, nothing altered in facultie, or any part of that diuine and impa[r]tible disposition, which it obtaineth by the excellencie of creation: no more then the

[38] In his subsection, 'A Digression of the Nature of Spirits, bad Angels or Devils, and how they cause Melancholy' Burton, with reference to various historical thinkers, refers to the problem of the nature of spirits as being "…according to *Postellus, full of controversie and ambiguity*: beyond the reach of humane capacitie, *fateor excedere vires intentionis meæ*, saith *Austin* I confesse I am not able to understand it, *finitum de infinito non potest statuere*, wee can sooner determine with *Tully de nat*: [sic] *deorum, quid non sint, quam quid sint*, our subtile Schoolemen, *Cardans*, *Scaligers*, profound *Thomistes*, *Fracastoriana & Ferneliana acies*, are weake, drye, obscure, defective in these misteries, and all our quickest wits, as an Owles eyes at the sunnes light, waxe dull, and are not sufficient to apprehend them,…" (Burton, vol. 1, 174)

[39] Laurentius, 73.

[40] Harvey, 31.

[41] Harvey, 31.

> Sunne is moued in the heauens, or receaueth in it selfe an obscuritie, when stormes arise, thunder, lightning, and cloudes of darkenesse, and boysterous whirlewindes, seeme here belowe to mixe heauen and earth together, and to make confusion in the course and frame of nature.[42]

However, if the person's individual identity is withheld by the soul when it is released from the body then a madness that is the fault of the soul and not the body may also extend beyond the grave. This then becomes a fate potentially worse than death. These are the main questions concerning the soul that are dealt with in the treatises. There is, of course, an almost infinite number of questions that might be asked of the soul. Thomas Wright says "I could propound above a hundred questions about the Soul and the body…Some I will set down…"[43] When he gets to one hundred and ten, he thinks of twenty more questions about other related things, and having set these down he eventually admits, "These Questions I might propound, but God knows who was, is, or ever shall be able to answer them exactly."[44]

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[42] Bright, 115. OED offers two definitions for 'impatible', "1. Incapable of suffering, or of sustaining injury" and "2. Intolerable". Though the first of these definitions would make sense in this case, it nonetheless seems more likely that it is rather 'impartible' that is meant. OED gives 'impartible' as meaning "Incapable of being parted or divided; not subject to partition or division into parts; indivisible." The early listings for the use of 'impartible' further suggest a common subject and line of reference, *The Middle English Dictionary* credits John Trevisa, *On the Properties of Things, John Trevisa's translation of Bartholomæus Anglicus De Proprietatibus Rerum* (1398) as the first use. (*The Middle English Dictionary*, ed. Sherman M. Kuhn, assoc. ed. John Reidy (Michigan: Michigan UP, 1968).) OED lists none other than Bright (1586) himself (see Bright, 60) as the first use and Bishop Reynolds' (1640) *Passions* (xxxii. 394) as the second. Given the common medical / spiritual references for 'impartible' I am inclined to see it as an error in the text. Writing in 1586 Bright is unusually adamant that the Copernican theory of a heliocentric universe (expounded in Copernicus' *About the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres* in 1543) is correct. The Church in Rome burned Giordano Bruno at the stake for the belief in 1600 and imprisoned Galileo in 1633. cf. Ina Taylor, *Galileo: A Beginner's Guide* (London: Hodder & Staunton, 2003) 24 & 63-65.

[43] Wright, 303.

[44] Wright, 308. In matters of the soul there can eventually be only one authority, God.

Causes

Having dealt with the excellence of man, and the nature of the soul the treatises on melancholy deal next with the causes of it. This generally makes up the main body of the texts.[45] In like manner we must next investigate what the causes of madness are. Violent fears may cause madness. Robert Burton has a subsection dedicated to 'Terrors and Affrights Causes of Melancholy.'[46] This section is characteristically anecdotal, and curiously enough, most tales end in madness and loss of wits rather than plain melancholy. Such terrors, he tells us, "are most pernitious and violent, and so suddainely alter the whole temperature of the body, move the soule and spirits, strike such a deepe impression, that the parties can never bee recovered,..."[47]

Timothy Bright explains how melancholy may be the cause of such violent fears. Melancholy "which is the grossest part of the blood,"[48] is generally processed by the spleen. However, he explains, when it is present in too great abundance vapours rise from the spleen to the heart, and from there to the brain. The heart, being the seat of the emotions, is caused such annoyance by these vapours that the emotion it begins to produce is fear. This in itself is not the end of the problem, but is compounded when the vapours reach the brain. There, the cloud of vapours

> counterfetteth terible [sic] obiectes to the fantasie, and polluting both the substance, and spirits of the brayne, causeth it without externall occasion, to forge monstrous fictions, and terrible to the conceite, which the iudgement taking as they are presented by the disordered instrument, deliuer ouer to the

[45] Much of this material is anecdotal, and may owe something to the tradition of the *exempla* of religious literature.
[46] Burton, vol. 1, 333-6
[47] Burton, vol. 1, 333.
[48] Bright, 102.

> hart, which hath no iudgement of discretion in it self, but giuing credite to the mistaken report of the braine, breaketh out into that inordinate passion, against reason.[49]

Bright refers in this passage to two of the three most substantial parts of the brain which are common to humans and animals, the fantasy (also called imagination or fancy) and the judgement (common sense). The third of these three 'inward wits', or 'internal senses' is memory.[50] These make up what Bright refers to as the "substance" of the brain, the substantial part as opposed to the subtler part, the "spirits". When imagination or fancy (lodged in the first cell of the brain) is allowed to wander without the controlling force of reason (lodged in the second cell) it is madness.[51] In humans, the animal spirits are what maintain the communion between the body and the brain,[52] and between the brain the rational soul.[53] Both the "substance" and the "spirits", Bright tells us, are polluted in this extreme melancholy, and the closing phrase is of utmost importance. This is not natural melancholy. This is insanity. The heart breaks out in an inordinate passion, *against reason.* Neither is this necessarily a temporary bout of insanity, although it may well be. For Bright tells us that when such vapours persist in affecting the brain, the very tissue of the brain may become tainted. This happens, he tells us,

> ...when the substance of the brayne hath plentifully drunke of that spleneticke

[49] Bright, 102.
[50] See Babb, 3 and Harvey, 2.
[51] "[The brayne] is distinguid in thre celles and dennes; for the brayne hath thre hollowgh places that physicians clepen *ventriculos* 'smale wombes'. In the formest cell and wombe is ymaginacioun conformed and imaad; in the middle, resoun; in the hindemest, recordacioun and mynde." John Trevisa, *On the Properties of Things, John Trevisa's translation of Bartholomæus Anglicus De Proprietatibus Rerum*, vol 1, gen. ed. M. C. Seymour (Oxford: OUP, 1975). 'Book V' edited by Ralph Hanna III, 173.
[52] See Babb, 8.
[53] See Harvey, 5.

> fogge, whereby his nature is become of the same quality, and the pure and bright spirites so defiled, and eclipsed, that their indifferency alike to all sensible thinges, is now drawen to a partiality, and inclination, as by melancholy they are inforced....this taking hold of the brayne by processe of time giueth it an habite of depraued conceite, whereby it fancieth not according to truth: but as the nature of that humour leadeth it altogether gastley and fearefull. This causeth not only phantasticall apparitions wrought hy [sic][54] apprehension only of common sense, but fantasie, an other parte of internall sense compoundeth, and forgeth disguised shapes, which giue great terror vnto the heart, and cause it with the liuely spirit to hide it selfe as well as it can, by contraction in all partes, from those counterfet goblins, which the brayne dispossessed of right discerning, fayneth vnto the heart.[55]

Reason is that which differentiates man from beast.[56] To the extent that we have the use of reason we are superior to animals, but if our reason fails us or we deliberately ignore it we are as beasts, and we are mad. The substantial part of the brain and the animal spirits can become permanently damaged by melancholy, causing a permanent or recurring madness. So too, Bright goes on to explain, is the third of the three inward wits corrupted by the fearful extremes of this severe melancholy.

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[54] This is presumably meant to be 'by'.

[55] Bright, 103-4.

[56] Explaining the different facets of the soul, Lawrence Babb says, "Animals as well as men are endowed with sensitive souls. Man is distinguished from all other created beings by the possession of a rational soul, located in the brain, which is capable of distinguishing good from evil (not merely pleasure from pain), of contemplating itself, and from knowing God. The rational soul is the 'self.'" (Babb, 3) "*Phantasie*, or Imagination,...In men it is subject and governed by *Reason*, or at least should be; but in Brutes it hath no superior, & is *Ratio Brutorum*, all the reason they have." (Burton, 152)

> Neither only is common sense, and fantasie thus ouertaken with delusion, but memory also recieueth a wound therewith: which disableth it both to keepe in memory, and to record those thinges, whereof it tooke some custody before this passion, and after, therewith are defaced. For as the common sense and fantasie, which doe offer vnto the memory to lay vp, deliuer but fables in stead of true report, and those tragicall that dismay all the sensible frame of our bodies, so eyther is the memory wholly distract by importunity of those doubtes and feares, that it neglecteth the custody of other store: or else it recordeth and apprehendeth only such as by this importunity is thrust thereupon nothing but darkenes, perill, doubt, frightes, and whatsoeuer the harte of man most doth abhor.[57]

It is important to note that this is not the case for ordinary melancholy, that is melancholy by disposition, in which case memory is rather stronger than in someone of another humoral disposition.

> Againe almost all the senses standing in a kinde of passiue nature, a substance cold and drie, and by consequent hard, is not so meete thereto; which as it serueth well to retaine that which is once ingrauen, so like adamant it keepeth, in comparison of other tempers, that which once it hath receaued: whereby as they are vnfit to commit readily to memorie, so retaine they that is committed in surer custodie.[58]

[57] Bright, 104.
[58] Bright, 129-130.

Thomas Wright affirms that this extremity of fear may carry the danger that it will lead to madness, as he believes all extreme passions to be likewise dangerous. He explains,

> For if peace be a concord or consort of our sensual soul with reason, if then the Mind be quiet when the Will ruled by Prudence overruleth, moderateth, and governeth Passions, questionless then the soul is troubled when Passions arise up and oppose themselves against Reason. Inordinate affections (as experience teacheth) many ways disquiet the Mind and trouble the peaceable state of this petty commonweal of our soul,...[59]

Of all the passions, romantic love may be the most dangerous. This particular variation of mental ailment takes up one whole volume of Robert Burton's three-volume *Anatomy*.[60] Laurentius divides melancholy into three types; ordinary melancholy, love melancholy and windy melancholy. He devotes two chapters out of fifteen to love melancholy.[61] He paints a rather black picture. Once love at first sight has taken place,

> [t]hen is all spoyled, the man is quite vndone and cast away, the sences are wandring to and fro, vp and downe, reason is confounded, the imagination corrupted, the talke fond and sencelesse; the sillie louing worme cannot any more look vpon any thing but his idol:...[62]

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[59] Wright, 141.
[60] Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy,* vol. 2, eds. Thomas C. Faulkner, Nicholas K. Kiessling & Rhonda Blair, intro. J. B. Bamborough (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).
[61] Laurentius, 117-124.
[62] Laurentius, 118.

But love at first sight is not for everyone. There are certain prerequisites for it to take place. Lawrence Babb explains, "Love at first sight is a natural thing if one is physically predisposed."[63] It is the sanguine temperament, he tells us, that is most likely to be infected by this condition,

> Erotic love, since it is a species of desire, is a warm and moist (or sanguine) passion. The person who by nature or by accident has a high proportion of blood in his system is predisposed to love just as he is predisposed in general to warm and moist passions, to other kinds of desire and to joy and hope.[64]

However, the humours are affected by diet and lifestyle.

> Even though one is not sanguine by nature, he may develop a sanguine, and therefore an amorous, disposition. Anything which engenders blood may be an antecedent cause of love. Other warm and moist passions may prepare the way for love.[65]

Naturally the opposite is also true, so that one may become melancholy if circumstances cause the appropriate changes to the emotions and body of the individual in question. Babb explains that "idleness and ease result in an abundancy of blood which in an active person would be consumed in exercise."[66] This is precisely

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[63] Babb, 132. For this section on 'The Lover's Malady in Medical Theory' Babb draws mainly on Burton's *Anatomy*, Laurentius' *Discourse* and Jacques Ferrand's *Erotomania.*
[64] Babb, 129.
[65] Babb, 130.
[66] Babb, 131.

why the ruling classes were more commonly afflicted with love at first sight.[67] The sexual seed of man was considered to be blood heated to such a temperature that it turned white. For this reason Babb tells us, "When blood abounds in a body, seed also abounds. Abundance of seed causes amorous disposition."[68] Once the subject is susceptible to this passion a love object will soon be found, and the tempestuous effects of love at first sight begin. In the initial phase the eyes are of course the most important factor. In the instance of love at first sight, which must be the beginning of amor hereos, the love object presents such a picture of beauty that the patient is immediately stricken. Laurentius explains what happens,

> Loue therefore hauing abused the eyes, as the proper spyes and potters [sic][69] of the mind, maketh a way for it selfe smoothly to glaunce along through the conducting guides, and passing without any perseuerance in this sort through the veines vnto the liuer, doth suddenly imprint a burning desire to obtaine the thing, which is or seemeth worthie to bee beloued,...[70]

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[67] Burton says of it, "...this mad and beastly passion, as I have said, is named by our Physitians, Heroicall love, and a more honourable title put upon it, *Amor nobilis*, as *Savanarola* stiles it, because noble men & women make a common practice of it, and are so ordinarily affected with it." Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy,* vol. 3, eds. Thomas C. Faulkner, Nicholas K. Kiessling & Rhonda Blair, intro. J. B. Bamborough (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) 56. Also, "But most part, I say, such are aptest to love that are young and lusty, live at ease, staule-fedde, free from cares, like cattle in a ranke pasture, Idle and solitary persons, they must needs *hirquitallire*, *Guastavinius* recites out of *Ceasorinas*." Burton, vol. 3, 60. Heffernan explains it in similar term, "One reason leisure is necessary for the sickness to take root is that a principal feature of the disease is fixation upon the beloved. The early physicians tell us that persons suffering from *amor hereos* become so obsessed with thoughts of the beloved object that they are unable to do anything else but be lost in reverie." (Heffernan, 81)

[68] Babb, 129.

[69] This should probably be 'spotters'. Alternatively 'porters' may be meant.

[70] Laurentius, 118.

Heffernan explains how the mind may hold the image, "Those who arrive at this exalted form of pure love can possess the beloved as an image, which in the diseased mind of the sufferer of *amor hereos* becomes an *idée fixe*."[71] Babb says,

> Falling in love, moreover, is a rude and painful shock which throws into confusion all the normal processes of the body and mind. The infection enters through the eyes and produces a swift and violent reaction.[72]

Before imprinting the impression of the beloved upon the brain, as an '*idée fixe*', it must pass to the heart. According to Laurentius, this impression, having entered through the eyes, and having been transported through the veins to the liver where a desire for the object is imprinted, it must then bypass the faculty of reason in order to rally the passions of the heart against it. Had the image been presented to the faculty of reason initially, it would have been treated more detachedly. In the liver the image,

> …setteth concupiscence on fire, and beginneth by this desire all the strife and contention: but fearing her selfe too weake to incounter with reason, the principal part of the minde, she posteth in haste to the heart, to surprise and winne the same: whereof when she is once sure, as of the strongest holde, she afterward assaileth and setteth vpon reason, and all the other principall powers of the minde so fiercely, as that she subdueth them, and maketh them her vassals and slaues. Then is all spoyled, the man is quite vndone and cast away,

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[71] Heffernan, 73.
[72] Babb, 132.

> the sences are wandring to and fro, vp and downe, reason is confounded, the imagination corrupted, the talke fond and sencelesse;…[73]

The extreme heat of these two organs, the liver and the heart is the climax of the sanguine phase of the illness, and it is at this point that Laurentius notes the patient's tendency to oscillate between fierce heat and icy cold,

> …sometime he is as hot as fire, and vpon the sudden he findeth himselfe as colde as ice: his heart doth alwaies quake, and his pulse keepeth no true course, it is little, vnequall, and beating thicke, changing it selfe vpon the sudden, not onely at the sight, but euen at the very name of the obiect which he affecteth.[74]

This oscillation is caused by the activity of the heart of the lover, which is torn between the hot love that dilates, and the cold fear (of rejection) and sorrow that contracts it. At this point the disease may develop in one of two ways. It may continue as a hot passion the heat of which will cause the characteristic loss of reason; or it may cool suddenly as a result of the fears of rejection and the accompanying sorrows, and turn the patient melancholy (again this is not ordinary melancholy). While the desire continues to heat the body of the afflicted, the "[l]overs become uncomfortably hot."[75] But at this stage there is still hope that madness will be avoided, if both lovers are agreeable and an honourable union may be achieved,

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[73] Laurentius, 118.
[74] Laurentius, 118.
[75] Babb, 132.

> The erotic impulse is overwhelmingly powerful. It impels men headlong into folly and evil. If love is directed by reason and if it has social and religious sanctions, it is conducive to man's physical and spiritual welfare. But of all the passions (except perhaps anger) it is the strongest and most violent and therefore the one most like [sic] to vanquish right reason.[76]

If a happy union may not be achieved the patient will generally suffer from a cold dry melancholy madness because of the sorrow and dejection he suffers. For "loue corrupteth the imagination, and may bee the cause of melancholie or of madnes. For in thus busying both the bodie and minde, it so drieth the humours, as that the whole frame of temperature, especially that of the braine, is ouerthrowne and marred."[77] Further, an element of the heat of love-madness may remain to complicate the lover's condition as when he thinks on the object of his unsatisfied desire and the humours may be further burnt or corrupted.

Unfulfilled ambition may also be a cause of madness, in the same way that an unrequited love can. Both involve a desire (a passion) that goes unsatiated. Robert Burton says of the ambitious man,

> ...both wayes hit or misse, he is distracted so long as his Ambition lasts, hee can looke for no other but anxiety and care, discontent & griefe in the meane time, madnesse it selfe, or violent death in the end.[78]

A great sorrow is very often a cause of madness. A man must be sure that his reason remains in control of his grief so that he will not lose himself to it. He must

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[76] Babb, 133.
[77] Laurentius, 119-20.
[78] Burton, vol. 1, 282.

maintain his reason. On the matter of death, Robert Burton quotes the Italian poet, Stroza Filius who "bewailes his fathers death"; "Fountaines of teares who gives, who lends me groanes, / Deepe sighes sufficient to expresse my moanes?"[79] Crying and sighing are of course not signs of madness, but these he asserts are common symptoms of melancholy caused by the sorrow of losing a loved one.

Thomas Wright explains how contrariety of passions might cause disquietness of the mind. As one passion fights with another he envisions a kind of civil war among passions.

> The Egyptians fought against the Egyptians, the East Wind riseth often against the West, the South against the North, the Wind against the Tide—and one Passion fighteth with another. The choleric Cavalier would with death revenge an injury, but fear of killing or hanging opposeth itself against this Passion…by which opposition we may easily perceive how unquiet is the heart of a passionate man, tossed like the Sea with contrary winds even at the same time and moment.[80]

Brutus explains away a change in demeanour towards Cassius by reference to such a conflict of passions,

> If I have veil'd my look,
> I turn the trouble of my countenance
> Merely upon myself. Vexed I am
> Of late with passions of some difference,

[79] Burton, vol. 1, 357.
[80] Wright, 142.

> Conceptions only proper to myself,
> Which give some soil, perhaps, to my behaviours;
> But let not therefore my good friends be griev'd
> (Among which number, Cassius, be you one)
> Nor construe any further my neglect,
> Than that poor Brutus, with himself at war,
> Forgets the shows of love to other men. (*Julius Caesar*, I. ii. 36-46)

Bad air is also apparently also a cause of melancholy.[81] Burton says of it, "Aire is a cause of great moment, in producing this, or any other Disease, being that it is still taken into our bodies by respiration, and our more inner parts. *If it be impure and foggy, it dejects the spirits, and causeth Diseases by infection of the heart…*"[82] This confirms what Boorde says,

> There is nothing, except poison, that doth putrify or doth corrupt the blood of man, as doth a corrupt and contagious air. The air can not be too clean and pure: considering it doth close and compass us round about, and we do receive it in to us, and can not be without it, for we live by it as the fish liveth by the water.[83]

Burton moreover extends this to madness as well as mere melancholy. Hot and dry countries he tells us are the worst, and that there are "therefore in *Spaine*, *Africke*, and

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[81] Burton has a subsection entitled, 'Bad Aire a Cause of Melancholy.' (Vol. 3, 233-237) ; Laurentius mentions that a change of air is a particularly good cure for love-melancholy, "Remouing, that is to say, the changing of the ayre, is one of the rarest remedies,…It will be good for him to lodge in the fields, or in some pleasant house; to cause him to walke often;…" (Laurentius, 123)
[82] Burton, vol. 1, 233. (Burton's italics are a quotation of Paulus).
[83] Boorde, 21.

Asia minor, great numbers of mad men, insomuch that they are compelled in all Citties of note to build peculiar hospitals for them".[84] Casca sees this as the main cause of Caesar's fit of 'the falling sickness' or epileptic fit. He tells Brutus and Cassius that he refused the crown three times, "He put it the third time by; and still as he refus'd it, the rabblement hooted, and clapp'd their chopt hands, and threw up their sweaty night-caps, and uttered such a deal of stinking breath because Caesar refus'd the crown, that it had, almost, choked Caesar; for he swounded, and fell down at it." (*Julius Caesar*, I. ii. 239-45)[85]

Boorde recommends that a house be built to face in such a way that it may receive the cleanest winds. He tells us that the "east wind is temperate, fresh and fragrant", and that the "north wind purgeth all vapours". He also says "the south wind doth corrupt and doth make evil vapours."[86] There is however a contrasting passage in Bright, "The ayre meet for melancholicke folke, ought to be thinne, pure and subtile, open, and patent to all winds: in respect of their temper, especially to the South, and Southeast".[87]

Lack of sleep and the proliferation of nightmares are seen both to be causes of and effects of madness. The inner turmoil of Brutus' fighting passions causes him to lose sleep,

> Since Cassius first did whet me against Caesar,
>
> I have not slept.
>
> Between the acting of a dreadful thing

[84] Burton, vol. 1, 234.
[85] It is worth noting that the phrase used by Brutus in asking of his recovery from the fit is, "What said he when he came unto himself?" (*Julius Caesar*, I. ii. 259) During his fit, Caesar is from himself, or not himself.
[86] Boorde, 24.
[87] Bright, 257.

> And the first motion, all the interim is
> Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream:
> The genius and the mortal instruments
> Are then in council; and the state of man,
> Like to a little kingdom, suffers then
> The nature of an insurrection. (*Julius Caesar*, II. i. 61-9)[88]

Laurentius considers this watchfulness to be a symptom rather than a cause of madness, and explains how it comes about;

> There is yet another accident which is very tedious, and euen consumeth these poore melancholike men, euen continuall watchings. I haue seene some that haue abode three whole moneths without sleepe…The instrumentall cause is the braine, which must be of good temperature: for if it be too hot, as in frenticke folkes; or drie, as in old folkes, the sleepe will neuer be with peace and quietnes…But if at one time or other it fall out, that they be ouertaken with a little slumber, it is then but a troublesome sleepe, accompanied with a thousand of false and fearefull apparitions, and dreames so dreadfull, as that it were better for them to be awake.[89]

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[88] It is unlikely that Brutus means genius as a literal guardian spirit, but rather, in the spirit (forgive the pun) of the metaphor, as the immortal part of the individual, that is the reconciled (or not in this case) composite of a body and a soul.

[89] Laurentius, 94-5. This is at the heart of the psychological problems faced by Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Lady Macbeth offers a warning to her husband early on in the play when he is on the verge of distraction, "You lack the season of all natures, sleep." (III. iv. 140) The Doctor later finds that she suffers a more serious nocturnal aberration, "A great perturbation in nature, to receive at once the benefit of sleep, and do the effects of watching!" (V. i. 9-10) His report to Macbeth acknowledges that this benefit of sleep is an appearance only, "Not so sick, my Lord, / As she is troubled with thick coming fancies, / That keep her from her rest." (V. iii. 37-9) The healing power of sleep is described by Macbeth, "Sleep, that knits up the ravell'ed sleave of care, / The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath, / Balm of hurt minds, great Neptune's second course, / Chief nourisher in life's feast". (II. ii. 36-9) I will discuss this in greater detail in Chapter Six.

Burton takes wakefulness to be both a cause and a symptom of melancholy and refers to many other authorities through history to make his point;

> …waking overmuch, is both a symptome, and an ordinary cause. *It causeth drinesse of the braine, frensie, dotage, and makes the body dry, leane, hard, and ugly to behold,* as *Lemnius* hath it. *The temperature of the Braine is corrupted by it, the humours adust,*[90] *the eyes made to sinke into the head, choller increased, and the whole body inflamed:* and, as may be added out of *Galen 3. de sanitate tuendâ, Avicenna 3. 1. it overthrowes the naturall heat, it causeth crudities, hurts concoction*, and what not? Not without good cause therefore *Crato consil. 21. lib. 2. Hildesheim spicel. 2. de delir. & Mania, Jacchinus, Arculanus* on *Rhasis*, *Guianerius* and *Mercurialis*, reckon up this overmuch waking, as a principall cause.[91]

This same agitation in the heart would cause the heating of the vital spirits, which in turn could 'overthrow the naturall heat' of the body. As usual moderation is the key, for as a lack of sleep may cause madness by overheating the melancholy in the system, so too, too much sleep may cause the humours to become sluggish and adust. In *The Duchess of Malfi* Antonio explains the danger of Bosola's melancholy,

> This foule mellancholly
> Will poyson all his goodnesse, for (i'le tell you)
> If too immoderate sleepe, be truly sayd

[90] The glossary of the single volume edition (2001) explains, "*adust*, burnt up, having much heat, a supposed condition of the four 'humours' of the body". (Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, intro. William H. Glass (New York: New York Review, 2001) 505.)
[91] Burton, vol. 1, 246. (Burton's italics)

To be an inward rust unto the soule;

It then doth follow want of action

Breeds all blacke male-contents, and their close rearing

(Like mothes in cloath) doe hurt for want of wearing.

(*The Duchess of Malfi*, I. i. 71-7)

Treatment / Cure

The attempt to find a cause having been made, the natural following step is to devise a treatment, and a cure. One such treatment is travel, and is clearly connected in many cases with bad air as a cause. It is also especially used for the treatment of distraction caused by love. Laurentius explains,

> Remouing, that is to say, the chaunging of the ayre, is one of the rarest remedies, because that vnder colour of that wee may bestow him in some remote place, and send him quite out of the countrie: for the sight of his mistresse doth daily blow vp the coles of his desire, and the only reciting of her name serueth as a baite for his ardent affections to bite vpon.[92]

A treatment solely for those suffering from love is in complete contrast to this. As opposed to sending the patient away from the object of his affection, whose presence stirs up the heat of his passion, the patient may be treated by allowing him to fulfil his sexual urges. Carol Falvo Heffernan explains what is happening in the body of the lover;

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[92] Laurentius, 123.

> The heat of *amor hereos* – closely associated with mania – is caused by the overheating of the vital spirit by a pleasing form. This vital spirit, in turn, generates heat in the animal spirit, which inflames the middle ventricle of the brain, the seat of the faculty of estimation.[93]

The fulfilling of the sexual desires of the patient may in part relieve this heat. As has been previously stated the seed of man is blood heated so much that it turns white. If this is retained, as in the case of unrequited love, it conflates the issue of the overheated spirits. It is important of course that the honour of the parties involved be protected, and so the solution in this case would preferably be their marriage.[94] As Babb says, "If love is directed by reason and if it has social and religious sanctions, it is conducive to man's physical and spiritual welfare."[95] Laurentius agrees with this conclusion mentioning also the removal of the desire, while giving the physician his due mention;

> There are two waies to cure this amourous melancholie: the one is, the inioying of the thing beloued: the other resteth in the skill and paines of a good Phisition. As concerning the first, it is certaine that the principal cause of the disease which is this burning desire, being taken away, the diseased partie will finde himselfe marueilously relieued...[96]

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[93] Heffernan, 72. Heffernan's explanation of the condition draws on the work of Arnaldus de Villanova. Her explanation is informed and supported by her own translation of the Latin text.

[94] The Jailer's daughter in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* owes much to Ophelia. She goes mad as a result of unrequited love. The doctor deems it necessary to sacrifice her honour in order to cure her madness. He tells her jilted suitor to "Please her appetite / And do it home, it cures her, ipso facto, / The melancholy humour that infects her." (V, ii, 39) All references to *The Two Noble Kinsmen* are to the Arden edition. Shakespeare & Fletcher, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, ed. Lois Potter, The Arden Shakespeare (Surrey: Thomas Nelson, 1997).

[95] Babb, 133.

[96] Laurentius, 121.

Laurentius recommends the "paines of a good Phisition." One thing a 'good' renaissance physician might prescribe is purgation. The purgation of the hot blood of the patient would reduce his body temperature. Timothy Bright likewise recommends the practice for an excess of the melancholic humour.

> The humour requireth euacuation, and emptying: and because your body is not only melancholicke vnder the ribbes but the whole masse of your blood is chaunged therewith: it shall be first necessarye to open a vaine:...[97]

One other treatment for mad folk, though it is as much for the protection of others as it is for the treatment of the patient, is the practice of locking them up. This practice seems to have been believed to be the most prudent treatment for lunatics.[98] Andrew Boorde writes,

> There is no man the which have any of the kinds of madness but they ought to be kept in safeguard, for divers inconvenience that may fall,...I do advertise every man the which is mad, or lunatic, or frantic or demoniac, to be kept in safe guard in some close house or chamber, where there is little light...And

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[97] Bright, 269.

[98] The practice of locking up madmen, particularly in a dark room, is alluded to in *Twelfth Night*, when Sir Toby decides what should be done with Malvolio, "Come, we'll have him in a dark room and bound." (III. iv. 136-7) All references to *Twelfth Night* are to the Arden edition. William Shakespeare, *welfth Night*, eds. J. M. Lothian & T. W. Craik, The Arden Shakespeare (London: Methuen, 1975, 2000). Dr. Pinch, the quack of *The Comedy of Errors*, also recommends this procedure for Antipholus and Dromio, "both man and master is possess'd, / I know it by their pale and deadly looks; / They must be bound and laid in some dark room." (IV. iv. 90-2) All references to *The Comedy of Errors* are to the Arden edition. William Shakespeare, *The Comedy of Errors*, ed. R. A. Foakes, The Arden Shakespeare (London: Methuen, 1962).

> see that the mad man have no girdle, except it be a weak list of cloth (to prevent) hurting or killing him self.[99]

Curiously Boorde mentions the dangers of wall hangings to mad men, "Also the chamber or the house that the mad man is in, let there be no painted cloths, nor painted walls, nor pictures of man or woman, or fowl or beast; for such things maketh them full of fantasies."[100] This perhaps makes Polonius' choice of hiding place all the more unfortunate in the 'closet scene' in *Hamlet*. (III. iv.) [101]

In contradiction of the recommendation of isolation, the treatise writers also recommend company and companionship as a treatment for madness. Boorde offers the opinion that "There is nothing that doth comfort the heart so much, beside God, as honest mirth and good company."[102] Thomas Wright also affirms this,

> It is good also to have a wise and discreet friend to admonish us of our Passions when we err from the path and plain way of Virtue; for, as I have often said, self-love blindeth much a man, and another may better judge of our actions than we can ourselves…if a man might have such a friend I would think he had no small treasure.[103]

Laurentius recommends constant activity and entertainment particularly to those stricken by love,

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[99] Boorde, 51-52.
[100] Boorde, 52.
[101] I will discuss the 'closet scene', (*Hamlet*, III. iv) in detail in the next chapter.
[102] Boorde, 17.
[103] Wright, 148.

> It will bee good for him, to lodge in the fields, or in some pleasant house; to cause him to walke often; to keepe him occupied euery houre with one or other pleasant pastime; to bring into his minde a hundred and a hundred sundrie things, to the end he may haue no leisure to think of his loue; to carrie him out a hunting; to the fenceschoole; to holde him vp sometimes with fine and graue stories; sometime with pleasant tales; and therewith to haue merrie musicke:...[104]

In *The Lover's Melancholy* (1628) by John Ford, the melancholy Prince Palador is prescribed the entertainment of a play as an attempted cure.[105] In *The Antipodes* (1640) by Richard Brome, Joyless is tricked into watching a play as a way of curing his mad jealousy, while performing in it cures his son's travel mania.[106] Though it is thought that entertainment of the same sort will help to cure Hamlet's distemper,[107] the effect is rather to agitate him even further.

Melancholy / Melancholy Madness

The distinction between melancholy and madness is a tenuous one. Lawrence Babb finds as much in his investigation of melancholy,

> Clearly the melancholic category is very indefinitely bounded. When one attempts to lay down its limits, he becomes involved in terminological difficulties...There is, indeed, no discoverable line of distinction in the old

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[104] Laurentius, 123.
[105] In John Ford, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore and Other Plays*, ed. Marion Lomax (Oxford: OUP, 1995). The performance takes place in Act III. scene iii.
[106] In Anthony Parr, ed., *Three Renaissance Travel Plays* (Manchester: MUP, 1999).
[107] Claudius hopes that the company of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern will "draw him on to pleasures" (*Hamlet*, II. ii. 15) and the Queen is later eager to hear whether they have "assay[ed] him / To any pastime". (III. i. 14-15) I will discuss this further in the next chapter.

> psychiatry between melancholy and madness. The difference, if any, is one of degree.[108]

Though Babb is correct in the difficulties involved in differentiating the two, it would seem to be consistent with other causes of insanity to suggest that melancholy becomes madness at the point where it obscures reason. Penelope Doob writes, "Ideally, all man's actions should be ruled by reason; to the extent that he departs from reason and its judgements of what is good, man is mad (seen psychologically) and sinful (seen morally)."[109] A fifth-century medical treatise writer, Caelius Aurelianus supports this saying, "...no one can hold that loss of reason (alienatio) is essentially different from madness (deliratio)." [110] Thus, if melancholy causes a departure from or a loss of reason, it is melancholy madness. If we grant that a patient is melancholy, the question still remains, does this melancholy interfere with his powers of reason or not? Bridget Gellert Lyons highlights a part of this problem that seems particularly relevant to Hamlet's character. With reference to the apocryphal Problem XXX of Aristotle she explains a feature of the complicated nature of melancholy,

> Though black bile in its natural cold state caused stupidity, disease or despondency leading to suicide, it could also, when heated, produce ecstacy or inspiration similar to Plato's divine frenzy, and when moderately heated it would result in the kind of superiority suggested at the beginning of the Problem: 'Those, however, in whom the black bile's excessive heat is relaxed

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[108] Babb, 36.
[109] Doob, 8.
[110] Caelius Aurelianus, *On Acute Diseases and On Chronic Diseases*, ed. & trans. I. E. Drabkin (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1950) 5.

> towards a mean, are melancholy, but they are more rational and less eccentric and in many respects superior to others in culture or in the arts or in statesmanship.'[111]

Laurentius' attempt to distinguish between madness and melancholy refers rather to behaviour, but perhaps implicit in his distinction is that there is a *reasonable* fearfulness that usually accompanies melancholy.

> ...madnes is caused of an humour, as blacke as that which causeth melacholie, for the humour called blacke choler, is altogether blacke and glistning like pitch, and therefore can make blacke the spirits and braine, as well as the other. But we see it falleth out, that mad men are nothing fearefull, but rather bolde and furious, not taking acknowledgement of any danger, as appeareth in their headlong casting of themselues into the deuouring fire, and vpon the murtherous knife.[112]

Wright finds that the evidence is recognisable in the face of a man whose reason is overruled by a passion, "for as a Rat running behind a painted cloth betrayeth herself, even so a Passion, lurking in the heart, by thought and speech discovereth itself".[113] Again, Polonius' choice of hiding place is unfortunate to say the least, considering the

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[111] "The *Problems*" Lyons explains, "have generally been attributed to Aristotle, although they are not certainly by him." Problem XXX, as Lyons explains it, asks the question, "Why is it, that all those who have become eminent in philosophy or politics or poetry or the arts are clearly melancholics, and some of them to such an extent as to be affected by diseases caused by black bile?" (Lyons, 3-4) Babb points out that examples of great Greek heroes who were melancholy include Heracles, Ajax, and Bellerophon, who all went mad. (Babb, 59.)

[112] Laurentius, 90.

[113] Wright, 148. Perhaps thus refuting Duncan's assertion that "There's no art / To find the mind's construction in the face". (*Macbeth*, I. iv. 11-2)

passions evident in Hamlet's chastisement of his mother in the 'closet scene.' (*Hamlet*, III. iv)[114]

Of Old Age

A final addition to many of these treatises and discourses is a section on old men, often seeming like something of an afterthought tagged onto the end of the treatise. Though this may seem an odd addition to these treatises and discourses, their encyclopaedic natures demand the inclusion of anything that might cause melancholy (in the cases of Bright, Burton and Laurentius), excessive passions (in the case of Wright) or a deviation from normal health (in the case of Boorde). In terms of humoural physiognomy old age is the coldest and driest phase of life, (all the natural moisture and heat having drained away during the course of life) and therefore is naturally accompanied by melancholy (being the coldest and driest humour). This change in physiognomy naturally brings with it emotional stress and bodily decay, and in many cases eventual madness. As Bright explains,

> In like manner the aged, farre stroken in yeares, faile in the execution of externall actions: though their mindes should rather be wiser through experience,...neither only do they faile in outward sense and motion, but by the internall also suffer like imbecillitie,...[115]

Laurentius also has such a passage. He considers there to be three stages to old age, the last being called "decrepite" in which "all the actions both of the bodie and the minde are weakened and growne feeble, the sences are dull, the memorie lost, and the

[114] I will discuss this further in the next chapter.
[115] Bright, 121.

iudgement failing, so that then they become as they were in their infancie".[116] Among other things, he says, "there passeth before their eyes, as it were clowdes, being nothing else but grosse vapours, which grow thicke and foggie", "[t]he strong men bow, that is to say, the legges" and "[t]he grinders doe cease, that is to say, the teeth".[117] Robert Burton also has a section on old age, which he lists as a cause of melancholy.[118] Naturally Thomas Wright also has something to say touching the passions of old men. "Old men are subject to sadness caused by coldness of blood, to suspect ill by reason of long experience wherein they have often been deceived, to lament, to be fastidious, testy, froward, and never contented,..."[119]

Anatomy

In the first chapter I discussed the use of the mirror as the central metaphor of books that might be used to facilitate self-analysis, the search within.[120] Though an actual mirror only reflects a surface image, it should be evident that a mirror-book provides more, in that the reader is encouraged to examine himself, look inward and recognise his inner self by comparison with the protagonists of the exempla. In a mirror-book the aim of this search is to find and root out sin. If the early English stage characters like Herod and Everyman are mad because of sin, and the treatment (i.e. confession) addresses the soul of humankind, then the turn away from the analysis and treatment of the soul to the investigation of the body of humankind must surely owe something to the relatively new science of anatomy.[121] So too the inward search

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[116] Laurentius, 175.
[117] Laurentius, 176.
[118] Burton, vol. 1, 203-5.
[119] Wright, 118.
[120] i.e. *A Myrour to Lewde Men and Wymmen*, *Speculum Virginum*, Gower's *Mirour de l'Omme*, *The Middle English Mirror*. See above, Chapter One, esp. 24-9.
[121] Devon L. Hodges notes that the word 'anatomy' was "first used to signify a dissected body in 1540; the process of dissection, 1541; the science of bodily structure, 1391 (the anomaly in this list of dates) and next in 1541; it is recorded as a trope in 1569." Devon L. Hodges, *Renaissance Fictions of Anatomy* (Massachusetts: U of Massachusetts P, 1985) 2.

for the subjective centre of humankind is refocused away from the soul (without actually disregarding the importance of the soul) to the body. Burton's title makes explicit his methodological debt to the science of anatomy, but, in their refocus of the search away from matters of the soul towards matters of the body, and the rigorous and encyclopaedic procedure, all of the medico-scientific authors I have looked at in this chapter are clearly indebted to anatomical research and methodology. Laurentius acknowledges this debt early on, explaining the reliance on anatomy for knowledge of the structures of the brain,

> Anatomie manifesteth vnto our eyes, how that there issue out from the lower part of the braine seuen great paire of sinewes, which serue at a trice to conuey the animall spirit vnto the instrument of the sences, and doe not any of them passe out of the head except the sixt paire, which stretch out themselues to the mouth of the stomacke.[122]

The best example we have of renaissance physical anatomy comes to us from the drawings of Vesalius. (see figs. V.a-i) Where the sinner looks within himself and exposes his sins to the world with the aid of a learned confessor, the subject of Vesalius' anatomy takes off layer by layer of flesh and muscle tissue while the artist/physician (Vesalius) labels and numbers each exposed layer of tissue. (see figs. V.a-h) Two related facets of this new kind of exposure must have seemed particularly startling: 1. At no point in this exposure does a label discover the soul. 2. Having peeled off layer by layer, as with the peeling of an onion, the removal of the final layer (the skeleton) would leave nothing. The failure to locate a physical soul is

[122] Laurentius, 3.

Chapter 4 - *Hamlet*: An Anatomy of Madness

Like Mundus,[1] like Richard II, Hamlet is a character of shifting identities. Unlike Richard, Hamlet manipulates and controls these shifts of identity. Richard is goaded and persuaded to assume a variety of identities, one after another, none of which he can sustain. Hamlet is likewise pressed and encouraged to assume identities, but resists all efforts to define him. When Claudius announces him as the heir to the throne, and his son, Hamlet's resistance is cutting. Using a complex series of puns he eludes Claudius' attempt to father him, "A little more than kin, and less than kind." (I. ii. 65)[2] Claudius makes a further attempt to tame him, asking why 'the clouds still hang' on him and he responds again with a pun on the father-son relationship that Claudius attempts to press upon him, "Not so, my lord, I am too much in the sun."[3] (I. ii. 66-7) When Ophelia says she believed that he loved her, he denies himself, "You should not have believed me;…I loved you not." (III. i. 117-119) "I am myself indifferent honest, but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me." (III. i. 122-4) This of course is to say nothing of the "antic disposition" that he says he will put on. (I. v. 180)

Not only does he disassociate himself from definition (even those he has assumed for himself, i.e. "I did love you…I loved you not" (III. i. 115-9)), but Hamlet also strives to undo the identities that others assume. "Horatio, or I do forget myself." (I. ii. 161) Horatio declares himself to be Hamlet's "poor servant ever" but Hamlet responds "I'll change that name with you." (I. ii. 162-3) Polonius asks Hamlet if he knows him, and finds himself twice redefined, "You are a fishmonger." (II. ii. 175-6)

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[1] Of *Mundus et Infans*. See Chapter One above, 8-10.
[2] One letter more than 'kin' could by 'king' or could be 'kind'. Claudius is thus a little more than kin in being 'kin-g', but he is less than 'kin-d'; they are not alike, and perhaps also Claudius is not as kind as his public display suggests.
[3] The pun here is dependant on the homophones 'son' and 'sun.'

and a little later as "Jephthah, judge of Israel". (II. ii. 400) Even a cloud cannot remain what it initially seems, as it looks first like a "camel" then a "weasel" and finally a "whale". (III. iii. 368-73) But the most illuminating confusion of identities that Hamlet makes, and we may suspect the source of his own shifting identities, is between his mother and the King. When Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are sent to Hamlet to find out the cause of his seeming lunacy, he immediately sees through the embassage, "my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceived…I am but mad north-north-west." (II. ii. 372-4) Hamlet calls Claudius "dear mother", and when he attempts to correct him, "Thy loving father," Hamlet explains his logic "Father and mother is man and wife, man and wife is one flesh; and so my mother." (IV. iv. 52-55)[4]

Hamlet's earliest defining characteristic is his age. "[Y]*oung* Hamlet" is what Claudius first refers to him as. (I. i. 175) Indeed Hamlet is consistently, though without being given a specific age, referred to as young.[5] Only once is he assigned a precise age, the gravedigger explains that he has been employed as sexton for thirty years, "I came to't that day…that young Hamlet was born…I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years." (V. i. 139-57) Hamlet is thirty according to the grave-

[4] "'For this reason," it says, "a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and they will be two in one flesh" [*Genesis* 2:24].'" (*Speculum Virginum*, 287.) If this fundamental pair of identities (and that of his father) has become confused by the marriage that this exchange suggests is perverse, it may be the factor that destabilises all other identities for him.

[5] Laertes warns Ophelia that his affections cannot be trusted because of his youth, "For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favour, / Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood, / A violet in the *youth* of primy nature, / Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting, / The perfume and suppliance of a minute, / No more." (I. iii. 5-12), and Polonius a little later "For Lord Hamlet, / Believe so much of him that he is *young*,…" (I. iii. 123-4) On the battlements, the Ghost tells him "I could a tale unfold whose lightest word / Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy *young* blood,…" (I. v. 15-16) and a little later "…know, thou noble *youth*, / The serpent that did sting thy father's life / Now wears his crown." (I. v. 38-40) Ophelia seeing him (apparently) mad says that she has seen "That unmatch'd form and feature of blown *youth* / Blasted with ecstacy." (III. i. 161-2) When he has killed Polonius, Claudius says, "It will be laid to us, whose providence / Should have kept short, restrain'd, and out of haunt / This mad *young* man." (IV. i. 17-19) When Claudius is spurring Laertes on to the duel, he says that Hamlet has been jealous of his skills in the art of fencing, which he says are "A very ribbon in the cap of *youth* - / Yet needful too, for *youth* no less becomes / The light and careless livery that it wears / Than settled age his sables and his weeds / Importing health and graveness." (IV. vii. 76-80) My italics.

digger. This is also the length of time his player king and queen declare themselves to have been married,

> Full thirty times hath Phoebus' cart gone round
> Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orbed ground,
> And thirty dozen moons with borrow'd sheen
> About the world have times twelve thirties been
> Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands
> Unite commutual in most sacred bands. (III. ii. 150-5)

These are two very precise measurements of time in a play that is otherwise casual, if not careless, about the passage of time. What these two specific temporal references do is to make a very clear connection between the marriage of the player king and queen and Old Hamlet and Gertrude and, by extension, with Hamlet whose sanity is so closely bound up with the breach of his parents' marriage. What follows naturally from this is a further problem with time in the play. How long is it since the death of old Hamlet? The earliest reference to it is in Hamlet's first soliloquy, "That it should come to this! / But two months dead - nay, not so much, not two - …Why, she would hang on him / As if increase of appetite had grown / By what it fed on; and yet within a month - / Let me not think on't - Frailty, thy name is woman - / A little month,…" (I. ii. 137-8 & 143-7) Hamlet begins with two months and as he speaks it contracts to less than a month. Again in the play-scene Hamlet says, "What should a man do but be merry? For look you how cheerfully my mother looks and my father died within's two hours." (III. ii. 124-5) Ophelia corrects him, "Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord." (III. ii. 126) As if he hasn't heard her, he retorts, "O heavens, die two months

ago and not forgotten yet!" (128-9) Clearly time must pass in Elsinor between acts one and two; (Laertes leaves in act one and Polonius sends Reynaldo to spy on him at the beginning of act three) very little has passed between acts two and three (Rosencrantz and Guildenstern leave Hamlet at the end of act two and report how he has greeted them to the King and Queen at the beginning of act three). But as Hamlet teases Ophelia he begins with two hours, ("my father died within's two hours") she corrects him that it's four months, ("'tis twice two months") and he concludes by flippantly reverting to two months ("two months ago and not forgotten yet!"). In part the problem is that the play gives no respect to the unity of time. The irregular passage of time (long stretches between acts one and two and between acts four and five, but almost nothing between the central acts of the play) seems to reflect Hamlet's epithet at the beginning, "The time is out of joint." (I. v. 196) But it is also in part explained in Hamlet's letter to Ophelia,

> *To the celestial and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia...these; in her excellent white bosom, these, & c....*
>
> *Doubt that the stars are fire,*
>
> *Doubt that the sun doth move,*
>
> *Doubt truth to be a liar,*
>
> *But never doubt I love.*
>
> *O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers. I have not the art to reckon my groans. But that I love thee best, O most best, believe it. Adieu.*
>
> *Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst this machine is to him,*
>
> *Hamlet.* (II. ii. 109-23)[6]

[6] I have removed Polonius' inane interjections for ease of reading.

The second line of the brief and cryptic verse casts doubt on the progress of Phoebus' cart, "Doubt that the sun doth move". That the Ptolemaic system (that everything revolved around the earth) has come into doubt by the time Shakespeare wrote the play adds irony to the verse,[7] but within the context of the play, if the sun stops moving, then time cannot be measured (as it is in the player's speech or as it might be on a sundial). When Hamlet says he is "ill at these numbers", the immediate sense is that he cannot compose his verse within the meter. But it also means simply that he cannot 'count', a sense echoed again in the word 'reckon'. Again, if he cannot count, he cannot keep time. His ending seems initially strange. What is 'this machine'? It suggests that his body is the machine, the elaborate mechanism in which his soul is for a limited space of time housed. So, he means, 'as long as I am alive, as long as my soul is housed in this body, I am yours.'[8] The medical treatise writer Timothy Bright describes one such machine, as he explains the coexistence of the soul and the body in humankind. He explains that through the complexity of the body, "one right and straight motion" of the soul (the "breath of life…inspired from God")[9] causes all the complex and diverse motions of the human body,

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[7] In 1543 Copernicus published *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* (*On the Revolution of the Celestial Spheres*) propounding the theory that we live in a heliocentric universe (i.e. that the earth and all the planets revolve around the sun). "*Doubt that the sun doth move*". (Jon Balchin, *Quantum Leaps: 100 Scientists who Changed the World* (London: Arcturus, 2003) 38-9.) Timothy Bright (writing in 1586) is convinced that Copernican theory is correct. See Chapter Three above, 112. Within the context of the play Hamlet is of course raising the doubt in Denmark before the ninth century (see Jenkins' introduction, 85-6) when there should certainly be no doubt. The anachronism, if there is one in this allusion, is a fitting one.

[8] That he adds the limiting factor of his earthly life to the limitless "*Thine evermore*" is further evidence of his temporal confusion. Though this paradox and the stilted and clichéd nature of the composition as a whole suggests that it may not be the sincerest of gestures there is method in his madness.

[9] Bright, 37.

> We see it euident in automaticall instrumentes, as clockes, watches, and larums, howe one right and straight motion, through the aptnesse of the first wheele, not only causeth circular motion in the same, but in diuerse others also: and not only so, but distinct in pace, and time of motion: some wheeles passing swifter then other some, by diuerse rases: nowe to these deuises, some other instrument added, as hammer, and bell, not only another right motion springeth therof, as the stroke of the hammer, but sound also oft repeated, and deliuered it at certaine times by equall pauses; and that either larume or houres according as the partes of the clocke are framed. To these if yet moreouer a directorie hand be added; this first, and simple, and right motion weight or straine, shall seeme not only to be author of deliberate sound, & to counterfet voyce, but also to point with the finger as much as it hath declared by sound. Besides these we see yet a third motion with reciprocation in the ballance of the clocke. So many actions diuerse in kinde rise from one simple first motion, by reason of variety of ioynts in one engine. If to these you adde what wit can deuise, you may finde all the motion of heauen with his planets counterfetted, in a small modill, with distinction of time & season, as in the course of the heauenly bodies.[10]

So Bright figures the human body as a clock, "an engine" he calls it. Hamlet calls his body a "machine". Bright says that by striking a bell periodically a complex clock may tell the time, Hamlet cannot reckon (or count) his groans. Bright says that if the clock is complex enough it may present all the motions of the planets and heavenly bodies, Hamlet doubts "that the sun doth move". The time is out of joint for

[10] Bright, 67-8.

him because his machine, his "engine", his soul's earthly residence is not working properly.

One of the most frequently discussed 'problems' with *Hamlet* has been the matter of its protagonist's sanity.[11] Four main interpretations of Hamlet's character have emerged. Irving I. Edgar summarizes these,

> 1. that the character represents a true feigned psychosis... 2. that it represents a combination of feigned psychosis and actual psychosis... 3. the historical interpretation which holds that Hamlet portrays the melancholy type common in Elizabethan literature and Elizabethan psychology; and 4. that the character represents a true example of an unresolved Oedipus complex.[12]

As recently as 1999 Robert M. Youngson believed that he had found the answer. He suggested that Hamlet suffered from Ganser syndrome. This syndrome, he explained, is "the voluntary production of psychiatric symptoms".[13] However, there is nothing original in this, other than its technical name, and Youngson admits that psychiatrists find it hard "to make up their minds as to whether Ganser syndrome is a genuine psychiatric entity or just another all-too-human ploy in the battle for personal survival in a hostile world."[14]

Drawing on the conclusions I have made in Chapter Three and the tradition traced in Chapter One, I propose a reading of *Hamlet* in terms of the medico-scientific literature available in the time in which it was written. I will show that *Hamlet* engages the rhetoric and the procedures of the medico-scientific works and makes

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[11] For a good discussion of how the main arguments have developed see Salkeld, 11-20.
[12] Edgar, 255.
[13] Robert M. Youngson, *The Madness of Prince Hamlet & Other Extraordinary States of Mind* (London: Robinson, 1999) 1.
[14] Youngson, 3.

greater use of them than has been previously argued,[15] that the rhetoric that surrounds his 'distemper' represents the extremity of melancholy that amounts to madness and not just ordinary melancholy. That there is no *Anatomy of Madness*, no *Treatise on Madness*, no *Discourse Concerning Madness* does not mean that there is no evidence to suggest madness. On the contrary, many of the texts that have previously been used to prove that Hamlet is melancholy,[16] also engage with a variety of forms of madness. Having proved that Hamlet is melancholy should not put an end to the previous argument over whether or not he is mad. I will show that Hamlet and Ophelia can be seen as case studies, albeit fictional, that exemplify polar opposites, contradictions unresolved in the current theories of madness. Moreover, I will also expose the possibility that other characters in the play also show signs of madness. Hamlet's 'machine', Bright's 'engine' is the best starting point, as Hamlet's condition is described in terms of bodily/physical malfunction.

Hamlet, a Physical Anatomy

John Hunt recognises a continual reference to the body and body parts in the rhetoric of the play. "The eyes of the mind, if they are open, behold in the play's language a spectacle of ruined bodies fully as grim as what their physical counterparts behold on stage."[17] He goes so far as to suggest that the play is some sort of symbolic dissection or autopsy,

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[15] The works of Babb (1951), Reed (1952) and more recently Duncan Salkeld (1993) have stopped short of suggesting that there is a debt to the formatting similarities of the medical texts. See Chapter Three.

[16] I do not dispute that there is evidence that proves Hamlet to be melancholy, but as the nature of humoural theory means that humours are not fixed conditions, it remains to be seen whether this is a long term 'natural' disposition or rather a temporary 'unnatural' condition resultant from the circumstances of his life.

[17] John Hunt, 'A Thing of Nothing: The Catastrophic Body in *Hamlet*,' *Shakespeare Quarterly*, vol. 39, No. 1, (Spring 1988) 27.

> It has, I believe, never been observed that these images of body parts in *Hamlet* add up to a virtual anatomical catalogue (or, to use the Ghost's grim little joke about dismemberment, 'blazon') of the human form. 'Considered curiously', as curiously as Hamlet considers the dust of Alexander, the play looks like a dissecting room, stocked with all of man's limbs, organs, tissues, and fluids.[18]

The suggestion seems initially absurd, but upon closer inspection, as Hunt lists the frequent references to a selection of prominent body parts, and continues to list every part mentioned, it becomes hard to discredit. Moreover it seems to be more than just a simple matter of grim and gory imagery to accompany the dark and dangerous acts of tragedy. "More than simply painting a bloody backdrop for his tragedy of revenge, in the manner of Webster, Shakespeare seems to be methodically deconstructing the body. His universal cataloguing of particulars does to the human body what Hamlet tells Osric it would be hard to do to Laertes: 'divide him inventorially' (V. ii. 114)."[19] The opening scene of the play is conspicuously anatomical in its rhetoric, as Francisco demands of Barnardo, "Stand and unfold yourself". (I. i. 2) Taken literally the line is a command to do as Vesalius' cadaver does.[20] In essence the command means "Tell me who you are." By implication, the form of the request infers that anatomy, (i.e. standing and unfolding yourself) is a means of finding out who / what you are. In a way the form of the request completes this *memento mori* (remember, you will die) at the beginning of the play.[21] Horatio joins in the grisly rhetoric when he arrives to join

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[18] Hunt, 29.
[19] Hunt, 30.
[20] See figs. V. a-h.
[21] This morbid rhetoric is fitting from a man who will declare himself grateful for the relief of his watch because "It is bitter cold, / And I am sick at heart", (I. i. 8-9) but who fails to give a reason for his heart-sickness.

the watch. In the darkness Barnardo cannot tell if Horatio is present, offering a hand to shake in greeting Horatio responds to the question, "Is Horatio there?" by saying, "A piece of him." (I. i. 21-2) They are soon to be joined by the physical representation of what the rhetoric has been hinting at. The initial appearance of the Ghost to satellite characters acts as an opening *memento mori* in the tradition of Death in *Everyman*,[22] sent to remind humankind that this earthly life is temporary, that "…'tis common: all that lives must die" (I. ii. 72).

Carol Chillington Rutter has also stumbled over the cadaver at the centre of the play, asking,

> Why is it…that a playtext crowded with male bodies presented in all stages of post mortem recuperation, from ghost walking Hamlet to fresh-bleeding Polonius to moldering Yorick to Priam of deathless memory;…when it finally arrives at the grave, lays out a woman's body for speculation?[23]

This observation of the profusion of bodies at various stages on their way to the dust from whence they came compliments Hunt's observation of quick corpses in various states of fragmentation. What Hunt sees in this catalogue of body parts, is a displacement of the soul, and a human existence imaged solely through the ultimately vacuous corporeal form. He takes Claudius' attempt to pray as the perfect example, "None of the angels whom Claudius begs to 'Make assay' offers him an incorporeal

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[22] See Chapter One.

[23] Carol Chillington Rutter, "Snatched Bodies: Ophelia in the Grave," in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, vol. 49, No. 3, (Autumn, 1998) 300. Rutter's argument concerns the relative obscuring of Ophelia's corpse by the foregrounding of the male characters (i.e. Hamlet and Laertes) in the burial scene (V. i.) in film versions of the play, and is therefore not of primary importance to this thesis. The observation is however significant. Spiritually, the burial of Ophelia's earthly body should be the release of her divine soul, "flights of angels" singing her to her rest, (V. ii. 364) but instead the scene is taken up with a quarrel during which neither Hamlet nor Laertes think to offer her a parting prayer. The significance of this scene, stripped as it is of spiritual substance, will become all the more apparent when I deal with the rhetoric that surrounds her madness later in this chapter.

hand: caught within the paralytic compound of his heart, hands, brain, face, voice, he looks in vain for a way out of the dwelling that he has made a prison."[24] But the important point is that *he* has made himself a prisoner of the flesh. The soul is not displaced in the play. It is held prisoner by the flesh. Like Bright's clock that malfunctions and fails to keep time,[25] the sinful body imprisons the aspiring soul, and this is why Hunt also finds an abundance of imagery associating the flesh with what is rotten or diseased. "The play also refers to various corrupting growths in the body – moles, cankers, warts, ulcers, abscesses, sores, scabs, and 'contagious blastments'."[26] The significance of this literal 'anatomy' in fact comes down to a point that Hunt only glancingly acknowledges, mental health. "The play's countless parts and functions, linked with various extreme and unhealthy states of mind, engender a disturbing sense of ontological dislocation."[27] But Hunt does not see this as anatomy[28] though he acknowledges that "throughout the play we are made to think of the fragmented state of a body that has been cut open, probed, dissected."[29] All the while Hunt points to the use of imagery that suggests dissection; "Stand and unfold yourself". (I. i. 2): "Whether aught to us unknown afflicts him thus, / That opened lies within our remedy" (II. ii. 17-18): "To draw apart the body he hath killed" (IV. i. 24): "The crowner hath sate on her, and finds it Christian burial" (V. i. 4-5): "Divide him inventorially" (V. ii. 114): "give order that these bodies / High on a stage be placed to the view" (V. ii. 379-80). This is precisely what Vesalius and other anatomists of the age were doing: opening and drawing apart bodies, listing the parts inventorially on a

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[24] Hunt, 30.
[25] See above, 142-5.
[26] Hunt, 30.
[27] Hunt, 31.
[28] He does see the use of the anatomy metaphor in "Jacques's lacerating intelligence in *As You Like It*". Hunt, 31.
[29] Hunt, 31. Dissection is surely what sixteenth and seventeenth century anatomy is. See figs. V.a-V.h.

stage at the centre of lecture theatres in the leading medical universities in Europe.[30] For Hamlet it remains to be seen whether his affliction is something that when the physical aspects are 'opened' will yield a cure or whether there is something within which "passeth" the "show" of anatomy.

Hamlet, a Literary Anatomy

Chapter Three has already detailed some of the main commonalities of the medical treatises that come closest to dealing with madness.[31] When these common elements are then compared to *Hamlet*, it becomes evident that the play is engaging this mode of discourse, by observing these same procedures in setting up its analysis of Hamlet's madness. The first common element discussed in the treatises is 'the excellencie of man', a passage commending the most marvellous of God's creations.[32]

Literary Anatomy 1. *Man's Excellence*

Here Hamlet discusses the seeming wonder of creation, but draws on the religious tradition of the contrariety of the composite of body and soul;

> What piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god: the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals – and yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? (II. ii. 303-308)

[30] See figs. VI a., VI b., and VI c.
[31] 1. Man's excellence. 2. The nature of the soul. 3. Causes. 4. Cures and treatments. 5. A diversion on old age. See Chapter Three above, esp. 103.
[32] See Chapter Three above, 104-7.

Hamlet engages directly with the same material as the medical treatise writers. Particularly clear is the debt to Timothy Bright's *Treatise of Melancholie*.[33] Hamlet's "how noble in reason" surely owes something to Bright's "Of all other practise of phisick, that parte most commendeth the excellency of the *noble* facultie,...the instrument of *reason*, the braine".[34] Hamlet's "paragon of animals" on its own would not suggest a reference to Bright's, "the excellencie of man appeareth aboue all other creatures," though it expresses the same idea. This passage in Bright's *Treatise* also contains the phrase, "discourse of reason", (I. ii. 150) which Hamlet himself uses in his earliest soliloquy. That this should be seen as evidence that Hamlet is melancholy[35] and nothing more extreme is strange when we examine the context of this reference to reason. Bright tells us that it is reason that allows humankind to fend off a number of extreme conditions only the mildest of which is melancholy. "The dayly experience of phrensies, madnesse, lunasies, and melancholy cured by this heauenly gift of God." It hardly needs to be pointed out that the other conditions mentioned are forms of madness. Bright's use of the word 'sovereignty' in conjunction with 'reason', in this passage may also lend something to Horatio's warning to Hamlet not to follow the ghost lest it assume "some other horrible form / Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason / And draw you into madness?" (I. iv. 72-4) Ophelia also links the two words when she laments that she must see in him "that noble and most sovereign reason / Like sweet bells jangled out of tune and harsh,.." (III. i. 159-60) These instances may recall Bright's insistence that all the

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[33] See Appendix I for Bright's 'The Epistle Dedicatorie' in full. Each of the ensuing quotations from Bright are from this epistle. The most comprehensive comparison of the two texts is to be found in O'Sullivan.

[34] My italics.

[35] Carol Falvo Heffernan lists a number of scholars who have described him as a melancholic; "Scholars of a generation or two ago, among them, Levin Schücking, Murray Bundy, Ruth Anderson, A. C. Bradley, John Dover Wilson and, more recently, Bridget Lyons, have discussed Hamlet as a pre-eminent representative of the melancholy type as the Elizabethans understood it." (Heffernan, 122) See also Introduction above, 5.

parts and spirits of the body be ruled by "the mind's commandment", that ordinarily nature "commandeth only by one sovereignty: the rest being vassals at the beck of the sovereign commander".[36]

Though it seems clear that the playwright has made use of certain sections from Bright's *Treatise*[37] Hamlet's speech on the excellence of man also owes much to the corresponding passage found in M. Andreas Laurentius.[38] Laurentius cites among other authorities Abdalas the Sarrasin, who says "...man alone did surpasse all other wonder whatsoeuer....For man hauing the image of God engrauen in his soule, and representing in his body the model of the whole world, can in a moment transforme himselfe into euery thing like a Proteus, or receiue at an instant the stampe of a thousand colours like to the Chamelion."[39] The most significant of his authorities are the "Diuines" (he does not specify which), who "haue called him, euery maner of creature, because he hath intercourse with euery maner of creature; he hath a being, as haue the stones; life, as haue the plants; and sence or feeling as the beasts; and vnderstanding, as haue the Angels."[40] Surely this lends something to Hamlet's man, "how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god". (II. ii. 304-5) And perhaps, as in the final part "apprehension...like a god", he also draws from Laurentius in the lines, "Sure he that made us with such large discourse, / Looking before and after, gave us not / That capability and *godlike reason* / To fust in us

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[36] Bright, 61. Admittedly this would not stand on its own as proof that Shakespeare drew on this text, and the use of this metaphor is not limited to Bright, but in conjunction with other evidence it is not improbable that there is a link between the common idea in the two texts.
[37] O'Sullivan lists line by line the similarities of phrase in the two texts.
[38] See Appendix II for the relevant section of Laurentius in full. Also see Chapter Three above, 102-7.
[39] This passage seems to have been used in *Henry VI, part 3*, "I can add colours to the chameleon, / Change shapes with Proteus for advantages..." (*3Henry VI*, III. ii. 191-2) William Shakespeare, *The Third Part of King Henry VI*, ed. Andrew S. Cairncross, The Arden Shakespeare (London: Methuen, 1964). Also it may or may not be coincidence that Hamlet responds to Claudius' greeting "How fares our cousin Hamlet?" by saying "Excellent, i'faith, of the chameleon's dish. I eat the air, promise-crammed." (III. ii. 92-4)
[40] Laurentius, 73.

unus'd." (IV. iv. 36-9)[41] Robert Burton's passage in this vein discusses rather the previous excellence of man, saying "this most noble Creature…O pittifull change! is fallen…and so much obscured by his fall that (some few reliques excepted) he is inferiour to a beast."[42] The general message of the medical treatise writers is clear. Reason is that which can best combat the infirmities of the mind. In the earlier Christian literature, discussed in Chapter One, sin is equated with madness and reason should be that which distinguishes us from beasts.[43] Without it we are mad, we are like beasts, or as Burton hyperbolises, we are worse than beasts.

Thomas Wright's *The Passions of the Mind in General* does not fit the pattern as well as the other treatises in regard to 'the excellencie of man'. As I have said in Chapter Three, rather than commending the marvel of God's creation, he defends instead the reputation of Englishmen against apparent accusations of stupidity from other nations, namely the Italians and Spanish.[44] He recommends an intimate knowledge of the passions in order to avoid the sins that taint God's creation. This may indeed be where Hamlet gets the impetus for his censure of the drinking of the Danes,

> This heavy-headed revel east and west
> Makes us traduc'd and tax'd of other nations –
> They clepe us drunkards, and with swinish phrase
> Soil our addition; and indeed it takes
> From our achievements, though perform'd at height,
> The pith and marrow of our attribute.

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[41] My italics.
[42] Burton, 122.
[43] See Chapter One above, esp. 48-50.
[44] See Appendix IV for the full text of the opening chapter of Wright's *Passions of the Mind in General*. See also Chapter Three above, 106-7.

So oft it chances in particular men
That for some vicious mole of nature in them,
As in their birth, wherein they are not guilty
(Since nature cannot choose his origin),
By their o'ergrowth of some complexion,
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,
Or by some habit, that too much o'erleavens
The form of plausive manners – that these men,
Carrying the stamp of one defect,
Being Nature's livery or Fortune's star,
His virtues else, be they as pure as grace,
As infinite as man may undergo,
Shall in the general censure take corruption
From that particular fault. The dram of evil
Doth all the noble substance often dout
To his own scandal. (I. iv. 17-38)

Thomas Wright might well be one such critic of the Danish; "…for as I have seen by experience," he tells us "there is no Nation in Europe that hath not some extraordinary affection either in pride, anger, lust, inconstancy, gluttony, drunkenness, sloth, or such like passion."[45] Hamlet's moralistic tone here is reminiscent of the preacherly rhetoric of Wright, whose list of "extraordinary affections" is almost the seven deadly sins.[46] Wright may also lend something to Polonius' advice to Laertes. Wright tells us "I myself have seen some, Gentlemen by blood and Noblemen by birth, yet so

[45] Wright, 92.
[46] Avarice and envy have been replaced with inconstancy and drunkenness (the particular sin of the Danes).

appassionate in affections that their company was to most men intolerable,..." As a passionate and headstrong man, Laertes would do well to take heed of this warning.[47] Wright also promotes the understanding of passions saying, "in fine, every man may by this come to a knowledge of himself, which ought to be preferred before all treasures and riches."[48] Polonius ends his advice to Laertes similarly, "This above all: to thine own self be true". (I. iii. 78)

So the first section of the treatises, on 'the excellence of man' is reflected in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, his *Anatomy of Madness*. But we are reminded by Laurentius that it is not the body of man that distinguishes him above all other creatures.

> But this his excellencie, whereby he is more glorious then all the rest, is not in respect of his bodie, although the shape thereof bee more exquisite, better tempered, and of more comely proportion then any other thing in the world,...This nobleness (I say) commeth not of the bodie, which consisteth of matter and is corruptible: ...It is the soule alone whereby he is so renowmed, being a forme altogether celestiall and diuine, not taking his originall from the effectuall working of any matter, as that of plants and beasts doth."[49]

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[47] Laertes' hot-headedness is set up as a foil to Hamlet's inaction. Polonius warns him against fighting, "Beware / Of entrance to a quarrel," and then seems to concede it as an inevitability, "but being in, / Bear't that th'opposed may beware of thee." (I. iii. 65-7) Polonius lists fighting among the vices that a youth may have that are not "so rank / As may dishonour him.../...such wanton, wild, and usual slips / As are companions noted and most known / To youth and liberty." Reynaldo suggests gaming as one such vice, to which Polonius adds, "drinking, fencing, swearing, / Quarrelling, drabbing". (II. i. 20-26) These hints from his father are the seeds of a violent temperament the portrayal of which grows to its full scale in the rabble stirred up on his return to Elsinor after Polonius' murder. He is described as "in a riotous head," (IV. v. 101) and his rebellion as "giant-like" (IV. v. 121) after the giants who pitted themselves against the gods in Ovid. (*Metamorphoses*, I. 152-160)

[48] Wright, 89. This is like the characters referred to in Chapter One, who have lost the knowledge or understanding of themselves to sin. Indeed as a clergyman Wright must surely be drawing on the tradition of the confessional literature. Where the confessional literature warns against the sins that put one from the knowledge of oneself, Wright warns of passions unchecked by reason that thus put one from the knowledge of oneself.

[49] Laurentius, 72-3.

And so it is that we move to the second common section in the treatises, on the nature of the soul.

Literary Anatomy 2. *Questions of the Soul*

Hamlet's reference to his body as a 'machine' in his letter[50] already acknowledges the duality of humankind, and the distinction between the body and the soul. When he discusses the 'excellencie of man' and concludes in the end that he sees only a 'quintessence of dust', he is not necessarily following a train of thought which begins with a perception of man as excellent and degrades during the thought process to a quintessence of dust, rather he is stressing that man is made up of two parts. He is acknowledging the duality of man's essence. One part is the body, the 'quintessence of dust'.[51] This part he refers to again and again, perhaps most poignantly in his explanation of "how a king may go a progress through the guts of a beggar." (IV. iii. 19-31) This is the earthly part of man that weighs him down and tempts him to sin. The other part of man is the soul. This it is that allows him to call man 'like a god'. Hunt sees the play as a sort of dissection or anatomy,[52] a catalogue of body parts, but the play (as with Hell) is also filled to the brim with souls.

Laertes also acknowledges this duality in man's nature, referring to the body ("thews and bulk") as the temple of the soul,[53] "For nature crescent does not grow alone / In thews and bulk, but as this temple waxes, / The inward service of the mind and soul / Grows wide withal…" (I. iii. 11-4) Laertes is keenly aware that greater the ambition of the soul within the body the greater the potential for disruption. Chapter Three discussed the argument that existed over the nature of the soul. Christian

[50] See above, 142-3.
[51] "Of þe erth and of þe cley we haue owr propagacyon." (*Mankind*, 186)
[52] See above, 147-8.
[53] I have discussed the theory of the 'body politic' in Chapter Two, 58-9.

religious thought saw the soul as immortal, whereas some medical and more scientific thought suggested that the soul might actually be a substantial part of the body, which they called *pneuma*.[54] The turn of the inward search away from the Christian doctrinal means of priest and confessional towards the scalpel and the anatomy theatre meant the displacement of the soul and consequently the seeming essence of man, his self.

The appearance of the Ghost has a double impact for both Hamlet and Horatio, firstly and most obviously it is a terrifying spectacle, secondly it proves that there is an insubstantial part of the identity (i.e. soul) that survives after death.[55] This discredits the more scientific view that the substantial soul (i.e. *pneuma*) dies with the body. Horatio's insistence that the ghost will not appear in the very first scene, "Tush, tush, 'twill not appear" (I. i. 33) shows him to be of the less superstitious viewpoint. Adumbrating a good empirical scientist, he believes nothing without the proof of his senses, "I might not this believe / Without the sensible and true avouch / Of mine own eyes." (I. i. 59-61) This apparition determines finally for both Horatio and Hamlet that the individual soul is immortal.

Hamlet likewise realises that the appearance of the ghost raises another common question arising with regard to the soul. Some theorists considered that the human mind (and hence the soul) was incapable of correctly contemplating celestial beings.[56] This belief is referred to by Hamlet, who is now forced to contemplate immaterial beings,

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[54] This is the most basic rendering of the argument possible and is therefore a gross oversimplification. For a more detail discussion see Chapter Three, 108-110.

[55] This is assuming that it is the ghost of Old Hamlet and not a devil. "Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd, / Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,..." (I. iv. 41-2)

[56] In his subsection, 'A Digression of the Nature of Spirits, bad Angels or Devils, and how they cause Melancholy' Burton, with reference to various historical thinkers, refers to the problem of the nature of spirits as being "...according to *Postellus, full of controversie and ambiguity*: beyond the reach of humane capacitie, *fateor excedere vires intentionis meæ*, saith Austin I confesse I am not able to understand it, *finitum de infinito non potest statuere*, wee can sooner determine with *Tully de nat*: [sic] *deorum, quid non sint, quam quid sint*, our subtile Schoolemen, Cardans, Scaligers, profound Thomistes, Fracastoriana & Ferneliana acies, are weake, drye, obscure, defective in these misteries, and

What may this mean,

That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel

Revisits thus the glimpses of the moon,

Making night hideous and we fools of nature

So horridly to shake our disposition

With thoughts *beyond the reaches of our souls*? (I. iv. 51-6)[57]

Hamlet surely feels his soul to be immortal as a result of the conclusion of this argument, and is thus determined to follow the ghost, no matter what the danger is to his life.

Why, what should be the fear?

I do not set my life at a pin's fee,

And for my soul, what can it do to that,

Being a thing immortal as itself? (I. iv. 64-67)

The answer, as Horatio quite correctly speculates, is that a fate worse than death would be that the ghost "draw" him "into madness". (I. v. 74)

This apparition returns our search for the inner, true man, from the medical and scientific search of the anatomy, the physical self, to the older Christian means of seeking within the soul for the essence of the man. Stephen Greenblatt has done some work identifying the Catholic rhetoric of ghosts, particularly with regard to the

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all our quickest wits, as an Owles eyes at the sunnes light, waxe dull, and are not sufficient to apprehend them,..." (Burton, vol. 1, 174)

[57] My italics.

doctrine, and the abuse and exposure of the doctrine of purgatory.[58] But ghosts return for a variety of reasons, not just to plead for prayers.[59] The ghost of Clytemnestra wakes the sleeping Furies to continue their pursuit of Orestes, in Aeschylus' *Eumenides* (c.458BC).[60] Don Andrea is returned from Hades to witness his revenge in Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*. Seneca's *Agamemnon* (c.50AD) opens with the ghost of Thyestes prophesying the protagonist's downfall.[61] *Thyestes* (c.50AD) opens with the ghost of Tantalus forced by a fury to infect the house of Thyestes with his spirit to bring about its bloody downfall.[62] Thus tragic tradition brings ghosts to the stage for two reasons; to incite revenge, and to prophesy the fall of kings.[63]

Ghosts, as Greenblatt has argued, also return in Christian tradition to plead for prayers. *The Speculum Virginum* provides an exemplum and attests to the efficacy of prayers for the dead. Peregrinus, appointed clerical guide to the prospective nun, Theodora, the exemplary virgin of the title, relates the tale of a stipendiary cleric, "a twig of the Antichrist," who "young and confused in the blindness of his mind" has designs on the virtuous prioress of a congregation of nuns. "At last the insolent madman broke into the dormitory of Christ's virgins with furtive steps,.."[64] He finds

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[58] Stephen Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory* (Princeton: Princeton U P, 2001).

[59] While purgatorial ghosts are the sole focus of Greenblatt's work, I will illustrate a variety of literary ghost traditions (in the following passages and in the fifth chapter) which when taken into account render the figure of the ghost in *Hamlet* far more complex than has previously been imagined.

[60] *Eumenides*, 94-139. References to *Eumenides* are from Aeschylus, *The 'Eumenides' of Aeschylus*, intro., ed. & trans. A. W. Verrall (London: Macmillan, 1908).

[61] "The famous king of kings, leader of leaders, Agamemnon, behind whose banner a thousand ships hid the seas of Ilium with their sails, has conquered Ilium after ten cycles of Phoebus, and here – doomed to offer his throat to his own wife. Soon now the house will swim in blood answering blood." (*Agamemnon*, 39-44)

[62] "Distribute this very frenzy throughout the house! They must be driven just like this, and in enmity thirst for blood of their blood by turns. The house feels you entering, and shudders throughout at this accursed contact." (*Thyestes*, 101-4)

[63] The ghosts who appear to Richard III the night before battle in Shakespeare's *Richard III* (V. iii. 119-21, 132-6, 147-9, 152-5, 160-4 & 168-73) also fit into this tradition, as do the ghosts of Caesar in *Julius Caesar* (IV. iii. 274) and Banquo in *Macbeth*. (III. iv. 41 & 90) There are further elements to the ghosts of Caesar and Banquo that I will discuss at later stages in this thesis. All references to *Richard III* are to the Arden edition. William Shakespeare, *King Richard III*, ed. Anthony Hammond, The Arden Shakespeare (London: Routledge, 1981, 1990).

[64] *Speculum Virginum*, 276. None of the ghost stories examined in this chapter are dealt with in Greenblatt's work except of course for Old Hamlet.

the prioress' bed and waits for her there, to fulfil his lustful ambition when she returns. "But divine vengeance instantly checked his rash enterprise. For he was 'handed over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh' [1 *Cor.* 5.5]. Strangled by the very angel who had tempted him to filthy love, he expired at once."[65] Peregrinus tells Theodora the tale as a warning "that women living beside men will breed thorns and stab their innermost minds with sharp swords."[66] The story, nonetheless, has a happy ending that involves the walking dead. Taking pity on the cleric's soul the virtuous prioress prayed daily for him, to great effect, "For when a year had passed, the dead man appeared in a vision to a woman of no small merit, joyfully intimating that he had received communion."[67]

A variant of this ghost who pleads for its own redemption out of purgatory may be found in the first section of *The Awntyrs of Arthur*, a ghost story somewhat out of place in the romance tradition. On a day's hunting, Gawayn (Gawain) and Gaynour (Guenevere) are separated from the rest of the hunting party. The sky turns black and a storm brews overhead. A ghost appears to them out of the lake and Gawain accosts it. It is wrapped in serpents and covered in toads. It wants to speak to Guenevere. It is her mother. She expands upon her former state and luxurious courtly life before coming to the great contrast,

> Now am I a graceless gost, and grisly I gron;
>
> With Lucyfer in a lake logh am I light.
>
> Thus am I lyke to Lucefere: takis witness by mee!
>
> For al thi fressh foroure,
>
> Muse on my mirrour;

[65] *Speculum Virginum*, 277.
[66] *Speculum Virginum*, 277.
[67] *Speculum Virginum*, 278.

For, king and emperour,

Thus dight shul ye be. (160-6)

She sets herself up as a mirror for Guenevere, and for the court in general. Her earthly sins have caused her to be followed by "fendes of helle" (186) she is burned "[i]n bras and in brymston" (188). It is complete terror for "any tonge [her] turment to telle" (190). Her sin is that she "brak a solempne avowe," (205) "luf paramour, listes and delites". (213) She has been guilty of adultery and, being returned from the afterlife, is privy to the knowledge of the sin that Guenevere will commit. The price of her redemption from purgatory is "thritty trentales", but before she goes Guenevere asks the ghost two questions; "What wrathed God most,…?" (238) and "What bedid might me best to the blisse bring?" (249) This is the author's opportunity to cite doctrine, "Pride" (249) (being the first of the seven deadly sins[68]) is the answer to the first; "Mekenesse" (250) (being the first of the seven contrary virtues[69]) is the answer to the second. She further urges mercy, (250) charity and chastity. (251) Gawain also has a question for her, "How shal we fare,…?" (261) he asks of chivalrous knights in general and of the knights of the round table specifically. The prognosis is not good,

Your King is to [sic] covetous, I warne the sir knight.

May no man stry him with strength while his whele stondes.

Whan he is in his mageste, moost in his might,

He shal light ful lowe on the sesondes.

And this chivalrous Kinge chef shall a chaunce:

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[68] The seven deadly sins are discussed in detail in Chapter One (see esp. 25-41) and Chapter Two (see esp. 68-80).

[69] Being the seven polar opposites to and therefore the means to combat the seven deadly sins, i.e. humility (meekness), liberality, patience (mercy), charity, diligence, abstinence, and chastity.

Falsely Fortune in fight,

That wonderfull wheelwryght,

Shall make lordes to light – (265-273)

She proceeds to prophesy the particulars of Arthur's downfall before departing the scene and allowing the romance to proceed to the more traditional realm of the post-hunt feast.

Guenevere's mother mixes the Christian tradition of the ghost who comes to beg prayers for the release from purgatory and the tragic tradition of the ghost who prophesises the fall of a king. She is also however tapping into another Christian tradition, where ghosts return to warn friends and loved ones of the punishments of a sinful life. A more traditional example is the exemplum of the slothful sergeant in *Handlyng Synne* (1303) discussed in greater detail in Chapter One.[70] His sin is such that he is punished by sickness and death. (4369-4514) He returns to make an example of himself that others may clear their accounts before dying. He explains how he was visited in his sickbed first by two beautiful men (4434) who show him "a lytyl feyr boke" (4442) which contained his good deeds. The second pair of visitants are more grisly. They are accompanied by a "foule stynkyng," and they have glazed eyes and mouths "grennyng." (4459-60) The book they bring is bigger "þan yn a byble" (4474) and is foul. It contains his sins. At the mere sight of them he fears he will "wax nygh wode for dred." (4462) They kill him, and carry him (apparently conscious, as he can relate the means) to hell. The implication of this book and its size for the reader or hearer of Robert Mannyng of Brun's exemplum is that we each have a book of sins like this slothful sergeant. He returns from hell to urge confession to

[70] See above, 28-9.

the living. The contents of the book may be erased by open, honest and penitent shrift. The same principle is used in an exemplum about Saint Augustine

> We rede that Saynt Austin on a day studied & saw passe by hym the deuil, whyche bare a grete boke vpon his sholdres. He comanded him to telle him what was in that boke. The deuyl said, "These ben the synnes that the peple hath forgete." He demanded, saieng, "Ben ther ony that I haue forgeten in tyme passed?" The deuyl shewid to him his boke and fonde noo synne that he had forgeten, sa[u]f only on a tyme he had seid [n]o complyn. Thenne Seint Austin comanded hym that he shold abyde, a[n]d anon he entryd in to the chyrche and said wel and deuoutely his complin, and after come again to the deuill and had him to shewe him his boke ther as was wreton the default of his complin. The deuil serched & fond it all void & scraped out there as was wreton the deffault of his complin.[71]

Augustine's sin is sloth, and is relatively minor, but the principle holds for any sin no matter how great. All sins are subject to erasure through confession. Even regular prayer, if not confession, can do much. Another member of the (seemingly) walking dead, related in an early fifteenth-century sermon, suffers a sickness that brings him to death's door. His sinful life has only been interrupted by daily matins said to Mary, the virgin mother. All seems lost when he is "layd before the hye iuge."

> And þere come þe fende with a greete booke full of synnis þat he had done and acusyd hym and askyd rythwysnesse. And also he stode and disparyd of

[71] From 'Of the synne of slouthe' in *The Doctrinal of Sapience*. Gallagher, 122-3.

> helpe, þere aperyd owre Lady with a lytyll rolle of prayerys þat he had worchepyd here, and qwat tyme a paire of weyskalys war broght to weye hys euyll and hys goode, sodaynly owre Lady refyt fra þe weyscalys þis booke of hys synnys and gaue yt onto hym, and bad hym wende and schryue hym and amend hym. And he wakenyd and fand, als my booke sayis, þis booke in hys handys, wrytyn full of alle þe synnys þat euyr he dyd fra he was born to þat day, and bare yt with hym in takyn to penitaunsere of Salisbery and schraue hym.[72]

Though the tale ends with his waking from his fever, and he is therefore not a ghost *per se*, the book in his hand suggests that he has in fact died and returned. The point of these ghost stories is plainly illustrated in an allegory from the 'Katherine Group' that uses the ghost motif, *The Sawles Warde*, or 'The Custody of the Soul' (c. 1200).[73] It describes a house (the human body) inhabited by a husband (Reason) and his wife (Will) and four daughters (Prudence, Fortitude, Temperance, and Justice). Reason must rule his house with a strong hand, (Will is very self-indulgent) and defend it from potential thieves (i.e. the Devil). The occupants of the house are visited at the beginning by a guest, "lonc he is ant leane, ant his leor deaðlich ant blac ant elheowet, ant euch her þuncheð þet stont in his heaued up." ("he is tall and thin, and his face is deathlike and pale and livid, and every hair in his head seems to be standing on end.")[74] "Fearlac Ich hatte," ("I am called Fear,") he tells them, "ant am Deaðes sonde

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[72] O'Mara, 102.

[73] 'Sawles Warde,' ('The Custody of the Soul') in Bella Millet & Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, eds., *Medieval English Prose for Women: Selections from the Katherine Group and Ancrene Wisse* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990) 86-109. The date for the texts in this edition are given as between 1190 and 1230. (see Millet and Wogan-Browne, xi). Text and modern translation are given on opposing pages, it is this translation that I have used.

[74] Millet and Wogan-Browne, 88 & 89. This is perhaps identifiable as an essentially tragic trope. Mike Pincombe relates William Baldwin's dream of the ghosts of Richard, duke of York, and his young son, the earl of Rutland (told by Baldwin in the *Mirror for Magistrates*). Of the description of the young

ant Deaðes munegunge, ant am icumen biuore hire to warnin ow of hire cume." ("and am Death's messenger and the remembrance of Death, and have come before her to warn you of her arrival.")[75] Fear explains that he does not know when Death is coming, but that, when she comes, she will bring devils with her each of whom will carry a book

> al of sunnen iwriten wið swarte smeale leattres, ant an unrude raketehe gledread of fure, for te binden ant to drahen into inwarde helle hwuch se he mei preouin þurh his boc, þet is on euch sunne enbre | uet, þet he wið wil oðer wið word oðer wið werc wrahte in al his lifsiðe, bute þet he haueð ibet earþon wið soð schrift ant wið deadbote." ("written all over with sins in small black letters, and an enormous chain glowing red-hot, to bind and drag down into innermost hell whoever he is able to convict with his book, which contains a record of every sin which that man committed in thought, word, or deed throughout his life, unless he has atoned for it before that time with true confession and penance.")[76]

Fear's ensuing description of Hell and its torments is spectacularly grim.[77] He has come after all to make them afraid. Though he is an allegorical character, he clearly fits the type that is the traditional *memento mori* ghost who returns from death to warn against sin by describing the torments of hell.

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earl, he says, "Baldwin's portrait of the young boy shows that Baldwin is aware of the correct Aristotelian responses to 'tragicall matter': 'his lovely face and eyes disfigured with dropping teares, his heare through horrour standyng upryght'. [Baldwin, vol. 1, 181] Here is an emblem of pity and fear." (Mike Pincombe, 'Sackville *tragicus*: a case of poetic identity,' in A. J. Piesse, ed., *Sixteenth-Century Identities* (Manchester: MUP, 2000) 117.)

[75] Millet and Wogan-Browne, 88-91.

[76] Millet & Wogan-Browne, 90-1.

[77] Millet & Wogan-Browne, 91-5.

The ghost of old Hamlet is a blend of each of these traditions. He begins by insisting on his haste, that he must return "to sulph'rous and tormenting flames". (I. v. 3) Initially he seems to come from Hell, like the ghosts who warn their kin against sins. "Pity me not," (I. v. 5) he says, suggesting that it is not for his own sake that he has come. Next he fulfils the function of the Senecan revenge ghost, telling Hamlet that he is 'bound' to revenge. (I. v. 6-7) He then draws upon the doctrine of Purgatory,

> I am thy father's spirit,
> Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,
> And for the day confin'd to fast in fires,
> Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
> Are burnt and purg'd away. (I. v. 9-13)

But he does not ask Hamlet to assist in the purgation of these sins. Unlike other purgatorial ghosts, he does not ask for prayers or the building of churches.[78] Instead, he continues in the tradition of the ghost sent back to evoke fear of Hell,

> But that I am forbid
> I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
> Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
> Make thy two eyes like stars start from their spheres,
> Thy knotted and combined locks to part,
> And each particular hair to stand an [sic] end
> Like quills upon the fretful porpentine. (I. v. 13-20)

[78] Hamlet does perhaps hint at this tradition in relation to the speed with which Gertrude has forgotten her husband, "...there's hope a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year. But by'r lady a must build churches then, or else shall not suffer thinking on,..." (III. ii. 130-2)

The closing image is reminiscent of Fear in *Sawles Warde*, on whom, "euch her þuncheð þet stont in his heaued up." ("every hair in his head seems to be standing on end.")[79] If this were taken to its usual conclusion the ghost would recommend confession for Hamlet for the erasure of his sins. After the ghost's departure Hamlet does say "for my own poor part, / I will go pray." (I. v. 137-8) But he is less than sincere, as Horatio is quick to point out, "These are but wild and whirling words, my lord." (I. v. 139) Hamlet is not on his way to pray for his father's soul, nor is he bound for confession to erase his sins from the Devil's account book. He has however promised the ghost that he will effect an erasure,

> Yea, from the table of my memory
> I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
> All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past
> That youth and observation copied there,
> And thy commandment all alone shall live
> Within the book and volume of my brain,
> Unmix'd with baser matter. Yes, by heaven! (I. v. 98-104)

His invocation of the tradition is clear enough, he will erase all earthly 'base' things from his book, but it is not the book of his sins, and they are not replaced with God's commandments, but with the ghost's Senecan commandment to avenge his murder. The final traditional role fulfilled by old Hamlet's ghost is made hard to miss by Horatio's reaction to it at its first appearance,

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[79] Millet and Wogan-Browne, 88 & 89.

In the most high and palmy state of Rome,
A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,
The graves stood tenantless and the sheeted dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets;
As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,
Disasters in the sun; and the moist star,
Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands,
Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse. (I. i. 116-123)

The government shall topple, the king shall be removed from his throne and Hamlet shall be revenged. But the mix of Christian and classical traditions highlights Hamlet's conflicting purposes, he must be revenged, but he also must 'remember' the Christian fate of his father's soul (and by extension fear the fate of his own).

Ewan Fernie is quick to dismiss Hamlet's unwillingness to kill Claudius at prayer, as a mere excuse and another element of his procrastination. "The proposal to slay him instead in a moment of sin is an excuse, a palpable play for time. The longer this goes on, the more Hamlet desires revenge but fails to commit it, the more depressing and static the play becomes, the more incapable Hamlet looks."[80] But in light of the prominence of spiritual rhetoric within the play, these 'questions of the soul' and the ghost traditions evoked, it is unreasonable to doubt Hamlet's sincerity in this scene, "A villain kills my father, and for that / I, his sole son, do this same villain send / To heaven." (III. iii. 76-8) Having seen his father's soul clearly tormented,

[80] Ewan Fernie, *Shame in Shakespeare* (London: Routledge, 2002) 127.

A took my father grossly, full of bread,

With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May;

And how his audit stands who knows save heaven?

But in our circumstance and course of thought

'Tis heavy with him. (III. iii. 80-4)

Hamlet could not possibly, understanding as he now must, the nature of souls and the sacrament of contrition, kill Claudius "in the purging of his soul, / When he is fit and season'd for his passage". (III. iii. 85-6) There is no reason to see this as equivocation on Hamlet's part. Knowing what little he knows of the fate of his father's soul, revenge requires that he kill Claudius while he is engaged in "some act / That has no relish of salvation in't", (III. iii. 91-2) that he must be taken in some sin, "that his soul may be as damn'd and black / As hell" (III. iii. 94-5) where he must be sent for true revenge, the torments of hell for the torments of hell, "blood answering blood" (Seneca, *Agamemnon*, 44) to be satisfied.

Hamlet's concern with souls is evident again in the closet scene with his mother immediately afterwards. While Hamlet needs Claudius to be damned, his partner in sin, Hamlet's mother, must be helped towards salvation. As if heeding the tradition of the ghost who returns to warn its kin to mend their ways, Hamlet begins to badger her into the recognition of her sin in the mirror he sets her up. "You go not till I set you up a glass / Where you may see the inmost part of you." (III. iv. 18-19)[81]

[81] This recalls the mirror-book tradition discussed in Chapter One (esp. 24-9) where the mirror-book reflects the sins of the reader allowing them to recognise their sinful state. Perhaps it is a beneficent coincidence that it seems to echo also Guenevere's mother's words to her daughter, "Muse on my mirrour". (164) She invites Guenevere to recognise her own sin in her, Hamlet extrapolates licentiousness in Ophelia from his mother's sin. Effectively he makes Gertrude a (warped) mirror for Ophelia.

Ewan Fernie recognises that "he is getting through to Gertrude"[82] and has accomplished what he set out to do when she says, "O Hamlet, speak no more. / Thou turn'st my eyes into my very soul, / And there I see such black and grained spots / As will not leave their tinct." (III. iv. 88-91) This is the sin that has caused her reason to err so profoundly, that has caused her to step from one 'goodly king' to a 'basilisk'.[83] The way to remove this sin and come back to the knowledge of oneself, as has been illustrated in Chapter One,[84] and as a ghost in the *memento mori* tradition would at this point explain, is the sacrament of confession. But at this point the ghost appears for the second time, not to Gertrude to explain this to her, but to Hamlet "to whet [his] almost blunted purpose." (III. iv. 111) As if the Ghost were reminding Hamlet that it is Senecan and not Christian, it reminds him to proceed with his revenge. But he resumes in *memento mori* fashion, "But look, amazement on thy mother sits. / O step between her and her fighting soul." (III. iv. 112-3) Like the ghosts who return to remind their sinful kin to confess and amend their ways, the ghost asks Hamlet to intervene to save Gertrude's soul. And Hamlet fulfils the rest of the *memento mori* ghost tradition, urging confession for his mother,

> Mother, for love of grace,
> Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,
> That not your trespass but my madness speaks.
> It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,
> Whiles rank corruption, mining all within,
> Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven,

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[82] Fernie, 131.
[83] "madness would not err / Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd / But it reserv'd some quantity of choice / To serve in such a difference." (III. iv. 73-6)
[84] See Chapter One above, esp. 24-9.

Repent what's past, avoid what is to come;

And do not spread the compost on the weeds

To make them ranker. (III. iv. 146-54)[85]

It is not enough to confess sin. Repetition of the sin must also be avoided for the salvation of the soul. The treatment of Gertrude in this manner highlights a problem inherent to the more scientific approach taken by the medical theorists. As Christians they must resolve their faith with their medical / scientific approach, they must return (as the very inclusion of a section on the nature of souls attests) to spiritual matters again and again in their attempts to explain the nature of, and problems in humankind. Though *Hamlet* engages the more scientific approach to humanity, (i.e. anatomy and medical theory) it returns again and again to older Christian rhetoric. But for all these 'questions of the soul', and of specific souls within the play, Old Hamlet's soul, Gertrude's soul, even Claudius' soul, there is conspicuously little said of Hamlet's own soul. It seems that almost everything said of his distracted condition relates to his body and not his soul. So we must next examine the problems of his body, and determine with the medical texts the cause of his defect.

Literary Anatomy 3. *Causes. i. Humoral imbalance.*

As Polonius says,

Mad let us grant him then. And now remains

[85] It is worth noting that flattering is warned against, in conjunction with the image of the roots of sin "mining all within". This is reminiscent of the imagery in *A Myrour to Lewde Men and Wymmen* discussed in detail in Chapter Two (see above, 63-7). The sin of flattery, it says, "enoynteþ þe wey to helle as it were wiþ swete hony", (*A Myrour to Lewde Men and Wymmen*, 213) encouraging sinners to continue in their vice. The central metaphor of *A Myrour to Lewde Men and Wymmen* is of a tree of vice, thus the sin of flattery anoints the roots causing the other branches of sin to flourish.

That we find out the cause of this effect,

Or rather say the cause of this defect,

For this effect defective comes by cause. (II. ii. 100-103)

Though we may not yet be ready, as Polonius is, to grant that Hamlet is mad, the next section in the melancholy and other medical treatises deals with the causes of the variety of ailments dealt with. *Hamlet* offers a range of explanations for Hamlet's madness that draw on the contemporary medical theories as they are detailed in the treatises. The key to health in the humoural system is of course balance. Hamlet sees Horatio as the perfectly balanced man,

Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man

As e'er my conversation cop'd withal.

. . . .

...and blest are those

Whose blood and judgement are so well commeddled

That they are not a pipe for Fortune's finger

To sound what stop she please. Give me that man

That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him

In my heart's core,... (III. ii. 54-5 & 68-73)

Though Hamlet's description of Horatio does not expressly refer to humoral theory it may nonetheless owe something to Bright, who tells how a "just proportion" in the "mixture of the elements" or the "humours" of the body "breedeth an indifferency to

all passions".[86] Clearly Hamlet means to compliment his friend's balanced system in contrast to his own disposition. Hamlet is not balanced as Horatio is, but it is not clear what form of imbalance Hamlet's system is subjected to. If there is an excess of the melancholy humour in his system, he will be melancholy by disposition. This is not an extreme condition, and is a common humoural type.

Perhaps a large part of the argument in favour of Hamlet being melancholy and not mad[87] comes from Claudius' lines, "Love? His affections do not that way tend, / Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little, / Was not like madness. There's something in his soul / O'er which his melancholy sits on brood,.." (III. i. 164-7) But Claudius' words at this point cannot be taken to mean that he is not mad, but melancholy. The mention of melancholy is not enough to argue that Hamlet is merely melancholy, for that melancholy "sits" on some other obstruction. Further, he proceeds within the same speech to contradict himself in hoping that travel to England will "expel / This something settled matter in his heart, / Whereon his brains still beating puts him thus / From fashion of himself." (III. i. 174-7) If this does not suggest madness then his concluding line points out the express contradiction, "Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go." (III. i. 190) A person melancholy by disposition would not suffer from the extremity to which Hamlet appears to be subjected, nor would it seem to those around that this ordinary melancholy would put him from "fashion of himself", only a more extreme condition could do so. There must be a more complicated imbalance to cause such an extreme condition. This may be 'extraordinary melancholy', which is not necessarily the melancholy humour, but rather any of the four humours that have become adust (corrupted) in the blood, thus causing an obstruction (over which his melancholy might "sit" and interfere with the

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[86] Bright, 97.
[87] See above, 146.

natural flow of things). This adustion must itself be caused by something else however.[88]

Causes ii. violent fears.

An alternative explanation for his predicament comes in the form of a warning. Horatio worries that the ghost may so frighten Hamlet as to drive him mad. When Marcellus and Barnardo bring the appearance of the ghost to his attention, he says "A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye."(I. i. 115)[89] Here he is particularly warning of the effect that such dreadful fears have on the imagination, "the mind's eye", which he himself is then at pains to keep in check as he relates the apocryphal account of the walking dead and lunar eclipse in the city of Rome just prior to the mightiest Julius Caesar's fall. (I. i. 116-123)[90]

Burton's subsection on 'Terrors and Affrights Causes of Melancholy' warns of the turmoil that a great terror can cause in the humoural system. Such terrors, he tells us, "are most pernicious and violent, and so suddainely alter the whole temperature of the body, move the soule and spirits, strike such a deepe impression, that the parties can never bee recovered,..."[91] It should be clear that the melancholy caused by such a

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[88] See Chapter Three above, 127.

[89] "...cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye." (Luke 6:42) Though Horatio's use of the word 'mote' might seem to suggest a reference to this passage and thereby diminish the significance of the appearance of the ghost, even a 'mote' causes considerable irritation. Neither can it be suggested that Horatio takes the event less than seriously. The suggestion may be that this apparition is a mere mote in his "mind's eye" compared to the beam it will be in Hamlet's. This interpretation gains weight with the echo of the term "mind's eye" in the following scene when Horatio is about to break the news of this supernatural sighting to Hamlet. Hamlet says that he sees his father. Horatio, understandably startled, asks "Where, my lord?" and Hamlet replies, "In my mind's eye, Horatio." (I. ii. 185) Perhaps it is only here that we are meant to see the relevance of the reference. If it is a 'mote' to trouble Horatio's imagination, to what extreme will it vex Hamlet's?

[90] See above, 168-9. Also see Chapter Three above, 113-4.

[91] Burton, vol. 1, 333.

terror is not natural melancholy, but rather the extremity of condition that is "by an vnproper speech called melancholy" or "vnnaturall melancholie".[92]

Causes iii. Thwarted Ambition.

Ambition is also suggested as the cause of Hamlet's distemper. He tells Rosencrantz and Guildenstern that Denmark is a prison to him, and Rosencrantz replies, "Why, then your ambition makes it one". (II. ii. 252) Later Rosencrantz demands from him the cause of his "distemper", and he replies "Sir, I lack advancement." (III. ii. 331) Though Hamlet is being less than sincere he is referring to an accepted cause of madness.[93]

Causes iv. Great Sorrow.

Many of the characters of the play fail to recognise the most obvious reason for Hamlet's unhappy state of mind. In Claudius' opening speech, he insists in his cynicism that in spite of his sorrow at his brother's death, he will "with wisest sorrow think on him / Together with remembrance of ourselves." (I. ii. 6-7) He is thus insisting that in spite of his grief he will not lose himself to it. He will maintain his reason and there is more than a hint that he urges the rest of the court to do likewise. In spite of this it seems that he has discounted this as a reason for Hamlet's distemper by the second act. Gertrude interrupts his and Polonius' speculations, with this more reasonable suggestion, "I doubt it is no other but the main, / His father's death and our o'er-hasty marriage." (II. ii. 56-57) Hamlet himself says as much later, when he meets the army of the passionate Fortinbras, "How stand I then, / That have a father kill'd, a

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[92] Bright, 110.

[93] Robert Burton says of the ambitious man, "...both wayes hit or misse, he is distracted so long as his Ambition lasts, hee can looke for no other but anxiety and care, discontent & griefe in the meane time, madnesse it selfe, or violent death in the end." Burton, vol. 1, 282.

mother stain'd, / Excitements of my reason and my blood, / And let all sleep,..." (IV. iv. 56-59) In the matter of mourning, Robert Burton quotes the Italian poet, Stroza Filius who "bewailes his fathers death"; "Fountains of teares who gives, who lends me groanes, / Deepe sighes sufficient to expresse my moanes?"[94] These correspond to Hamlet's "windy suspiration of forc'd breath" and "fruitful river in the eye" (I. ii. 79, 80). Crying and sighing are of course no sign of madness, unless we consider, as Claudius does, time enough to have been given to "obsequious sorrow" (I. i. 92). However, we may well compare Hamlet to Wright's Cavalier whose need for revenge and duty to his kin and king are opposing passions that tear his soul this way and that, "tossed like the Sea with contrary winds even at the same time and moment."[95] It is not unlikely that this contrariety of passions is behind Gertrude's assertion that Hamlet is as "Mad as the *sea* and *wind* when both contend / Which is the mightier."(IV. i. 7-8)[96]

Causes v. Bad Weather.

The weather is again invoked when Hamlet declares himself to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to be "but mad north-north-west. When the wind is / southerly, I know a hawk from a handsaw." (II. ii. 374-5) This cryptic comment makes more sense when we take into consideration the effect the air has on the heart and mind. This comment of Hamlet's may be meant ironically, for Boorde recommends the virtues of the east and north winds, the "east wind is temperate, fresh and fragrant",

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[94] Burton, vol. 1, 357.

[95] Wright, 142. Hamlet's situation parallels that of Kyd's Hieronimo, in *The Spanish Tragedy*, whose judicial duties as Knight Marshal conflict with his need to revenge the murder of his son, Horatio. I will discuss this play in detail in the next chapter.

[96] My italics. Burton has a subsection entitled, 'Bad Aire a Cause of Melancholy.' (Burton, vol. 1, 233-237); Laurentius mentions that a change of air is a particularly good cure for love-melancholy, "Remouing, that is to say, the changing of the ayre, is one of the rarest remedies,...It will be good for him to lodge in the fields, or in some pleasant house; to cause him to walke often;..." (Laurentius, 123)

and the "north wind purgeth all vapours".[97] Hamlet thus claims to be mad only when the wind is most favourable. He further claims to be at his sharpest when the wind is southerly, where Boorde says, "the south wind doth corrupt and doth make evil vapours."[98]

Bright corresponds more with Hamlet's assertion, recommending for "melancholicke folke" winds "especially to the South, and Southeast".[99] In explaining his condition earlier in the scene Hamlet tells his seeming friends that the air in Denmark, "appeareth nothing to me but a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours." (II. ii. 302-3) Either way Hamlet perceives the air in Denmark to be a corrupting factor. How much, if any, of this is to be taken symbolically may be a more complicated issue, but clearly Shakespeare is aware of the medical theory connecting mental aberrations and foul air.

Causes vi. Bad Dreams & Lack of Sleep.

Lack of sleep and frequent nightmares are both causes and effects of madness.[100] On a number of occasions in the play Hamlet confesses that he suffers severely from bad dreams. Hamlet's first hint that it is a cause of distress for him is when he (though rather facetiously) explains his discontent to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, "O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space - were it not that I have bad dreams." (II. ii. 254-6) The thought of dreams also intrudes on his most famous "To be, or not to be," (III. i. 56) suicidal contemplations; "To sleep, perchance to dream-ay, there's the rub: / For in that sleep of death what dreams may come, / When we have shuffled off this mortal coil, / Must

[97] Boorde, 24.
[98] Boorde, 24.
[99] Bright, 257.
[100] See Chapter Three above, 125-7.

give us pause…" (III. i. 65-68) And again later Hamlet gives a hint as to what might cause the nightmares that intrude upon his sleep. He tells Horatio, "Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting / That would not let me sleep." (V. ii. 4-5)[101]

Causes vii. Erotomania.

Another possible cause for Hamlet's distemper is *erotomania*, *amors hereos* or love-melancholy. Love-melancholy is not strictly speaking melancholy, which is by nature cold, but rather an extreme imbalance caused by the heat of love that goes unreleased.[102] Polonius comes to the conclusion that it is this that causes Hamlet's condition,

> This is the very ecstasy of love,
> Whose violent property fordoes itself
> And leads the will to desperate undertakings
> As oft as any passion under heaven
> That does afflict our natures. (II. i. 102-106)

This, Polonius is sure, is the discovery of the "very cause of Hamlet's lunacy." (II. ii. 49) But erotomania is a condition caused by a 'violent' (as Polonius says) heat.

> Erotic love, since it is a species of desire, is a warm and moist (or sanguine) passion. The person who by nature or by accident has a high proportion of

[101] The healing power of sleep is described by Macbeth, "Sleep, that knits up the ravell'ed sleave of care, / The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath, / Balm of hurt minds, great Neptune's second course, / Chief nourisher in life's feast". (II. ii. 36-9)
[102] See Chapter Three above, 128-9.

> blood in his system is predisposed to love just as he is predisposed in general to warm and moist passions, to other kinds of desire and to joy and hope.[103]

Hamlet of course is generally considered to be of melancholic disposition, and could hardly be considered, as we know him from the play, to be prone to joy and hope.[104] It is not inconceivable then that Hamlet was at one point, prior to his father's death and the hasty marriage of his widowed mother, of a more sanguine temperament. Indeed Polonius suggests as much when reprimanding Ophelia for being too free with his tenders of affection. "I do know, / When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul / Lends the tongue vows." (I. iii. 115-7) Burton says of it, "...this mad and beastly passion, as I have said, is named by our Physitians, Heroicall love, and a more honourable title put upon it, *Amor nobilis*, as *Savanarola* stiles it, because noble men & women make a common practice of it, and are so ordinarily affected with it."[105] Also, "But most part, I say, such are aptest to love that are young and lusty, live at ease, staule-fedde, free from cares, like cattle in a ranke pasture, Idle and solitary persons, they must needs *hirquitallire*, *Guastavinius* recites out of *Censorinus*."[106] Heffernan explains it in similar term, "One reason leisure is necessary for the sickness to take root is that a principal feature of the disease is fixation upon the beloved. The early physicians tell us that persons suffering from *amor hereos* become so obsessed with thoughts of the beloved object that they are unable to do anything else but be lost in reverie."[107]

Hamlet's position as a prince would presumably afford him much leisure. His studies also would keep him from exercising, and though he is clearly a well-practiced

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[103] Babb, 129.
[104] See Introduction above, 5 and Chapter Three above, 103 & 132-4.
[105] Burton, vol. 3, 56.
[106] Burton, vol. 3, 60.
[107] Heffernan, 81.

fencer, this is no replacement for the hard work that someone below his social standing would have needed to do to maintain a living. There is no reason to assume that Hamlet had any hindrance to the promotion of the warm and moist sanguine humour, prior to his father's death. It is therefore not an unreasonable suggestion for Polonius to make.[108]

Causes viii. Unruly Passion.

As the untamed passion of love can cause madness, so too any passion of such extremity as to overrule reason is madness. Hamlet must at least be temporarily mad at the point that he kills Polonius. This "rash and bloody deed" in contrast to his earlier seeming hesitancy is "bolde and furious," as Laurentius describes the madman distinguished from the merely melancholy.

> …madnes is caused of an humour, as blacke as that which causeth melacholie, for the humour called blacke choler, is altogether blacke and glistning like pitch, and therefore can make blacke the spirits and braine, as well as the other. But we see it falleth out, that mad men are nothing fearefull, but rather bolde and furious, not taking acknowledgement of any danger, as appeareth in their headlong casting of themselues into the deuouring fire, and vpon the murtherous knife.[109]

When Hamlet stabs through the arras, he exclaims, "How now? A rat!" (III. iv. 22). Here Hamlet is echoing Wright, who writes "for as a Rat running behind a painted cloth betrayeth herself, even so a Passion, lurking in the heart, by thought and speech

[108] The fact that he does ought to dispel the notion that Hamlet is a 'natural' melancholic.
[109] Laurentius, 90.

discovereth itself".[110] This is particularly relevant in that at this moment, perhaps more than any other, Hamlet is ruled by passion, not reason, the very thing that Wright is at pains to warn against. This is a temporary moment of madness under the terms set down by Laurentius and Wright.

The profusion of possible, medically viable explanations for Hamlet's apparent madness however makes it impossible to isolate one particular cause. It is nonetheless significant that among the causes offered, it is never suggested that Hamlet is in the madness of sin, or that he has succumbed to the temptations of the devil. Even when he stabs Polonius, a "rash and bloody deed", it is discussed and explained in terms of unruly passions and not wrathful madness.

Literary Anatomy 4. *Cures and Treatments i. Travel.*

Claudius' response to this murder is not to punish the crime openly, but rather to proceed with his plan to send Hamlet to England, using a recognised treatment for madness as a cover for the dispatch of his nemesis. His journey had been decided prior to the murder of Polonius, and though we may question Claudius' sincerity, he is in fact following common medical practice.[111]

> Haply the seas and countries different,
> With variable objects, shall expel
> This something settled matter in his heart,
> Whereon his brains still beating puts him thus
> From fashion of himself. (III. ii. 173)

[110] Wright, 148.
[111] See Chapter Three above, 128.

When the Grave-digger is asked why Hamlet was sent into England, he replies, "Why, because a was mad. A shall recover his wits there." (V. i. 146-7) This clearly is the credible reason given out to the common multitude by Claudius.

Cures and Treatments ii. Sex.

The release of the heat of erotomania is best achieved by the satiation of the desire.[112] There may be a subtle allusion to this remedy in Gertrude's encouragement of Ophelia,

> …I do wish
> That your good beauties be the happy cause
> Of Hamlet's wildness; so shall I hope your virtues
> Will bring him to his wonted way again,
> To both your honours. (III. i. 38-42)

Gertrude is hoping for a marriage, a match that will satisfy both their desires and cure Hamlet's madness.

This cure does not, however, require that the desire be satiated by the particular beloved. Because the patient suffers from a biological excess of heat, the release of that heat (in the form of the seed, which is white hot blood) does not require the coincidence of an emotional attachment. The Jailer's Daughter in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* owes much to Ophelia. She goes mad as a result of unrequited love, and there is no hope of attaining her beloved. Ultimately, the doctor deems it necessary to

[112] Seed (male and female) was thought to be blood heated until it was white hot. Laurentius speaks specifically of a male patient in this regard, "it is certaine that the principal cause of the disease which is this burning desire, being taken away, the diseased partie will finde himselfe marueilously relieued..." (Laurentius, 121) See Chapter Three above, 129.

sacrifice her honour in order to cure her madness. He tells her jilted suitor to "Please her appetite / And do it home, it cures her, ipso facto, / The melancholy humour that infects her." (V. ii. 39)

Cures and Treatments iii. Purgation & Blood Letting.

Release of corrupted or undesirable fluids is more often achieved by bloodletting, or purgatives. This is recommended, albeit in jest, by Hamlet as a treatment for Claudius' distemper after the play scene. Guildenstern remonstrates with him, "The King, sir – /…/…Is in his retirement marvellous distempered…/…/…with choler." (III. ii. 291-5) And Hamlet responds by recommending consultation with a doctor, and treatment, "..for me to put him to his purgation would perhaps plunge him into more choler." (III. ii. 296-9) Claudius is of a similar mind, when he sends his letters to England demanding the "present death of Hamlet…/ For like the hectic in my blood he rages, / And thou must cure me." (IV. iii. 68-70) Though Hamlet says 'purgation' it seems more likely that in both cases the suggestion is that the blood should be purged with a blade.

Cures and Treatments iv. The 'Dark Room and the Whip'.

Like sending someone travelling to cure their madness, locking them up may be as much for the benefit of everyone else as for the cure of the patient. For this reason Polonius grants that if the Queen makes no progress in a private interview with Hamlet, the best thing to do is either "To England send him; or confine him where / Your wisdom best shall think." (III. i, 188-9) At numerous stages the King proclaims his fears of the dangers of allowing Hamlet his freedom. "Madness in great ones must

not unwatch'd go." (III. i. 190); "I like him not, nor stands it safe with us / To let his madness range." (III. iii. 1-2); "How dangerous is it that this man goes loose!" (IV. iii. 2) This sentiment accords with current beliefs of the most prudent treatment for lunatics and is alluded to in *Twelfth Night* (III. iv. 136-7) and *The Comedy of Errors.* (IV. iv. 90-2)[113]

These commonly held beliefs are behind Claudius' fears that he will be held responsible for Polonius' death for giving so much freedom to a man that is out of his wits,

> His liberty is full of threats to all –
> To you yourself, to us, to everyone.
> Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answer'd?
> It will be laid to us, whose providence
> Should have kept short, restrain'd, and out of haunt
> This mad young man. (IV. i. 14-19)

Mad folk are dangerous both to themselves and to others. It may be however that Claudius is by this stage in the play (after the exposure of the mousetrap) aware that Hamlet is dangerous precisely because he is sane (if not completely) enough at least to have deduced that Claudius is guilty of foul play.

[113] See Chapter Three above, 130.

Cures and Treatments v. Entertainment, Honest Mirth and Good Company.

If the devil makes work for idle hands, then mental aberrations are similarly best kept out of danger with constant entertainment. This is Claudius' apparent reason for inviting Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to Denmark;

> I entreat you both
> That, being of so young days brought up with him,
> And sith so neighbour'd to his youth and haviour,
> That you vouchsafe your rest here in the court
> Some little time, so by your companies
> To draw him on to pleasures... (II. ii. 10-15)

Though as always his intentions are to be viewed with suspicion, his declared intention is medically feasible. Guildenstern reflects this belief when he responds, "Heavens make our presence and our practices / Pleasant and helpful to him." (II. ii. 38-9) Hamlet shows himself to be aware of the benefit of a well-balanced and honest confidant when he takes Horatio into his confidence.[114]

The arrival of the players and their performance at court may itself be seen as a form of treatment for Hamlet. His mother Gertrude is anxious to know whether Rosencrantz and Guildenstern have assayed him to any pastime, to which they enthusiastically relate the arrival of the players and Hamlet's intent to have them

[114] Hamlet's praise of Horatio's balanced and reasonable nature ((III. ii. 54-73) See above, 173) is of the utmost importance in this regard. If Hamlet cannot rely on himself to be governed by reason, his friend and companion must be. "There is nothing that doth comfort the heart so much, beside God, as honest mirth and good company." (Boorde, 17) See also Chapter Three above, 131.

perform. This is greeted by Claudius as though it were rather the arrival of a famous doctor than a company of players,

> …it doth much content me
> To hear him so inclin'd.
> Good gentlemen, give him a further edge,
> And drive his purpose into these delights. (III. i. 24-7)

Those who interpret Hamlet's mental condition to be melancholy rather than madness would say that many of these causes and treatments mentioned are also causes and treatments of melancholy. This is indeed true, and so it is that many of the examples come from texts whose main point of investigation is melancholy. However the context is most often the determination of the cause of and treatment for Hamlet's madness. Whether he actually is or is not mad need not necessarily be of primary importance, nor indeed does a person have to be consistent in their madness, patients can be prone to temporary bouts of madness though they are perfectly lucid the rest of the time. The important point here at least is that an extraordinarily wide variety of possible causes and possible cures/treatments are suggested. Indeed it seems that this variety is part of the difficulty in establishing a case for or against actual madness as opposed to pretended. Conversely, a certain ambiguity in the matter may be necessary to justify the inclusion of such a range of diagnoses and possible treatments. In the same way that an immediate revenge would deprive us of a play, an early diagnosis and cure would deprive us of a theme that takes up a significant portion of the play.

There are thus so many plausible causes of Hamlet's lunacy under the medical theories of the time that it would be impossible to pinpoint one as the sole cause. In

his interview with Hamlet the Grave-digger/First clown gives an amusing parody of this search for cause,

> *Ham.* How came he mad?
>
> *Grave.* Very strangely, they say.
>
> *Ham.* How 'strangely'?
>
> *Grave.* Faith, e'en with losing his wits.
>
> *Ham.* Upon what ground?
>
> *Grave.* Why, here in Denmark. (V. i. 151-6)

The clear irony of this scene makes a mockery of the earlier attempt by the other characters to seek out the cause of his distemper. Equally, it throws into question the very validity of the contemporary theories by which madness is diagnosed. No single cause may be discerned.

Literal Anatomy 5. *Digression on Old Age*

The final common trait to the treatises is a digression on old age, and it is the interference of Polonius that evokes Hamlet's thesis on the subject. Hamlet is interrupted in his reading. Asked what it is he reads, he responds,

> Slanders, sir. For the satirical rogue says here that old men have gray beards, that their faces are wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum, and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams

> – all which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down. (II. ii. 196-202)[115]

There has been much speculation as to the identity of this 'satirical rogue'.

> If Shakespeare had meant a reference to Juvenal, as Warburton and others suggested, he would surely have made a better job of it. The vague resemblance between Satire X. 188ff. and what Hamlet purports to be reading is no more than is to be expected of two passages both ridiculing the disabilities of old age. This is equally the case with Guazzo's *Civil Conversation* and Erasmus's *The Praise of Folly*, which have also been identified with Hamlet's 'book'.[116]

Perhaps the main problem is that critics have been too literal in their search. That the text should be a satire is not a necessity. In fact it seems more likely that Hamlet would be as ever disingenuous towards Polonius in referring to the author as satirical. It is more likely that the text referred to is written as 'honesty'. Nor indeed is there any necessity to search for a particular book, as Jenkins points out, two texts 'ridiculing' (or even sincere about) old age of such brevity are bound to have a certain similarity, the point is that it's a traditional motif. It is significant only for its mockery of Polonius and the inclusion of a traditional element of the medical treatises.

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[115] It may be that Shakespeare also has something like this in mind as Jacques comes to the close of his famous 'seven ages of man' speech in *As You Like It*, "The sixth age shifts / Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon, / With spectacles on nose, and pouch on side, / His youthful hose well sav'd, a world too wide / For his shrunk shank, and his big manly voice, / Turning toward childish treble, pipes / And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all, / That ends this strange eventful history, / Is second childishness and mere oblivion, / Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything." (II. vii. 157-166) William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, ed. Agnes Latham, The Arden Shakespeare (London: Methuen, 1975).

[116] Jenkins.

The butt of this 'satirical rogue' is of course Polonius, or as Hamlet has previously dubbed him, Jephthah. It follows that he has a daughter, Ophelia. Though she appears in only five scenes in the play,[117] it is incorrect to see her as a minor character especially while asserting that *Hamlet* is to stand as *A Treatise of Madness* of sorts. Laertes after all calls her "a document in madness". (IV. v. 176) She and Gertrude form the significant representatives of womankind within the play, and they show the three alternatives available to women; virginity, widowhood, and marriage. The Jephthah allusion makes plain that Ophelia is destined to die a virgin.[118] Gertrude is both widow (though perhaps not a very good one) and a married woman. These are the terms under which both of these characters are treated in the play. Whereas Hamlet's madness has been examined in the play in terms of contemporary medical theory, he interprets Gertrude's remarriage as the madness of the sin of lust. Likewise Ophelia's madness will draw on older more judgemental Christian ideas of madness. For the portrayal of both of these characters in the play the rhetoric will draw on traditional religious literature directed at women.

The priest Peregrinus in the *Speculum Virginum* declines the three ranks of women,

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[117] Elaine Showalter points out, "She appears in only five of the play's twenty scenes; the pre-play course of her love story with Hamlet is known only by a few ambiguous flashbacks." Elaine Showalter, 'Representing Ophelia: women, madness, and the responsibilities of feminist criticism,' in *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, ed. Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman (London: Methuen, 1985) 78. We may add a sixth appearance, though mute, if we also consider her burial scene. (V. i.) Gertrude's eulogy upon her drowning (IV. vii. 162-183) also makes her the centre of attention.

[118] "For Jephthah too had a 'fair daughter', as Hamlet indeed tells us by quoting a popular ballad. What he does not tell us, but what the completed ballad would, and what in any case we ought to know, is that Jephthah sacrificed his daughter while she was still a virgin. And though Polonius, along with most Shakespearian commentators, fails to see this point, it does something to explain why Hamlet, when he meets Ophelia, directs her to a nunnery." (Harold Jenkins, 'Hamlet and Ophelia,' *Proceedings of the British Academy*, vol. XLIX (1963) 139.)

> We will speak somewhat in the following section about the three orders – the married, the continent, and the virgins – which are to be regarded as good, better, and best…Married fidelity and widowed continence hasten forward according to the law of their vows,…[119]

'Hali Meiðhad' (or 'A Letter on Virginity') further describes these three ranks of women in terms that Polonius would relate to,

> For alswa as a charbucle [sic] is betere þen a iacinct i þe euene of hare cunde, ant þah is betere a briht iacinct þen a charbucle [sic] won, alswa passeð meiden, onont te mihte of meiðhad, widewen ant iweddede; ant tah is betere a milde wif oðer a meoke widewe þen a prud meiden.
> (For just as a ruby is better than a jacinth in its natural quality, and nevertheless a bright jacinth is better than a dull ruby, so a maiden by the virtue of virginity surpasses widows and married women; and nevertheless a modest wife or a meek widow is better than a proud virgin.)[120]

Polonius uses similar rhetoric in response to Ophelia's assertion that she has received tenders of Hamlet's affection.

> …think yourself a baby
> That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay
> Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly;
> Or – not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,

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[119] *Speculum Virginum*, 282.
[120] 'Hali Meiðhad' in Millett & Wogan-Browne, 38-9.

Running it thus – you'll tender me a fool. (I. iii. 105-9)[121]

The equation of financial worth with virginity is decidedly disconcerting (carrying as it does suggestions of prostitution) but is not uncommon in Christian rhetoric on the subject. Laertes also uses this equation when he warns Ophelia to be wary of Hamlet's 'tenders' earlier in the scene.

...weigh what loss your honour may sustain
If with too credent ear you list his songs,
Or lose your heart, or your *chaste treasure* open
To his unmaster'd importunity.
. . . .
The chariest maid is prodigal enough
If she unmask her beauty to the moon. (I. iii. 29-32 & 36-7)[122]

Right from this first appearance Ophelia is portrayed as a virgin in peril of her maidenhead, with Polonius and Laertes speaking in many ways like the priest guide, Peregrinus in the *Speculum Virginum*.

'Hali Meiðhad,' after detailing the worst possible husband, and the worst-case scenario for sex and pregnancy, concludes,

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[121] Richard Jacobs' reading of these lines is useful, "[Polonius] has certainly been using 'tender' in a sexual context: 'Do you believe his tenders...?' (sexual advances); 'Tender yourself more dearly' (i.e., set your virginity at a higher rate). The wordplay of the whole passage is sexual: it refers to the seduction of a virgin and the getting of a child, which is exactly what Polonius, discomfortingly, wants to 'teach' Ophelia about. The imagery moves from 'think yourself a baby,' through 'tender yourself,' to the furiously punning 'you'll tender me a fool.' The last phrase is peculiarly rich in meaning, as Polonius implies it will be. 'If you don't look after yourself you will present me with a baby, present yourself to me as a fool, present me to the world as a fool.'" Richard Jacobs, 'Sex and Money: A Note on *Hamlet* I. iii. 108-9' *Shakespeare Quarterly*, vol. 31, No. 1 (Spring, 1980) 89.
[122] My italics.

> Hwa se þencheð on al þis, ant o mare þet ter is, ante nule wiðbuhe þet þing þet hit al of awakeneð, ha is heardre-iheortet þen adamantines stan ant mare amead, 3ef he mei, þen is meadschipe seolf; hire ahne fa ant hire feont, heateð hireseolfen.
>
> (Whoever considers all this, and more that is involved, and will not avoid that act from which it all arises, is more hard-hearted than a stone of adamant, and madder, if she can be, than madness itself is; her own foe and her enemy, she hates herself.[123])

Widows, on the other hand, are offered a second chance at redemption. For on the death of their first husbands they may (as virgins do) take Christ as their eternal bridegroom, and are for this reason ranked second among Christian women.[124] Dorothea Kehler explains how widows may rise above married persons, "Paul honoured pious matrons who were 'widows indeed'; those over sixty who had been married only once were deemed fit to join the congregation (1 Timothy 5:3, 5, 9)."[125] She goes on to explain the rite of "the Mantle and the Ring," practised up until the formation of the Anglican Church,

> In this rite widows who had remained celibate for a number of years after the death of their first [sic] husbands knelt before the high altar during the Mass. After vowing never to remarry on pain of punishment by the Church, each widow was clothed by the bishop in a consecrated black mantle. On her fourth

[123] Millet and Wogan-Browne, 32-3.
[124] It may be worth noting that in the essay, 'On three good wives,' the three Monaigne singles out for praise, the wife of Pliny the Younger, (843-4) Arria, the wife of Caecinna Paetus, (844-5) and Pompeia Paulina, the wife of Seneca, (846-8) all resolved to commit suicide on their husbands' deaths. (Pompeia Paulina was kept alive against her will by Nero). Montaigne, 842-9.
[125] Dorothea Kehler, 'The First Quarto of Hamlet: Reforming Widow Gertred,' *Shakespeare Quarterly*, vol. 46, No. 4 (Winter, 1995) 401.

> finger he placed a silver or gold wedding band, and over her head a veil. The bishop then blessed the widow as a sacred person, and *Te Deum laudamus* was sung before the widow was accompanied to her home by two pious matrons.[126]

The chaste and faithful widow thus stands in stark contrast to the married woman regardless of the latter's fidelity. But worse again than the married woman is the remarried widow, a character that becomes the subject of invective and ridicule in literature and on the stage for succumbing to lust (for what other reason could there be to marry again?)[127] Jeremy Taylor lays down a less stringent guide for widows, giving an appropriate time frame rather than a strict edict, "It is against public honesty to marry another man…within the year of mourning; but anciently it was infamous for her to marry till by common account the body was dissolved into its first principle of earth."[128] Right from Hamlet's first soliloquy it is clear that he is disgusted with the brevity of Gertrude's mourning period,

> A little month, or ere those shoes were old
> With which she follow'd my poor father's body,
> Like Niobe, all tears – why she –
> O God, a beast that wants discourse of reason

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[126] Kehler, 401.

[127] "Pernicious clichés about widows (but not widowers) are found in polemics, household manuals, and plays of the period and can be explained politically, in that, of the socially endorsed roles available to women – maid, wife, widow – the last is most perplexing for patriarchal theory…not only because the weaker vessel survives the stronger but because she may remarry, thus, some would say, cuckolding her former husband(s), albeit belatedly. In consequence, remarrying widows are liable to be figured as 'lusty widows.'" Kehler, 400.

[128] Jeremy Taylor, *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living*, [1650] ed. Anne Lamb (Essex: Langford, 1970) 44. It is interesting here to note that when Hamlet asks the Gravedigger how long a body will last, "Faith," he replies, "if a be not rotten before a die – as we have many pocky corses nowadays that will scarce hold the laying in – a will last some eight or nine year." (V. i. 159-162)

Would have mourn'd longer – married with my uncle,

My father's brother…

. . . . . .

…O most wicked speed! To post

With such dexterity to incestuous sheets! (I. ii. 147-52 & 156-7)

Here Gertrude fits the model of Montaigne's immoderately tearful widows, "It is no good widows tearing their hair and clawing their faces:…take no notice of those moist eyes and that pitiful voice: but do note the way they carry themselves and the colour of those plump cheeks beneath their veils!"[129] "The lady", Montaigne seems to suggest, "doth protest too much" (III. ii. 225).

The Ghost is of a like mind, her show of virtuous grief now plainly exposed, he says of Claudius,

…that incestuous, that adulterate beast,

With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts –

O wicked wit, and gifts that have the power

So to seduce! – won to his shameful lust

The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen.

. . . . . .

But virtue, as it never will be mov'd,

Though lewdness court it in the shape of heaven,

So lust, though to a radiant angel link'd,

Will sate itself in a celestial bed

[129] Montaigne, 842-3.

And prey on garbage. (I. v. 42-6 & 53-7)

When Hamlet turns his invective on Gertrude she is dumbfounded, "What have I done, that thou dar'st wag thy tongue / In noise so rude against me?" (III. iv. 39-40) She seems genuinely ignorant of her crime until Hamlet explains,

> Such an act
> That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,
> Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose
> From the fair forehead of an innocent love
> And sets a blister there, makes marriage vows
> As false as dicers' oaths – (III. iv. 40-5)[130]

It is clear that Hamlet considers his mother's remarriage a breach of her wedding vows, and extends her infidelity to her own vows (as he sees it) to the debasement of all marriage vows. His invective soon turns to an accusation of madness under the more traditional terms of the equation of sin with madness, "what judgement" he asks, would step from Old Hamlet to Claudius, "madness would not err / Nor sense to ecstacy was ne'er so thrall'd / But it reserv'd some quantity of choice / To serve in such a difference." (III. iv. 70-76) She is mad, he argues, to have remarried. This madness (albeit rhetorical) is figured not in terms of the medical theories that are so

[130] The symbolism of the plucked rose in these lines is significant. The *Speculum Virginum* recommends a garland of flowers for virgins, "Lilies, roses, and violets – that is chastity, charity, and humility. If one of these three species is lacking, the beauty of the woven crown will not endure. Take charity away from chastity, or humility from both, or take either one from humility, and all the flowers that seemed charming individually will wither at once." (*Speculum Virginum*, 290) The implications of this line for Ophelia are immense; this virginal flower has been plucked off by Gertrude's infidelity. In Hamlet's eye this has caused all virtues to wither and die in "innocent love". I will discuss this in greater detail below.

abundant in the play, but in the older terms of temptation, sin, and demonology. "What devil was't / That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind?" (III. iv. 76-7) he asks.

> O shame, where is thy blush?
> Rebellious hell,
> If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,
> To flaming youth let virtue be as wax
> And melt in her own fire; proclaim no shame
> When the compulsive ardour gives the charge,
> Since frost itself as actively doth burn
> And reason panders will. (III. iv. 81-8)

If "a matron's bones", "frost", can be turned to the madness of sin by lust, then what chance has virtue in "flaming youth". His preaching reaches her eventually and she says, "O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain." (III. iv. 158) There may be an allusion to traditional religious motif, used in the 'Dedication of an Altar to St. Anne Sermon' (c.1419-1421) to urge confession.[131] The sermon explains that God is like the gentle falcon, who hunts its prey not for the body of the fowl, but only for the heart, which is "fryst waschyn and clensyd, and clouyn wyth a knyf, and clene wrougyn owthe"[132] of blood. This is the reward that God asks for his gifts and his death on the cross, "nowght ellys bot þe hart clouyn and knyttyd, fryst wyth þe scharp

[131] This sermon is included in O'Mara, 133-140.
[132] O'Mara, 136. This line may be echoed in Hamlet's "Peace, sit you down, / And let me wring your heart" (III. iv. 34-5)

knyf of contricion."[133] The sermon finishes with the exemplary tale of a prince who challenges the tyrant who had "spoylyd and disheryte" a worthy maiden who was his beloved. In the battle both men are slain and the worthy maiden takes the prince's armour to her bedchamber so that she might always have his image before her, so that if she has suitors who tempt her to remarry she can look at the armour again and see who is the worthiest.[134] The extension of his mother's sin to all that seemed virtuous, from her breached marriage vows to all wedding vows is essential to the portrayal of Ophelia and in particular to Hamlet's attitude to her.

In the plot that Claudius and Polonius devise, determining to "loose" (II. ii. 162) Ophelia to Hamlet in order to ascertain whether the madness that afflicts him is caused by love and if it may thus be tamed by Ophelia, they may be echoing a traditional metaphoric anecdote related in the *Speculum Virguinum*. A virgin is set in wait to trap "the unicorn – a savage and ferocious beast that all the labor of hunters is powerless to catch...The unicorn is not a beast of great size, but it is of such ferocity, restlessness, and strength that it may seem unconquerable, and cannot be captured by any trick of the hunters."[135]

> A girl of elegant beauty, attractively dressed, is prepared and set down in a place where the unicorn frequently roams. As soon as it has seen her, the untamed beast runs up immediately and grows gentle. Setting aside its fierceness, it folds its limbs and lays its furious head in the virgin's lap.[136]

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[133] O'Mara, 137. It is not insignificant that Hamlet urges her to discard the corrupted part of her heart and confess (offering himself as confessor), "Confess yourself to heaven, / Repent what's past…/…/…Throw away the worser part of it / And live the purer with the other half…/…/…And when you are desirous to be blest, / I'll blessing beg of you." (151-2, 159-60 & 173-4)
[134] O'Mara, 139-40.
[135] *Speculum Virginum*, 293-4.
[136] *Speculum Virginum*, 294.

In case the point is lost on Theodora, or the reader, Peregrinus explains the metaphor, "Understand this virgin as a type of divine Wisdom, and recognize in the beast the image of worldly princes." In this way the "madly raging beast"[137] that was the Roman Empire was tamed by Christ. Peregrinus invites us to "…notice how the brutality of the beast is diminished by the sight of a virgin, whereas the insanity of men is sometimes aroused to perverse love."[138] Likewise, the effectiveness of the virgin (Ophelia) is upturned in the play scene when Hamlet (the madly raging prince) makes lying in her lap a thinly veiled allusion to the sexual act, "Lady, shall I lie in your lap?…I mean, my head in your lap." (III. ii. 110-1 & 113)

When Hamlet comes upon Ophelia, she is reading "[t]hat the show of such an exercise may colour / [her] loneliness…/…[with] devotion's visage". (III. i. 45-7) Jenkins suggests that a woman carrying a book is symbolic of devoutness, from the tradition of the inclusion of a book in pictures of the Annunciation.[139] Edwards is more insistent, the "book is obviously a prayer-book".[140] Hamlet's responses to her in this scene ought to be read in the light of this book. "Nymph, in thy orisons / Be all my sins remember'd." (III. i. 89-90) If Jenkins and Edwards are correct, then Hamlet is asking for her prayers. It may be however that Hamlet has inferred more from the refusal of his company and "tenders", and this pious show of devotion. If now she has turned away from his love (the natural conclusion for which would be marriage) then the remaining course of action for her is a devotional life (a nunnery). If she is to take to a devotional life it is quite likely that she should be reading a mirror book (like the confessional literature discussed in Chapter One) or literature pertaining to virgins (such as the *Speculum Virginum* or the 'Hali Meiðhad'). Such a book could

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[137] *Speculum Virginum*, 294.
[138] *Speculum Virginum*, 294.
[139] Jenkins, note.
[140] Edwards, note.

"remember" Hamlet of his sins in two ways; the continual warnings about the lusts of men and the perfidiousness of carnal desire and marriage may remind him of his sinful desire for her, or it may be that the listings of the seven deadly sins (common to the confessional mirror books) more plainly list (or even represent in picture form[141]) his sins on the pages that she is reading. He still has this in mind later in the scene when he says,

> I am myself indifferent honest, but yet I could accuse myself of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me. I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. (III. i. 122-7)

It is almost as though he has scanned down the pages she is reading and selected three sins, ("proud, revengeful, ambitious")[142] though of course he need not look at the page to be aware of the sins that he ought to confess. However, it is more important in this scene that he picks up on the same rhetorical tone that Laertes and Polonius have already used towards her in her opening scene.

He warns her of the danger of her beauty and "...the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness....virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall have some relish of it." (III. i. 111-4 & 117-8) This reference to the 'old stock' is quite common, but is explained quite clearly in the *Speculum Virginum*, "For all the

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[141] See Appendix VIII, 'Tree of Vices,' from the *Speculum Virginum*.

[142] Pride must be the first (being the worst of the seven deadly sins), revenge is a sin of wrath, and ambition as we have seen is a particularly courtly sin. It is also a branch of pride. "Though Hamlet sees in Ophelia the nature of a woman and all the sins that belong to it, his first speech to her in this scene – and that means in the play itself – refers not to her sins but to his...That Hamlet has in mind his condition of sinful man will presently appear when he refers to the human stock from which he springs." (Jenkins, 142.)

nobility of earthly stock belongs to the old man rather than the new; it pertains to what is born carnally, not what is reborn spiritually. It follows from this that the honor of the greatest nobility lies within us, not outside us."[143] Hamlet thus warns her that virtue and honour are easily corrupted by the flesh. His next lines spell out the only way that she may escape the filth of carnality and of earthly life, a course of action he may presume at the opening of the scene that she has already chosen, "Get thee to a nunnery. Why, wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners?" (III. i. 121-2)[144]

The alternative is to become a bride of Christ. As the *Speculum Virginum* asks,

> What, then, does Christ exhort his virgins to hear and see? 'Forget your people,' he says, 'and your father's house.' It follows most rightly that, if the bride happens to have heard her beloved speaking or seen him going before her, she will promptly forget her father and her fatherland…and having forgotten her earthly father, she who was old becomes new, she who was vile becomes fair, she who was frail becomes strong, adding beauty to beauty, that is love of the eternal to her native reason, by despising the allure of the world.[145]

"Where's your father?" (III. i. 130-1) Hamlet asks. 'Hali Meiðhad' explains the meaning of this psalm of David, "'Þi fea|der' [David] cleopeð þet unþeaw þet streonede þe of þi moder – þet ilke unhende flesches brune, þet bearninde 3eohðe of þet licomliche lust biuore þet wleatewile werc, þet bestelich gederunge, þet

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[143] *Speculum Virginum*, 292.
[144] 'Hali Meiðhad' describes the anguish and pain and humiliation of labour and childbirth in gruesome detail, and as negatively as is possible only to conclude that the final misery that the child brings its mother is that she will "eauer habbe sar care, ant lokin efter al þis hwenne hit forwurðe, ant bringe on his moder sorhe upo sorhe." ("[be] anticipating after all this the time when it will go astray and bring all kinds of unhappiness to its mother." Millet & Wogan-Browne, 32-3.
[145] *Speculum Virginum*, 281-2.

scheomelese sompnunge, þet ful of fulðe, stinkinde ant untohe dede." ("'Your father' [David] calls that sinful act through which your mother conceived you – that indecent heat of the flesh, that burning itch of physical desire before that disgusting act, that animal union, that shameless coupling, that stinking and wanton deed, full of filthiness."[146]) It does not follow from Hamlet's question that he is aware of Polonius' presence, rather it is in the spirit of this virginal rhetoric that Hamlet asks the question, and he follows with a "plague for [her] dowry" that is no worse than (and in the same spirit as) the warnings against matrimony and carnal desire that are common to the guidance given for virgins. When he exclaims, "Go to, I'll no more on't, it hath made me mad" (III. i. 148-9) it is clear that what has made him mad is her vacillation, first accepting his advances, then rejecting him and putting on the pretence of one bound for a virginal life, only to return his "remembrances" (III. i. 93) in such a fashion as to suggest that "words of so sweet breath compos'd" (III. i. 98) would be welcome again. It is this apparent vacillation between desire and devotion that causes Hamlet to use the rhetoric of the virginal guides to rail at her concluding finally, "I say we shall have no mo marriage." (III. i. 149) Marriage, as is amply demonstrated by the virginal guides and by his mother, is corrupt and vile.

This encounter sets the scene for Ophelia's third scene, where Hamlet, in high spirits mocks her virginity and publicly propositions her in most indecent fashion. Her apparent vacillation makes her representative to him of both extremes of sexual license and chaste maidenhood. "Lady, shall I lie in your lap?...I mean, my head in your lap...Do you think I meant country matters?...That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs...Nothing." (III. ii. 110-9) Nothing having lain between a maid's legs, means that she is still a virgin and therefore "fair". An "O" thing, or no thing is a

[146] Millet & Wogan-Browne, 8-9.

pleasant thing for a lustful mind to think about. Ophelia asks him if the prologue after the dumb show will "tell us what this show meant?" "Ay" Hamlet replies, "or any show that you will show him. Be not you ashamed to show, he'll not shame to tell you what it means." (III. ii. 139-2) If you are shameless enough to "show" yourself (i.e. indecently expose) then he'll interpret what you intend by the exposure. Told that he is keen, Hamlet says, "It would cost you a groaning to take off my edge." (243-4) "Still better, and worse." (245) Ophelia replies; wittier, but more cutting. "So you mis-take your husbands." (246) It is a mistake to take a husband for "better" or for "worse". His final lines addressed to her in the play thus forewarn of his later ones concerning the cheapening of marriage vows, making them as "false as dicers' oaths" (III. iv. 44-5) and make the conflation that has occurred in his mind of the two women in his life.

Ophelia's Songs & Flowers

In Ophelia's final scenes she is mad. In the first of her mad scenes, she sings snatches of songs, first one that begins with the question, "How should I your true love know / From another one?" (IV. v. 23-4) Then she sings two verses that relate to a dead beloved, "He is dead and gone, lady, / She is dead and gone," (29-30) and "White his shroud as the mountain snow –" (36) Then she sings "Tomorrow is Saint Valentine's day". These songs indicate a conflation of the death of her father and the departure of and apparent betrayal by her beloved Hamlet, in a similar manner to the conflation that has occurred in Hamlet's mind.[147] Her last song before she departs to

[147] "So Ophelia is left in the state of Jephthah's daughter. And if we recall, as Dowden did, that Jephthah's daughter, before she went to her death, spent two months bewailing her virginity, this may help to explain to us what Ophelia too will do. In forms given to her by madness, she sings of what she has not known." (Jenkins, 151)

allow Laertes steal the scene briefly with his mini rebellion, is a bawdy song, warning maidens against sex before marriage.

When she returns she fails to recognise her brother and distributes flowers, the significance of which she only partially explains. She begins with rosemary for remembrance and pansies for thoughts.[148] These probably go to Laertes as he is the one who comments on them. Fennel, is given for flattery, dissembling, and fickleness, and so probably goes to Gertrude. Columbines are given for cuckoldry, and may go either to Gertrude or to Claudius. Rue is given for grace, but it must also represent its homonym, regret or repentance. Claudius needs to repent; she keeps some for her own regrets. The final one is harder to ascribe and everyone already has a flower. A daisy may be for dissembling and therefore go to Gertrude to accompany her fennel, or if she already has two, it may be appropriate that it go to the King so that she and the King have two flowers each. Alternatively it may be for unhappiness in love in which case the most appropriate recipient would be herself, but this seems less likely. Her violets, which she says withered when her father died, are perhaps more interesting to the purposes of this discussion. They have been taken to represent faithfulness, and indeed that meaning is available, but the fact that they have withered since her father died seems to be anachronistic. Hamlet has rejected her love before killing her father.[149] The violet may alternatively represent the humility of the virginal life, described as an enclosed garden in the *Speculum Virginum*, "in it grows flowers of

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[148] "There's rosemary, that's for remembrance... And there is pansies, that's for thoughts." (IV. v. 173-5) I have followed Jenkins' interpretations of the significance of the flowers in this scene for the most part. What they represent is not as important to my argument as what they do not as will shortly become clear.

[149] Her "father," may in this case be as emblematic as the flower itself. "'Þi fea|der'", 'Hali Meiðhad' tells us, is "þet ilke unhende flesches brune, þet bearninde 3eohðe of þet licomliche lust biuore þet wleatewile werc,..." ("'Your father'...[is]...that indecent heat of the flesh, that burning itch of physical desire before that disgusting act,...") Millet & Wogan-Browne, 8-9. The suggestion in this case would be that the violets (faithfulness in love) withered when her father ("that burning itch of physical desire") died (was satiated). This is in keeping with the tone of her bawdy songs, and does not necessarily mean that she has enjoyed "that disgusting act". I will, in any case, suggest an alternative significance for the violets.

different kinds, diverse in colour and fragrance. There the white lily of chastity shines, the crocus of charity burns, the *violet* of humility glows; there the rose of modesty blushes, the spikenard breathes a fragrance of spiritual discipline;..."[150] These flowers stand in stark contrast to the flowers that Ophelia has gathered. While the emblematic flowers that Ophelia has gathered apart from rue (repentance) are either morally indifferent (thoughts, remembrance) or decidedly negative (flattery, cuckoldry, and dissembling), the flowers in the virgin's garden are representative of virtues (chastity, charity, humility, modesty and discipline). It is worth noting that Gertrude's sin has taken "off the rose" (III. iv. 42) and Ophelia's violets have "withered all" (IV. v. 182). The emblematic flowers are not yet finished with, however, and Ophelia's death as Gertrude describes it again paints an emblematic picture,

> There is a willow grows askant the brook
> That shows his hoary leaves in the glassy stream.
> Therewith fantastic garlands did she make
> Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples,
> That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,
> But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them.
> There on the pendent boughs her crownet weeds
> Clamb'ring to hang, an envious sliver broke,
> When down her weedy trophies and herself
> Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide,
> And mermaid-like awhile they bore her up,
> Which time she chanted snatches of old lauds,

[150] *Speculum Virginum*, 272. My italics.

As one incapable of her own distress,

Or like a creature native and indued

Unto that element. But long it could not be

Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,

Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodius lay

To muddy death. (IV. vii. 165-182)

Again there are daisies (perhaps for dissembling, perhaps for unhappiness in love), also crow-flowers, (symbolic of dejection) nettles, (associated with pain and betrayal) and long purples.[151] She has been gathering these for a garland. As the *Speculum Virginum* makes clear, virgins also gather flowers for garlands, "While browsing through the meadows of Scripture, we have at the same time gathered flowers to weave a crown for the virgin's head, until we are able to cover the rest of her body as well with mystical garments…"[152] But these garlands are to be woven of different flowers, "Lilies, roses, and violets – that is chastity, charity, and humility. If one of these three species is lacking, the beauty of the woven crown will not endure. Take charity away from chastity, or humility from both, or take either one from humility, and all the flowers that seemed charming individually will wither at once."[153] What Ophelia gathers is a coronet of weeds and wild flowers and thus is directly associated, not with the enclosed garden of virginity, but with Hamlet's mother, and the thrift with which she abandoned her widowhood,

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[151] The identification of these "long purples" has been a matter of debate (see Charlotte F. Otten, 'Ophelia's "Long Purples" or "Dead Men's Fingers",' *Shakespeare Quarterly*, vol. 30, No. 3 (Summer, 1979), 397-402) but it is enough for the sake of this argument to recognise that they may have a "grosser name" (what this name might be must remain in the realms of speculation) which suggests a grosser significance. The various attempts to isolate the particular flower have based their arguments on their resemblances to human sexual organs.

[152] *Speculum Virginum*, 275.

[153] *Speculum Virginum*, 290.

How weary, stale flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fie on't, ah fie, 'tis an unweeded garden
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely. That it should come to this!
But two months dead... (I. ii. 133-8)

The theme is also picked up in the lines "Confess yourself to heaven, / Repent what's past, avoid what is to come; / And do not spread the compost on the weeds / To make them ranker." (III. iv. 151-4) Where the virgin's flowers represent virtues, Gertrude and Ophelia's weeds represent sins. Even the willow (traditionally emblematic of sadness[154]) is guilty of the sin of envy. Ophelia's madness is thus entangled with sin.

The reasons for her madness are clear enough, lost love and the violent death of her father, but there is in the rhetoric that surrounds her portrayal throughout the play a persistent suggestion of the older tradition that madness is a punishment for, or is itself sin. Hamlet has also suffered lost love and the violent death of a father as a possible causes of his madness. But given Ophelia's potent and striking scene of madness and her subsequent drowning she seems rather to contrast with Hamlet's more ambiguous mental state, than to confirm his madness. There is a distinction between the way the play treats Hamlet's madness and Ophelia's. Ophelia's madness is rather set up in terms of spiritual corruption than in terms of physical debility. Hamlet's (pretended or not) madness is analysed throughout in the terms that are set down in the medical literature current in the period, but Ophelia is read within the

[154] Hence 'weeping willow'.

play in terms of Christian virginity and morality. Her madness is of the older type; Hamlet's is a more complex condition (and perhaps at its core empty).

Legal Problems

The final problem with Ophelia is the matter of her 'doubtful' death (V. i. 220) and small funeral. The doubt is expressed quite clearly by the Gravedigger, "Is she to be buried in Christian burial, when she wilfully seeks her own salvation?" (V. i. 1-2) It is undecided whether she committed suicide or whether it was accidental death. "The crowner", says the other, "hath sate on her and finds it Christian burial." (V. i. 4-5) This is a half decision, the coroner has not decided that she did not commit suicide, just that it is Christian burial. It must be self defence, concludes the Gravedigger,

> *se offendendo*, ...if I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act, and an act hath three branches – it is to act, to do, to perform; argal, she drowned herself wittingly...Here lies the water – good. Here stands the man – good. If the man go to this water and drown himself, it is, will he nill he, he goes, mark you that. But if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself. Argal, he that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life. (V. i. 9-20)[155]

The example is absurd, and is meant to be nothing else. The Other clown gives the truth of the matter, "If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o' Christian burial." (V. i. 23-5) This prognosis is upheld by the priest, who explains that it is only the intervention of "great command" (V. i. 221) that has

[155] The second grave digger may intentionally confuse *se offendendo* (self offence) with *se defendendo* (self defence).

prevented her being buried in "unsanctified" ground. (V. i. 222) And also upheld by Hamlet when he first sees the funeral train, "Who is this they follow? / And with such maimed rites? This doth betoken / The corse they follow did with desp'rate hand / Fordo it own life. 'Twas of some estate." (V. i. 211-4) Michael MacDonald explains the realities of coroners deliberations on the matter,

> they could find that the deceased killed himself while sane, and thus was a felon of himself (*felo de se*), or they could decide that he was insane and thus innocent of any crime (*non compos mentis*). When verdicts of *felo de se* were returned, the suicide was denied the rites of Christian burial; his property was forfeited to the crown and his corpse was buried profanely, interred at night in a public highway with a stake driven through it. When verdicts of *non compos mentis* were brought in, the suicide's property was saved and the normal rites might be performed.[156]

The normal rites are not performed for Ophelia, but it is Christian burial, so the judgement of the coroner is incomplete. This, MacDonald asserts, is in keeping with the records of the time, "Mixed or ambiguous verdicts, in which it was alleged that the deceased was both insane *and* guilty of self-murder, were not uncommon. (Such verdicts actually outnumbered *non compos mentis* verdicts, 196 to 155.)"[157]

It is not insignificant that the rites she is allowed include that she is buried with her "virgin crants" (V. i. 225) and "maiden strewments" (V. i. 226) and the wish that "from her fair and unpolluted flesh…/…violets spring." (V. i. 232-3) The rhetoric

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[156] MacDonald, 310. The second gravedigger's "*se offendendo*" is in contrast with *felo de se*, although Michael MacDonald says that this suggests the more legitimate alternative to *felo de se* and *non compos mentis* verdicts of accidental death. See Michael MacDonald, 'Ophelia's Maimed Rites,' *Shakespeare Quarterly*, vol. 37, No. 3 (Autumn, 1986) 312-3.
[157] MacDonald, 312.

has not changed, Gertrude can still call her "sweet maid" whilst scattering flowers (not weeds). This virginal rhetoric has tortured and entangled Ophelia throughout her first four scenes, coming as it does from the three most important male figures in her life, and becomes as a result the rhetoric against which her madness exposed itself. Her burial is marked by a return to the appropriate symbolism of virgins, in death she is reassumed into a moral norm appropriate for women.

There is also a legal technicality surrounding Hamlet's murder of Polonius. If Hamlet is mad then, as he correctly points out to Laertes, he is not responsible for the murder of Polonius,

> This presence knows, and you must needs have heard,
> How I am punish'd with a sore distraction,
> What I have done
> That might your nature, honour, and exception
> Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.
> Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never Hamlet.
> If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,
> And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,
> Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.
> Who does it then? His madness. If't be so,
> Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd;
> His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy. (V. ii. 224-35)

This is undoubtedly a case of Hamlet's wit devising an elaborate excuse for the murder he has committed. Nonetheless, he is quite correct, in citing a legal tradition that Kinsman identifies.

> ...older religious attitudes toward the mad were being advantageously incorporated into the spirit of the law, for such legal commentators as Dalton (1635) and Coke (1648) agreed that lunatics could not be held responsible either in criminal or civil cases, for they were "innocents" who lacked knowledge of good or evil. Hence lunacy was a state of involuntary ignorance in contrast, say, with drunkenness, which induced a voluntary ignorance and besottedness.[158]

Conclusion

Hamlet's engagement with the medical authorities on madness in dramatic form serves to highlight an inadequacy in the theories of the time. Though Hamlet's madness is observed, though repeated attempts are made to establish a cause and a diagnosis, though a range of accepted cures are administered, the case is never conclusively settled (even now). Ophelia on the other hand gets no treatment for her agitated mental condition whatsoever. The most that can be said is that in her madness Horatio is asked to watch over her.[159] But even this observation seems to stop short at any actual interference. Her death may be reported, but not prevented.

It is worth noting that, in one form or another, accusations and warnings of proximity to madness abound throughout the play. Claudius begins the string of

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[158] Robert S. Kinsman, 'Folly, Melancholy, and Madness: A Study in Shifting Styles of Medical Analysis and Treatment, 1450-1675' in *The Darker Vision of the Renaissance: Beyond the Fields of Reason*, ed., Robert S. Kinsman (London: U of California P, 1974) 293.

[159] The King sends Horatio to "follow her close" (IV. i. 74) after her initial bout of indecent songs. He fails to do so, but some eyewitness must have been close enough to relate the details of her death.

accusations by reprimanding Hamlet for mourning too long, warning that grief (like any emotion) has the potential to obscure reason, "It shows a will most incorrect to heaven, / A heart unfortified, a mind impatient, /…'tis a fault to heaven, /…To reason most absurd, whose common theme / Is death of fathers". (I. ii. 95-6, 97, 102-3) Hamlet in turn ponders the lack of reason shown in his mother's marriage to Claudius, and in particular the haste of it. " O God, a beast that wants discourse of reason / Would have mourn'd longer…" (I. ii. 150) Hamlet is then again held in suspicion of madness by his loyal friend Horatio, "He waxes desperate with imagination." (I. v. 87) The ghost then curiously warns Hamlet, "howsomever thou pursuest this act, / Taint not thy mind…" (I. v. 84) It seems curious that even the ghost is wary of the sanity of the young man. It may also be that Hamlet is aware of a tendency towards madness in himself, when he replies to the ghost's command to remember, "Ay, thou poor ghost, whiles memory holds a seat / In this distracted globe." (I. v. 96) This 'globe' of course encompasses a triple pun, being his head, the world, and the theatre The Globe, all of whom fall foul to the suggestion of distraction. The Danish people are also accused of distraction by Claudius, who cannot understand Hamlet's popularity, "He's lov'd of the distracted multitude, / Who like not in their judgement but their eyes". (IV. iii. 4) Polonius admits that he also suffered much at the hands of love, "A is far gone. And truly in my youth I / suffered much extremity for love, very near this." (II. ii. 189) Hamlet accuses Gertrude of worse than lunacy in moving so easily from a marriage to his father to one with Claudius, "…what judgement / Would step from this to this?…madness would not err / Nor sense to ecstacy was ne'er so thrall'd / But it reserv'd some quality of choice / To serve in such a difference." (III. iv. 70-1 & 73-6)

The play serves to highlight a problem with defining the bounds of madness, when so many of the characters can be legitimately accused of madness, of one sort or another, where the legal implications of madness are a matter of controversy, and the madness or sanity of the protagonist cannot be conclusively established. It seems rather poignant that the Gravedigger remarks that sent into England Hamlet's madness will go unrecognised. The comment, though a glib jest, is indicative of the problem of Hamlet's madness. In spite of their best efforts, the treatise writers have failed to set down an incontrovertible diagnostic method for distinguishing the sane from the insane, and likewise the critics may never rest in their attempts to pluck out the heart of Hamlet's mystery. Ophelia on the other hand constructed as she is in terms of older Christian rhetoric, is clearly identifiable as mad and is eventually buried outside of the bounds of normal Christianity in a moral judgement that the rhetoric of the play seems to uphold. Hamlet's madness has been anatomised, and like Vesalius' cadaver once opened a soul is nowhere to be seen, peeled layer by layer like an onion whose final layer reveals nothing, Hamlet's madness is in the end insubstantial. Ophelia's madness on the other hand uses the rhetoric of the *Speculum Virginum* and the *specula* (mirror-book) tradition and the literature of sin, and what is reflected is immediately identifiable as madness. Perhaps this is why in the end Bright must conclude his scientific treatise with "I commend the blessing & successe of my labour to the Almighty, who restore you if it be his will sound in bodie, cheerfull in mind, and assured in faith of his sweete mercie and fauour"[160] and Horatio's final words to Hamlet are "Good night, sweet prince, / And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest." (V. ii. 364-5)

[160] Bright, 284.

Chapter 5: Classical Madness

Introduction: Two developing traditions

Two strands of theatrical tradition developed side by side (not without influencing each other) during the century and a half before Shakespeare's plays were staged at the Rose and Globe theatres in London. The first may be referred to as the 'native tradition'[1] and has been discussed at length in Chapter One. This opening chapter dealt with the development of subjectivity in dramatic characters up to and during the English renaissance; the observable progression from the predominance of allegorical characters in the drama of medieval moral allegory, to the more subjective and introspective characters of Shakespeare's plays. It engaged with some of the more important allegory plays that expose what is essentially a phase of growth and development for the dramatic subject.

In this first section I investigated the developing subjectivity of the allegorical protagonists, of *Mankind* (c.1470), *Wisdom* (c.1470),[2] *Everyman* (c.1495), and *Mundus et Infans* (c.1522)[3] (by their very natures not subjective individuals[4]) through to Shakespeare's *Richard II*. In it I focussed on the elements of Christian and courtly moral traditions that encouraged increased self-consciousness. While this influence of courtly 'self-fashioning' and identity manipulation was combining with more traditional Christian means of gaining self-awareness (specifically, through

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[1] I have borrowed the term 'native tradition' and the term 'classical method' from T. H. Howard-Hill. The terms are used by him in 'The Evolution of the Form of Plays in English During the Renaissance' to explain the two developing traditions in the dramatic printing methods of the time, but the terms also seem equally useful in terms of the actual plays themselves. See T. H. Howard-Hill, 'The Evolution of the Form of Plays in English During the Renaissance,' *Renaissance Quarterly*, vol. 43, No. 1 (Spring, 1990) 112-145.

[2] Anima is the protagonist (although with relatively few lines) of *Wisdom*.

[3] Infans is the protagonist of *The Worlde and the Chylde* (or *Mundus et Infans*) (1522).

[4] This is not to say that the characters are devoid of individual characteristics, but as embodiments of humankind as a whole (Anima of course is representative of the human soul, rather than humankind) they can never be subjective individuals in the way that later renaissance dramatic characters are.

confessional literature) to develop the subjectivity of the stage protagonists, a further tradition was also influencing the drama in the same direction. Classical dramatists drew on legendary figures to create their tragedies, and so these Greek heroes (and anti-heroes) were readymade models for more subjective protagonists. It is the influence of classical models that I shall trace in this chapter, specifically with reference to the classical stage madmen who influenced their renaissance counterparts to a great extent.[5]

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[5] I will deal in particular with a group of English vernacular tragedies that imitate to a large degree the work of Seneca. J. W. Cunliffe's *The Influence of Seneca on Elizabethan Tragedy* (London: Macmillan, 1893) is still an extremely important (albeit extremely dated) work in the investigation of the use of Seneca by Elizabethan dramatists. T. S. Eliot's essay, 'Seneca In Elizabethan Translation,' (in T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays* (London: Faber & Faber, 1932, 1972) 65-105) (characteristic of much of the material on the subject) oddly combines a distaste for Seneca with the assured belief in the importance of his work to the period, "No author exercised a wider or deeper influence upon the Elizabethan form of tragedy than did Seneca." (Eliot, 65) There are, however, a couple of inexplicably impassioned objections to the assertion of Senecan influence on the drama of the period. Some are characterised by a simple distaste for Seneca. Leicester Bradner, for one, only reluctantly acknowledges the "harmful" (Leicester Bradner, 'The Rise of Secular Drama,' *Studies in the Renaissance*, vol. 3 (1956) 11) influence of "the Senecan prison-house." (Bradner, 17) More emphatically, and more convincingly, G. K. Hunter objects on a number of grounds that deserve attention. Firstly, he objects to Cunliffe's methodology, listing as it unashamedly does "echoes and reminiscences" with which to prove the "influence" one classical author has on other Elizabethan dramatists. (G. K. Hunter, *Dramatic Identities and Cultural Tradition: Studies in Shakespeare and his Contemporaries, Critical Essays by G. K. Hunter* (Liverpool: LUP, 1978) 159) Secondly he argues that the premise works well for *The Misfortunes of Arthur* and *Gismond of Salerne* (both of which I shall discuss below) but that the 'influence' is "less convincing as the works he treats become aesthetically more important." (Hunter, 160) Thirdly he objects that by prioritising the Senecan influence Cunliffe somehow detracts from the "alternative line of serious writing, running through *Damon and Pithias*, *Horestes*, and *Cambyses*" (Hunter, 160) and from the "vernacular drama" (i.e. the biblical pageant and allegory tradition) (Hunter, 172-3). Finally he argues that other classical authors, in particular Ovid, wield a far greater influence in the tragedy of the period. (Hunter, 165) While it is fair to say that Cunliffe's approach is simplistic, it is not without its uses. Refusing to acknowledge and incorporate Cunliffe's findings in his argument simply makes the same mistake of leaving out one aspect involved in the development of this drama. Hunter's aesthetical prioritisation of some of the works Cunliffe "treats" (Hunter, 160) betrays what may be the unstated heart of his objection; i.e. that he prefers Ovid to Seneca. By maintaining that *Damon and Pithias*, *Horestes*, and *Cambyses* epitomise the 'serious,' 'vernacular drama,' on one level maintains a sense of separation (and independence) between the two types of drama that is artificial and inaccurate, and on another level fails to acknowledge the 'vernacular' aspect of the more Senecan tragedies (Hunter's division further contains an implicit acknowledgment of the Senecan debt that he is reluctant elsewhere to admit).

I hope to avoid such censure and invective as Cunliffe has attracted on the following grounds. My approach to madness in this thesis has taken account of a wide range of 'influences'. Nor shall I restrict my approach to listing echoes and reminiscences (Cunliffe has done that). Rather my focus will be on tracing the development of a tradition that specifically relates to Senecan madness. I do not wish to prioritise Seneca aesthetically to the detriment of Ovid, but if Seneca's treatment of madness is more apt than Ovid's to the literature I am dealing with it would be unproductive to give equal attention to Ovid. (This defence would also hold for Cunliffe who was not writing 'The Influence of Ovid on Elizabethan Tragedy'.) Finally, by referring to a 'native tradition' as opposed to a 'classical tradition' I do not wish to suggest that one is more important than the other, (nor even that they developed independently) there shall therefore be no need for the type of misplaced and thinly veiled patriotism that leads Hunter to too vigorously defend the 'vernacular' drama.

Classical Comedy

The first English play to be printed,[6] *Fulgens and Lucres* (1512-1516) already shows the influence of classical authors. In essence the play is a disputation (in the legal tradition) over what constitutes true nobility. Lucres' two suitors Gayus and Cornelius must each in turn put forward their case for marriage. Lucres must then decide,

> Ye, but not wythstondyng that ye thereto agre
> That I sholde this question of nobles diffine,
> It is a grete matter whiche, as semyth me,
> Pertayneth to a philosopher or ellis a devyne. (pt. 2, 420-3)

The argument becomes a matter of whether true nobility comes from lineage and descent or whether it is through virtue that nobility is attained, more plainly, 'What makes a man?' The play contains, particularly in its subplot,[7] many of the traditional elements included by authors of Greek and Roman new comedy.[8] The two servants (simply designated by A and B, never named, and referred to by each other throughout as "what-calt") are reminiscent of the 'tricky slaves' of this tradition.[9]

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[6] *Revels* (1980) records *The Summoning of Everyman* (1510-25) as potentially the first, with *Fulgens and Lucres* (1512-1516) perhaps slightly later. (*Revels History of Drama in English*, vol. II, 1500-1576, eds. Norman Sanders, Richard Southern, T. W. Craik & Lois Potter, (London: Methuen, 1980) 39.) Gray (1989) reaffirms the *Revels*' date for *Everyman* (c. 1510) but does not give a date for *Fulgens and Lucres*. (Martin Gray, *A Chronology of English Literature*, York Handbooks (London: Longman, 1989) 24.) Howard-Hill (1990) records *Fulgens and Lucres* (1512-1516) as the first, with the same date. (Howard-Hill, 129) Alan H. Nelson also believes it is the first play printed in England. Alan H. Nelson, ed., *The Plays of Henry Medwall* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1980) 28. It is this edition of the play that I am using.

[7] In his introduction to the play in *Medieval Drama: An Anthology*, Greg Walker writes, "perhaps the first real sub-plot, rather than merely a comic interlude, in English drama". Walker, 306.

[8] i.e. Menander, Plautus and Terence.

[9] The title character in Plautus' *Pseudolus* and Terence's Syrus in *Adelphoe* are perhaps the best examples of this 'tricky slave,' or 'dolosus servus' character type. Plautus, *The Pot of Gold and Other Plays*, trans. E. F. Watling, Penguin Classics (London: Penguin, 1965). Terence, *The Comedies*, trans. Betty Radice, Penguin Classics (London: Penguin, 1965, 1976). See also Northrop Frye, *The Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton: PUP, 1957) 173.

Their base courtship of the brusque serving-girl Joan (designated by the speech prefix Ancilla) is also reminiscent of Terentian and Plautine sub-plots.[10] And the flamboyant aristocrat, Cornelius, is in many ways similar to the braggart warrior stock character.[11] But the classical dramatic influence in *Fulgens and Lucres* is primarily indebted to the 'new comedy,'[12] and lends little to the influence over the perceptions of madness in Shakespeare's plays.

This tradition, as it is evident in the records of the plays performed and printed at the time, shows the immediately identifiable influence of classical comedy on the English drama to a much greater extent than tragic drama. The Roman 'new comedy' is represented quite early in the printing of editions of Terence as early as 1470 and Plautus in 1472, as well as individual translations of Terence's *Andria* in 1520 and Plautus' *Menaechmi* (trans. William Warner) in 1595,[13] its influence more readily

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[10] The best example of this type of romantic sub-plot among minor characters is Permeno's attempted wooing of Pythias in Terence's *Eunuchus*. A and B's courtship of Ancilla is however in essence a burlesque of courtly romantic contest, culminating in a mock joust. (*Fulgens and Lucres*, 1202)

[11] Pyrgopolynices in Plautus' *Miles Gloriosus* is the archetype. Cornelius' flamboyant clothes and large codpiece (*Fulgens and Lucres*, 734) are Medwall's equivalent of Pyrgopolynices' well-polished sword and shield (*Miles Gloriosus*, 1-5). There is an argument which locates the development of these stock character types in the native tradition. Leicester Bradner, perhaps somewhat confusedly, articulates both traditions. First he writes, "This [biblical pageant] repertory handed on to the Renaissance drama such acting parts as the proud tyrant (Herod and Pilate), the braggart soldier (the soldiers of Herod and of the high priests), the comic yokel (the shepherds at the Nativity), the witty servant, the shrewish wife, and many others." (Bradner, 8) Then, 'Roman drama did leave its mark on England, even though the process was slow, in the five-act structure and in the increased coherence and compactness of plot. Furthermore, a number of the comic devices of Plautus – the beatings, the clever servants, and the braggarts, for instance – fitted in with and enforced the tradition of the moralities, while the cruel tyrants of Seneca were not new figures to an audience accustomed to the deeds and the ranting of Herod and Pilate." (Bradner, 12) As this somewhat begrudgingly seems to indicate, both traditions had an influence that blended over the years to such an extent that to attempt to prioritise one over the other as most influential is impossible and irrelevant. I shall return to the figure of Herod and the Senecan 'cruel tyrant' type a little later.

[12] *Fulgens and Lucres* is essentially a reworking of a Latin prose work, *De Vera Nobilite* (1428) by the Italian Buonaccorso da Montemagno. (Reed spells his first name 'Bonaccorso.') The discourse was first translated to French by Jean Mielot, then from the French version into English by John Tiptoft in 1481. It is this version of the debate that Medwall uses for his dramatisation. See A. W. Reed, *Early Tudor Drama: Medwall, the Rastells, Heywood and the More Circle* (London: Methuen, 1926) 97-8.

[13] Howard-Hill, 130.

identifiable in a reworking of Plautus' *Amphitruo* as *Jacke Jugeler*[14] printed in 1562,[15] and in *Ralph Roister Doister* (indebted to Terence's *Phormio*) printed 1566. The culmination of this tradition is perhaps the court performance of Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors* (based, to a large extent, on Plautus' *Menaechmi*) in 1604. One comedy, however, shows a greater debt to classical tragic and epic material; *Thersites*.

Thersites

Ravisius Textor's *Thersites*[16] (1530) is a curiosity in terms of its classical debt. The title character originates in a brief episode of Homer's *Iliad* (c.850BC).[17] Thersites is a source of comic scorn, physically impaired and intellectually deficient. In his pride he rails against all his compatriots and earns a vicious rebuke from Ulysses, who promises that a repeat of his "madnesse" (II. 226) will be punished with his being stripped and whipped back from the council tent to the fleet. (II. 180-241) This brief character sketch is extended by Textor to a Latin dialogue of two hundred and sixty eight lines. His madness, a comic offhand in Homer, becomes a full blown proud lunacy in Textor. His mother reprimands him in the midst of his railings, "Hei fili, si quod mater tibi contulit unquam / Obsequium, hanc hanc animi rabiem durumque furorem / Exue, caeruleamque breuis dilatio bilem / Mitiget, exiguum tempus concede furori, / Dum mea me victam doceat fortuna dolere." (160-4) ["Alas son, if ever your mother has imputed obedience to you, / Lay aside this rage of spirit

[14] "Taking the ground therof out of Plautus first commedie" (Prologue, 64) *Jacke Jugeler* in Marie Axton, ed., *Three Tudor Classical Interludes*, (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer and Rowman & Littlefield, 1982).
[15] *Revels*, vol. II, 57.
[16] Both the Latin (with translation) and the English versions are included in Axton.
[17] I have used George Chapman's translation (1598) in George Chapman, *Chapman's Homer: The Iliad*, Bollington Series XLI, ed. Allardyce Nicoll (Princeton: PUP, 1998). Though perhaps anachronistic (translated, as it is, after most of the plays I will deal with) it provides a more contemporary appreciation of this epic than a modern more literal translation would. See Nicoll's introduction for the complicated printing history of the work. (Nicoll, xix-xxx)

and uncouth madness / Let a brief delay sooth the dark bile, / Grant short time to madness, / Whilst my lot teaches me, overcome, to lament."] But she is forced to concede that she has no hope of appeasing his fury ("furoris" (181)) when his madness ("furor"(186)) is mixed with anger. The dialogue reaches its comic peak when he fearfully enters into battle with a snail. (199-218) When the play was adapted into English it more than trebled in length. Mulciber (charged with making his armour) is the first to question his sanity, "Why thou pevysshe ladde / Arte thou almost madde / Or well in thy wytte?" (59-61) Thersites himself has an explanation for his madness, "The goddess of battayle hyr fury on me hath cast." (296) The comedy of this brief interlude contains within it reasons and forms of madness that are evident in earnest in other classical sources.[18] This pride, that in Thersites is simply ludicrous, is the earnest cause of Ajax' madness.[19] The battle fury that Thersites claims to be under the thrall of does in fact infect Achilles, who was the true recipient of Mulciber's labours.[20] The black bile that his mother accuses him of succumbing to in the Latin text is the very real black bile (melas choloi) or melancholy of Bright's

[18] Thersites' mother threatens to commit suicide if he insists on going into battle, and in an apparently unusual moment of melodrama threatens, "I wyll also cut my pappes awaye / That gave the sucke so manye a daye". (290-1) The significance of these lines will be discussed at length when the essence of them appears again in the tragedies of this developing tradition later in this chapter. Thersites' mother may owe something to Thetis, who persuades her son Achilles to delay his entry into battle until she has secured new armour and a shield for him from Mulciber. (*Iliad* IIXX, 128-31)

[19] Enraged that Odysseus has been thought worthy (before him) to receive Achilles' armour, Ajax means to slaughter his Greek compatriots, but Athena (to protect Odysseus, and punish Ajax's pride) drives him mad so that he spends his slaughter on cattle. (see esp. Sophocles' *Ajax* (c.425BC), 39-70) Sophocles, *Ajax, Electra, Oedipus Tyrannus*, Loeb Classical Library, ed. & trans. Hugh Lloyd-Jones (London: Harvard UP, 1994).

[20] There are frequent references to Achilles' rage and fury spurred by his desire to revenge the death of his friend Patroclus, the most striking image (which will recur again and again) is of him wading in the crimson (with blood) river Xanthus, "spritelike did with his sword advance / Up to the river. Ill affaires tooke up his furious braine / For Troy's engagements: every way he doubl'd slaine on slaine. / A most unmanly noise was made with those he put to sword, / Of grones and outcries; the flood blusht to be so much engor'd / With such base soules." (*Iliad* XXI, 18-23)

Treatise and Burton's *Anatomy*, and the other medical writings discussed at length in Chapter Four.[21] These medical writings also refer repeatedly to classical models.

Classical Influence on Medical Madness Theory

The medical treatise writers investigated in Chapter Four cannot help themselves in borrowing elements of their conceptions of madness from classical Greek and Roman tragic and epic madness. M. Andreas Laurentius seems barely to acknowledge that he is discussing fictional characters, as he gives examples to show that madmen often kill themselves, but that we have "very few examples of meere melancholike persons which haue slaine themselues". His examples include Empedocles Agrigentinus, who "cast himselfe headlong into the burning flames of the mountaine Ætna"; Ajax, son of Telamon, who he explains, "was out of his wits, soo far that he was not thought worthie of *Achilles* armour, but that it was adiudged vnto *Vlisses*. Whereupon he passed ouer some part of his furie in killing all maner of cattell he met withall, thinking he had slaine *Vlisses* and all his companions"; Cleomenes, who killed himself with his own sword while he was "likewise out of his wits"; and finally, "*Orestes* hauing slaine his mother *Clytemnestra*, was so furiously outraged, that if his deare friend *Pylades* had not carefully watched ouer him, he had destroyed himselfe a hundred times."[22]

Thomas Wright clearly has the theatre in mind when he says, "He that should see Hercules raging, Orestes trembling, Cain ranging, Amnon pining, Dido

[21] Ruth Padel has also observed the transmission of this darkening madness from Greek tragedy through to Shakespeare, "Ajax's eyes are 'darkened' in madness. Biological and daemonic causes of madness are black. Daemonic madness-senders are 'dark-faced children of Night': Lyssa, Erinyes, rising from black Hades. Magico-medical organic causes of madness include black roots cut from black earth in the dark: a root-magic still at work in Shakespeare's day. 'Have we eaten of the insane root, that takes the reason prisoner?' [I. iii. 84-5] asks Banquo when the witches disappear. Internal organic causes include black bile." (Padel, 47)

[22] Laurentius, 93. We may think of Horatio, and the advise of the treatise writers that a good friend is "no small treasure", as Bright says. See Chapter Three, 89 & 90.

consuming, Archimedes running naked would little doubt that Passions mightily change and alter the quiet temper and disposition of the Mind."[23] Timothy Bright cites Homer's characterisation of Agamemnon as the example to prove his moralizing. "Our intemperance" it seems is to blame for all the maladies a body is prone to, including madness (because "God permits it") and by these sins we "metamorphize our selves, and degenerate into beasts." This, he tells us, has been shown to us by Homer about "*Agamemnon*, that when he was well pleased, and could moderate his passion, hee was ---- *os oculosque Jovi par*: like *Jupiter* in feature, *Mars* in valour, *Pallas* in wisdome, another God; but when he became angry he was a Lyon, a Tiger, a Dogge, &c. there appeared no signe or likenesse of *Jupiter* in him".[24] So too, he tells us, "if wee give reines to Lust, Anger, Ambition, Pride, and follow our owne wayes, wee degenerate into beasts, transforme our selves, overthrowe our constitutions, provoke God to Anger, and heap upon us this of *Melancholy*, and all kindes of incurable diseases, as a just and deserved punishment of our sinnes."[25] Bright's stern moralizing tone clearly articulates the combination of the two predominant explanations for madness that merge in the drama of this period. Greek tragic madness is generally the result of a sin or misdemeanour (most often hubris / pride) and a punishment from a god or gods. In the Christian tradition also madness is most often seen as the punishment of sin (or indeed the sin itself is madness). By using classical examples (case studies even), but listing "Lust, Anger, Ambition, Pride" i.e.

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[23] Wright, 141. That Wright says "see" rather than, 'read about' makes it clear that it is initially the theatre he has in mind, Seneca's *Hercules Furens* seems a likely means of seeing Hercules raging, Cain might be viewed in the N. Town *Cain and Abel* as in other town cycles, Amnon could be seen pining in George Peele's *David and Bethsabe* (printed in 1599 after his death), Dido could be seen on the public stage in Marlowe and Nashe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage* (1590), but Archimedes and Orestes may pose a problem in terms of actually being viewed.

[24] Edgar in the guise of Mad Tom O' Bedlam may owe something to this when he claims, "Wine loved I deeply, dice dearly; and, in woman, out-paramoured the Turk: false of heart, light of ear, bloody of hand; hog in sloth, fox in stealth, wolf in greediness, dog in madness, lion in prey." (*King Lear*, III. iv. 88-92) William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, ed. R. A. Foakes, The Arden Shakespeare (Surrey: Thomas Nelson, 1997).

[25] Bright, 128.

three of the 'seven deadly sins' (and adding ambition, a branch of pride) he is recontextualising the classical myths to prove his point, giving classical weight to Christian argument. Greek 'hubris' becomes the first and worst of the deadly sins, 'pride'. It is further supplemented with 'ambition,' perhaps more familiar to the viewers of classical tragedy.[26] While attempting to take a more scientific approach to mental dysfunction,[27] the treatise writers need to accommodate traditional approaches to madness. Timothy Bright makes reference to the Eumenides in distinguishing the difference between a dysfunction of the body and the soul:

> Whatsoeuer molestation riseth directly as a proper obiect of the mind, that in that respect is not melancholicke, but hath a farther ground then fancie, and riseth from conscience, condemning the guiltie soule of those ingrauen lawes of nature, which no man is voide of, be he neuer so laborious. This it is, that hath caused the prophane poëts to haue fained Hecates Eumenides, and the infernall furies; which although they be but fained persons, yet the matter which is shewed vnder their maske, is serious, true, and of wofull experience. This taketh nothing of the body, nor intermedleth with humour, but giueth a direct wounde with those firie dartes, which men so afflicted make their mone of.[28]

He has recast the Furies as a more Christian allegorical figure representing a guilty conscience. They thus represent for Bright a type of sinful madness that ought to be

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[26] Hamlet has made this same duplication (Shakespeare perhaps drawing on Laurentius) in his assertion, "I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious". (III. i. 124-5) Hamlet has also replaced the sin of wrath with the more classically resonant 'revengeful'.
[27] i.e. melancholy and all its variants (discussed in Chapter Three), erotomania, passions (i.e. passions of the mind).
[28] Bright, 193.

treated by a priest rather than a physician. The translators of classical tragedy in the sixteenth century also make this accommodation of Christian and classical ideas of punishment and madness. In this the Furies play the dominant role.

Greek Tragedy

The tragic tradition running concurrently with the comic one seems to have affected the native drama less immediately. There is plenty of evidence to suggest that, within the universities, Greek and Roman tragedies were performed in their proper languages,[29] but their translation into the vernacular and the transmission of tropes and features of the classical tragedy into English tragedies did not happen as quickly as it did with comedy. In the early records the Greek dramatists are represented in Latin translation and performance primarily by Euripides and Sophocles. A play called 'Bacchus' was performed in Dublin in 1528 and 'Dionysius the Tyrant' at the playfield, Dundee in 1540.[30] A translation of *Medea* was printed in 1544 (probably written a year before), *Alcestis* in 1556 (also probably written 1543).[31] A collection, 'Tragedies of Euripides' was translated but not printed around 1550 (c.1540-72).[32] 'Philoctetes' was translated (to Latin) in 1543, but not printed.[33] In 1556 a play called *Ajax Flagellifer* was due to be performed before the Queen at Christ Church, Oxford.[34] The Queen was too tired to view the performance of what Nicholas Robinson, fellow of the college, called "Ajacis *furores*, Sophocaeo Cothurno

[29] See especially Boas' *University Drama in the Tudor Age*. (Boas, 16-18) I will only deal briefly with Greek and Latin performances and printings as it is with the transmission of features, tropes and traditions from Greek and Roman drama into English vernacular tragedy that I am primarily interested.
[30] *Revels*, vol. II, 47 & 51.
[31] *Revels*, vol. II, 53 & 58.
[32] *Revels*, vol. II, 55.
[33] *Revels*, vol. II, 53.
[34] This is not to be confused with the play of the same name performed before James I in 1605, which Boas convincingly argues is different. (Boas, 97)

non indignos".[35] The madness (*furor*) of Ajax was clearly the key to this lost translation as it is in Sophocles.[36] Again *Iphigenia in Aulis* was translated but not printed in 1558 (c.1549-77).[37] Further to this 'Iphigenia' was performed at court in 1571.[38] 'Ajax and Ulysses' was performed at court in 1572.[39] Thomas Watson's famous translation of Sophocles' *Antigone* was printed in 1581.[40] 'Agamemnon and Ulysses' was performed at court in 1584.[41] 'Ajax' was performed at Oxford in 1605.[42]

The transmission of Greek mad figures to the vernacular English tragedy owes a far greater debt to Latin and Italian drama, however, than to the Greek originals, which remained largely the territory of the universities. In the remainder of this chapter I will focus on the transmission of these models for classical theatrical madness through Latin sources (especially Seneca) to the vernacular English tragedies which preceded the work of Shakespeare. I will trace the development of a tradition of English classical tragedy by the almost chronological (I have withheld those plays with clear debts to Seneca until after *Jocasta* and *Horestes*) examination of a series of

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[35] Cit. Boas, 97. My italics.
[36] Ajax appears in person in one of Shakespeare's plays, and though the Ajax of *Troilus and Cressida* is not the raging madman of Sophocles' play his portrayal surely owes something to his mad episode which must have been as imbedded in the minds of Shakespeare's generation as was the pun associated with his name and a 'jakes'. [In 1596 Sir John Harington designed and installed a 'water-closet' for the Queen's Palace at Richmond. The installation was accompanied by a series of publications by Harington playing upon this pun; *Anatomy of the Metamorphosed Ajax*, *An Apology or Rather a Recantation*, *Metamorphosis of Ajax*, and *Ulysses upon Ajax*. (see Gray, 47).] Alexander describes him, "He is as valiant as the lion, churlish as the bear, slow as the elephant; a man into whom nature hath so crowded humours that his valour is crushed into folly, his folly sauced with discretion. There is no man hath a virtue that he hath not a glimpse of, nor any man an attaint but he carries some stain of it. He is melancholy without cause, and merry against the hair; he hath the joints of everything, but everything so out of joint that he is a gouty Briareus, many hands and no use, or purblind Argus, all eyes and no sight." (I. ii. 20-30) Peter J. Smith recognises a connection between Harrington's *Metamorphosis Of A Iax* (I have altered the title here as Smith does to emphasise the connection) and Malvolio's puzzle, "what should that alphabetical position portend?...'M.O.A.I.'" (*Twelfth Night*, II. v. 119-121) Peter J. Smith, 'M.O.A.I. "What Should That Alphabetical Position Portend?" An Answer to the Metamorphic Malvolio,' *Renaissance Quarterly*, vol. 51, No. 4 (Winter, 1998) 1199-1224. Fittingly, the letter that contains this riddle will prove the means by which Malvolio is made to seem mad.
[37] *Revels*, vol. II, 58.
[38] *Revels*, vol. II, 64. Titles in inverted commas are plays for which we do not have a text or which we cannot with certainty identify.
[39] *Revels*, vol. II, 65.
[40] *Revels History of Drama in English*, vol. III 1576-1613, eds. J. Leeds Barroll, Alexander Leggatt, Richard Hosley, Alvin Kernan (London: Routledge, 1996) 57.
[41] *Revels*, vol. III, 58.
[42] Boas, 97.

tragedies which forefront the madness of their protagonists by modelling them on received classical traits and tropes. Because my focus is on the theatre, I will primarily concern my argument with the debt to classical drama, with only the occasional reference to epic sources.

Jocasta

In 1566 George Gascoygne and Francis Kinwelmershe presented a fairly free translation of Euripides' *Phoenician Women* at Grays Inn under the title *Jocasta.* It owes more to Dolce's Italian version of the play by the same name than it does to Euripides', but it nonetheless makes a significant contribution to the development of classically styled tragedy in the period.[43] The play begins with Jocasta retelling the details of Oedipus' "furious fate" (I. i. 96) the end of which was his tearing out of his own eyes:[44]

> So sore began the rage of boyling wrath
> To swell within the furious brest of him,
> As he him selfe by stresse of his owne nayles,
> Out of his head did teare his griefull eyne,
> Unworthy more to see the shining light. (I. i. 126-30)

The play concerns the children of Oedipus (Eteocles and Polynices) more than anything else, their "furious spight," (I. i. 146) "th'unbridled mindes of ambicious

[43] The play may also owe something to Seneca's *Phoenissae*, though Seneca's version is cut short, the text ending (at 664) in the midst of Jocasta's attempt to intervene between the two brothers (Eteocles and Polynices) before battle. Cunliffe refers to it as "cast into the form of Seneca". (Cunliffe, *Influence*, 9) It may also borrow some of the colourful battle descriptions from Statius' version of the story, *Thebaid.*

[44] In Sophocles' version Oedipus gouges his eyes out with the pins from Jocasta's brooches. (*Oedipus Tyrannus*, 1263-85) In Seneca's he uses his hands and nails. (*Oedipus*, 960-79)

men", (I. i. 170) that drove them to conflict with each other, and Jocasta's and Antigone's "afflicted minde[s]" (I. i. 208) as they attempt to "staie their fierce and furious fight". (I. i. 195) Jocasta is accompanied in her plight by the chorus of Phoenician women who almost seem to resemble rather witches or Furies than mourning women, "Beholde them clad in clothes of griesly blacke, / That hellishe hewe that nay for other harmes / So well besemed wretched wightes to weare:" (II. i. 20-22)

The grief of the play is caused by Eteocles' pride and ambition. It has been decreed that the two brothers should share the rule of Thebes with the annual swapping of the crown, but Eteocles has taken the crown for himself and banished his brother who has now raised a Greek army against the city. Jocasta pleads with Eteocles, while at the same time painting a vivid picture of the madness that has gripped him,

> Represse deare son, those raging stormes of wrath,
> That so bedimme the eyes of thine intent,
> As when the tongue (a redy Instrument)
> Would fayne pronounce the meaning of the minde,
> It cannot speake one honest seemely worde.
> But when disdayne is shrunke, or sette asyde,
> And mynde of man with leysure can discourse
> What seemely wordes his tale may best beseeme,
> And that the toung unfoldes without affectes
> Then may proceede an answere sage and graue,
> And euery sentence sawst with sobernesse:

Wherefore vnbende thine angrie browes deare childe,

And caste thy rolling eyes none other waye,

That here doest not *Medusaes* face beholde,

But him, euen him, thy bloud and brother deare.

And thou behold, my *Polinices* eke,

Thy brothers face, wherein when thou mayst see

Thine owne image, remember therewithall,

That what offence thou wouldst to him were done

The blowes thereof rebounde vnto thy selfe. (II. i. 262-281)

The image of Eteocles' rolling eyes makes clear the madness of his rage, but perhaps the curious reference to Medusa is even more telling. A note is included beside the text for less learned readers, "One of the furies".[45] Medusa is of course a gorgon whose horrid image turns people to stone and it seems that either Gascoygne has confused Medusa with Megaera (actually one of the furies) whose pursuit drives people (most famously Orestes) mad, or the printer has made a fortunate interpretive error. The error must be suggested by the madness (as opposed to petrifaction) that is caused to Eteocles on looking at his brother. Jocasta urges him to view his brother as a mirror, in which he will see the reflected image of himself.[46]

In his own speech, Eteocles may owe something to the native biblical pageant tradition.

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[45] There is an unsigned apology for the notes at the end of the text, "certē words which are not / cōmon in vse are noted and expounded in the margent. I did / begin those notes at request of a gentlewoman who vnderstode / not poëtycall words or termes. I trust those and the rest of / my notes throughout the booke, shall not be hurtfull to any / Reader." (End Note to the Reader, 4-9) These notes are not included in the earliest available texts (i.e. the manuscript, (MS) or the first quarto of 1573 (Q1)), but were added to the second printed edition (Q2) and retained in subsequent editions.

[46] As in the mirror literature discussed in the first chapter, he may come to knowledge of himself by recognising the mirror image of himself in the figure of his brother. See Chapter One, esp. 20-29.

If I could rule or reigne in heauen aboue,

And eke commaund in depth of darksome hell,

No toile ne trauell should my sprites abashe,

To take the way vnto my restlesse will,

To climbe aloft, nor downe for to descend. (II. i. 339-43)

His pride and ambition recall the figure of Herod (the first English stage madman) in *The Shearmen and Tailors' Play*, who claims to be "he thatt made bothe hevin *and* hell," (488) and "cheff capten of hell". (503) Herod also blends the two traditions in this speech, claiming also to be Jove (493) and "Jubytor" (517).[47] Jocasta explains to Eteocles what his rolling eyes have already indicated, and Herod's raging "*in* the *pagond* and *in the strete also*" make clear, that pride and ambition poison the mind:

Oh, cast aside that vaine ambition,

That corosiue, that cruell pestilence,

That most infects the minds of mortal men:

. . . .

Kingdomes and realmes it topsie turuie turnes,

And now, euen thee, hir gall so poisoned hath,

That the weake eies of thine affection

Are blinded quite, and see not to them selfe

. . . .

Now to conclude my sonne, Ambition

[47] This play is discussed in greater detail in Chapter One. See above, 48-9.

It is that most offends thy blynded thought,

Blame not thy brother, blame ambition

From whome if so thou not redeeme thy selfe,

I feare to see thee buy repentance deare. (II. i. 401-3 & 409-412 & 474-8)

Her allegorisation of Ambition in itself recalls the Christian moral allegory tradition, but perhaps most significant of all is the sense that he needs to repent of his sin which is seen to be causing a mental blindness that corresponds to his father's literal blindness. His inability to see himself clearly may be amended by relinquishing his sin of ambition; his infected mind may be redeemed by repentance, in the same way that confessional manuals provide a mirror to Christian men and recommend shrift for the cure of the madness of sin.[48]

Jocasta's appeal to Christian remedies for this moral madness can do nothing to avert the inevitable battle. The Chorus thus have the opportunity to complain to "Fierce and furious *Mars*, whose harmefull harte" inspires the battle fury that causes the shedding of "giltlesse blood". (Chorus after Act II, 1-2)[49] Mars does not do this alone, but with the aid of the Furies, portrayed in this speech with more than a hint of Christian demonology, "...thou raisest from the depth of hell, / The wrathfull sprites of all the furies there". (Chorus after Act II, 17-18) They do not come from Hades or Dis to pursue the guilty to madness, but to "enriche that pit with spoile of damned ghostes." (Chorus after Act II, 21) Though they are the classical Furies, accompanied

[48] See Chapter One above, esp. 24-9.

[49] Mars is also described in this complaint as, "Father of warre and death, that dost remove / With wrathfull wrecke from wofull mothers breast, / The trustie pledges of their tender love". (Chorus after Act II, 8-10) As with Thersites' mother's threat that she will cut her "pappes awaye" (*Thersites*, 291) the Chorus' complaint says that war (Mars in this case, Bellona in *Thersites*) removes the breasts (vessels of nurturing milk) from mothers' bodies. This is a motif that will recur with extraordinary frequency.

by "cruell discorde", "Engirt with snakes and serpents venomous"[50] (Chorus after Act II, 23 & 24) they become aligned with Christian devils dragging the souls of their victims down to hell (like the devils in 'Sawles Warde'[51] who bring a chain to "binden ant to drahen into inwarde helle"[52] the sinners of the world). When Eteocles and Polynices finally meet in single combat, the Nuntius' report makes the battle fury that has gripped them most plainly evident, "Their angry lookes, their deadly daunting blowes, / Might witnesse well, that in their heartes remaynde / As cankred hate, disdayne, and furious moode, / As euer bred in beare or tygers brest." (V. ii. 86-9) This "furious moode" that overtakes the two combatants may owe something to the fury of battle as it is described in Statius' *Thebaid* (c.92AD),[53] but is also reminiscent of Bright's warning about Agamemnon, who "when he became angry [...] was a Lyon, a Tiger, a Dogge".[54] *Jocasta* is not simply a classically styled drama, but a classical setting for a more intricate investigation of Christian vice and virtue than is allowed by the theatre of allegory, or biblical pageant.

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[50] Discord here seems to correspond to Maegera who was earlier conflated with Medusa. See above, 226.

[51] For the discussion of this text see Chapter Four, 165-6.

[52] Millet & Wogan-Browne, 90-1.

[53] For example, the actual Fury-inspired battle madness of, "it geminum excutiens anguem et bacchatur utrisque / Tisiphone castris; fratrem huic, fratrem ingerit illi, / aut utrique patrem: procul ille penatibus imis / excites implorat Furias oculosque reposcit." ["Tisiphone shakes her twin serpents and runs riot in both armies. She thrusts his brother upon one and his brother upon the other, or their father upon both. He afar in the depths of the palace is roused and invokes the Furies and reclaims his eyes [i.e. Oedipus wishes to see the battle]."] *Thebaid*, VII, 466-9; or Eteocles' taunting description of the animalistic battle fury of the Pelasgi (the army of the 'Seven'), "quisquamme Pelasgis / mitis adhuc hominemque gerit? iam morsibus uncis / (pro furor! usque adeo tela exsatiavimus?) artus / dilacerant. nonne Hyrcanis bellare putatis / tigribus, aut saevos Libyae contra ire leones?"["Does any man still have mercy or humanity for the Pelasgi? Now they are tearing limbs apart with their hooked teeth – the madness! Have we so glutted their weapons? Think you not that we war with Hyrcanian tigers, fight fierce lions of Libya?"] *Thebaid*, IX, 12-16. (Macbeth lists "th'Hyrcan tiger" among beasts he is not afraid of (*Macbeth*, III. iv. 100)) All references to *Thebaid* I-VII are from Statius, *Thebaid, Books 1-7*, ed. and trans. D. R. Shackleton Bailey, Loeb Classical Library (London: Harvard U. P., 2003); references to *Thebaid* IIX-XII are from Statius, *Thebaid, Books 8-12*, ed. and trans. D. R. Shackleton Bailey, Loeb Classical Library (London: Harvard U. P., 2003). For a probable date see Bailey's introduction, 2.

[54] Bright, 128. There are also frequent references to the bestial nature of battle fury in the *Iliad*. Achilles' pursuit of Hector in his fury to avenge the death of his friend provides some good examples. Achilles is described as "Rabide" (*Iliad*, XXI, 481) when in search of Hector on the battlefield, like a "Dragon" (XXII, 79) waiting to pounce once he has found him, and as he chases him, "hauk-like" (XXII, 121) and like a "Hound" pursuing a hart. (XXII, 157)

Horestes

Pickering's *Interlude of Vice* (*Horestes*)[55] owes a very limited and filtered debt to *The Oresteia.* It was performed at court and printed in 1567. In spite of the apparently obvious classical source of the plot, Pickering's interlude owes more to the allegory tradition. In a way it is a classical plot overrun by a wandering band of allegorical characters. The ambiguous vice character is the driving force in the play. Simply designated by the speech-prefix, Vyce, he claims first to be called Patience (86-92), then claims to be Courage sent by the gods to assist Horestes (207), but by the end (819-End) has become Revenge.[56] The Furies are notable by their absence, but the moral ambiguity that is highlighted by their appearance in the classical sources is maintained by the vice figure. The classical Orestes is caught between the deity-enforced obligations to father and mother; Pickering's Horestes is caught between the warning of Nature (408-448), and the encouragement of the vice. In spite of the nature of the vice, his presence is not entirely negative. The revenge must take place to remove the tyrant Egistus. Revenge is a necessary vice, discarded to a life of poverty (perhaps deserving sympathy) when his role is fulfilled.[57] Unlike his classical counterpart there is no suggestion that Horestes goes mad after his mother's murder. It is an unnatural act (Nature asks him not to do it), and the vice is his close companion and henchman while he wages war and gets revenge, and so it may be sinful, but it is not the Fury driven madness of Orestes.

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[55] All references to *The Interlude of Vice* are taken from Axton.

[56] In this renaming he is perhaps reminiscent of the protagonist of *Mundus et Infans*, (see Chapter One, 8-9) however, Vyce is responsible for the manipulation of his own identity.

[57] His song, 'A newe master, a newe!' (849-60), his *staffe*, *bottell* or *dyshe*, and *wallet* (s.d. 1037) make him identifiable as a masterless man (i.e. a beggar). "The vice has all the tokens of a beggar: *a bottell* could be a leather drinking pouch or bag for belongings; *dyshe* for collecting money; *wallet* a satchel slung on the back." (Axton, note)

In spite of Roger Ascham's assertion in *The Scholemaster*, that "Sophocles and Euripides far ouermatch our *Seneca* in Latin,...although *Senecaes* elocution and verse be verie commendable for his tyme;"[58] it seems that Seneca was by far the most popular of the classical dramatists available to the time. 'Thebais' was translated, but not printed in 1558 (written c.1550-66). Jasper Heywood's translation of *Troas* was printed individually in 1559 and again in 1560, his *Thyestes* was printed the following year in 1560, and the year after that his *Hercules Furens*, 1561. The pseudo-Senecan *Hercules Oetaeus* was translated but not printed in 1561 (c.1561-70).[59] A. Neville's translation of *Oedipus* was printed individually in 1563. In 1566 J. Studley had his translations of *Agamemnon*, *Medea*, and *Hercules Oetaeus* printed. In the same year T. Nuce's translation of *Octavia* was also printed. A translation of *Hippolytus* was printed in 1567. In 1581 *Seneca: His Tenne Tragedies*, (the complete plays of Seneca in English) was finally published.[60] Further to Jasper Heywood's *Troas*, *Thyestes*, and *Hurcules Furens*, A. Neville's *Oedipus*, T. Nuce's *Octavia* and J. Studley's *Agamemnon*, and *Medea*, the collection included new translations of *Thebais*, *Hippolytus*, and *Hercules Oetaeus*. This was the pinnacle of Seneca's grip on the

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[58] Cunliffe suggests that "the way in which he speaks of 'our Seneca' seems to imply that the Roman dramatist was far more familiar to his readers." (Cunliffe, *Influence*, 9-10) This is certainly borne out by the evidence in the performance and printing records of the time, details of the performance history of both Euripides' and Sophocles' plays are given above. See, 223-5. The more extensive translation (to English) and performance of Seneca in the period is detailed below.

[59] *Hercules Oetaeus* and *Octavia* are most probably by an imitator, (cf. Fitch (individual introductions) *Seneca: Tragedies II*, 332-3 & 510-12) but they were included for so long amongst Seneca's works (as they were in the renaissance) that I shall not distinguish them from Seneca's authentic works beyond this point.

[60] References to these translations are taken from Seneca, *Seneca: His Tenne Tragedies*, trans. & ed. Thomas Newton, [1581] 2 vols., The Tudor Translations, intro. T. S. Eliot (London: Constable & Co., 1927). Where these specific translations are intended, it will be indicated by the inclusion of the individual translator's name, followed by the play title and a page number (there is no line numbering in this edition).

dramatic printing presses of the century.[61] Further to this, *Troades* was performed in Trinity College, Cambridge in 1551-2,[62] and *Hippolytus* was performed at Oxford in 1592. It was inevitable that Seneca would have a huge influence on the tragedy of this period.[63]

Gorboduc

The most immediate evidence of Seneca's influence is to be found in Sackville and Norton's *Gorboduc*, or *Ferrex and Porrex* (1565).[64] McIlwraith gives the more obvious indebtedness,

> [Norton and Sackville] chose from British legend a story perhaps as familiar to their audience as the Grecian myths were in ancient Rome; they reduced action to a vanishing-point, and adopted the classical Messenger to narrate events; they divided their play into five acts with choruses between, as they found Seneca's plays in the printed editions.[65]

The story is Senecan in its relation of spilled familial blood and revenge feeding revenge even without the guiding hands of the authors. But the debt to Seneca is more pronounced than merely theme, and dramatic structure and device. It is as much the overpowering mood of impending doom that suffuses the play from the outset, and

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[61] Also see John Hazel Smith's modestly titled 'Seneca's Tragedies: A Tentative Checklist of Fifteenth-, Sixteenth-, and Seventeenth-Century Printings,' in *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama.* X (1967) 49-74.
[62] Howard-Hill, 131.
[63] G. K. Hunter requests that we "notice that there was only one translation of each tragedy in the period 1540-1640, and that the one complete edition of 1581 enjoyed only one printing." (Hunter, 166)
[64] Played at the Inner Temple in 1561-2, the first printing (thought of as an 'unauthorised' text) was in 1565, a revised edition appeared in 1570. Irby B. Cauthen, Jr., ed., *Gorboduc or Ferrex and Porrex*, Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton, Regents Renaissance Drama, (London: Edward Arnold, 1970) xxix. Quotations are from this edition.
[65] A. K. McIlwraith, ed., *Five Elizabethan Tragedies*, The World's Classics (London: OUP, 1938) xi. Cunliffe lists the closest parallels between this text and Seneca's plays. (Cunliffe, *Influence*, 48-50)

the Roman gods that brood over the dialogue. Sackville and Norton are at pains to point out their Roman heritage, Philander making an early reference to Gorboduc's "forefather Brute" (I. ii. 165), or Brutus (mythical Trojan founder of Britain), as again does Eubulus, "The mighty Brute, first prince of all this land" (I. ii. 270) and again Dordan, "I fear the fatal time now draweth on / When civil hate shall end the noble line / Of famous Brute and of his royal seed." (II. i. 194-6) Philander draws the family line back farther to the Trojan kings, "the mindful wrath of wreakful gods / (Since mighty Ilion's fall not yet appeased / With these poor remnants of the Trojan name)". (II. ii. 75-7) Gorboduc also picks up the theme, blaming the fates,

> O cruel fates, O mindful wrath of gods,
> Whose vengeance neither Simois' stained streams
> Flowing with blood of Trojan princes slain,
> Nor Phrygian fields made rank with corpses dead
> Of Asian kings and lords can yet appease;
> Ne slaughter of unhappy Priam's race,
> Nor Ilion's fall made level with the soil
> Can yet suffice; but still continued rage
> Pursues our lives and from the farthest seas
> Doth chase the issues of destroyed Troy. (III. i. 1-10)

There is a clear allusion to Trojan narratives in these lines, and perhaps a debt to the river Xanthias' complaint to Achilles, in Homer's *Iliad*, "My sweet streames choake with mortalitie / Of men slaine by thee. Carkasses so glut me that I faile / To powre into the sacred sea my waves". (*Iliad*, XXI, 204-6) But, what Gorboduc's speech

makes clear is that the arrival of Brutus in England brought, not only the foundation of Britain with the issue of the devastated Trojan line, but also the curse unleashed by the gods against that line. Gorboduc blames the fates, but traditionally it is the Furies who are unleashed by Zeus (guardian of guest-host laws) against Troy for Paris' theft of Helen from his host Menelaus. England has inadvertently imported the Furies and their curse along with the Trojan line; English drama has imported the madness of the Furies with the influence of classical epic and dramatic literature.

Ferrex invokes a further, more Senecan tradition when he responds to Hermon's admonishment for not previously wresting the whole kingdom from his aging father by force of arms,

> The wreakful gods pour on my cursed head
> Eternal plagues and never-dying woes,
> The hellish prince adjudge my damned ghost
> To Tantale's thirst, or proud Ixion's wheel,
> Or cruel gripe to gnaw my growing heart,
> To during torments and unquenched flames,
> If ever I conceived so foul a thought,
> To wish his end of life or yet of reign. (II. i. 14-21)

Tantalus was punished to eternal hunger and thirst for the heinous crime of feeding his son Pelops to the gods. Ixion was punished to an eternity on a wheel for attempting to seduce Juno, and Prometheus[66] also suffered punishment (chained to a

[66] I have followed McIlraith's interpretation of this Gripe (vulture) as referring to Prometheus on the grounds that Sackville and Norton specify the pecked "heart" (specified also for Prometheus) of the punished figure, but as Cauthen notes Tityus is an alternative, and as I will show there is a conflation of the two.

rock with his heart exposed for birds to peck at) for stealing fire from the gods. The reference to Tantalus is of the greatest significance however, because it forewarns of the kindred murders that plagued his house (also known as the house of Atreus) after his first crime. This reference also recalls Tantalus' opening speech in Seneca's *Thyestes*,

> peius inventum est siti
> arente in undis aliquid et peius fame
> hiante semper? Sisyphi numquid lapis
> gestandus umeris lubricus nostris venit,
> aut membra celeri differens cursu rota,
> aut poena Tityi, qui specu vasto patens
> vulneribus atras pascit effossis aves
> et nocte reparans quidquid amisit die
> plenum recenti pabulum monstro iacet? (*Thyestes*, 4-12)

> [Has something worse been devised than thirst parched amidst water, worse than hunger that gapes forever? Can it be Sisyphus' stone comes to be carried – so slippery – on my shoulders, or the wheel that racks limbs in its swift rotation? Or the punishment of Tityos, who with his cavernous vast opening feeds dark birds from his quarried wounds – who regrows by night what he lost by day, and lies as a full meal for the fresh monster?]

The two figures of Tityos and Prometheus, whose punishments are almost identical, have been conflated in *Gorboduc*. Tityos was tortured in hell by vultures (Gripes) that

pecked at his body (or liver); unspecified birds pecked at Prometheus' heart. The debt is unmistakable, however, and forewarns that the animosity and bloody murder that plagued the brothers Thyestes and Atreus (the matter of Seneca's play) is to be replayed in part in the sons of Gorboduc.[67]

The tragedy is suffused with an increasing sense that the division of the realm, and effectively the division of the family, is tainting the minds of Gorboduc's family.[68] It is not until the dumb show before the fourth act though, that it becomes exactly clear what is causing the growing madness in the play, as "three Furies" come

> forth from under the stage, as though out of hell,...Alecto, Megaera, and Tisiphone, clad in black garments sprinkled with blood and flames, their bodies girt with snakes, their heads spread with serpents instead of hair,...each

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[67] This is something of a rhetorical set-piece in Seneca. The examples of it are too many to be quoted here in full, and so are given in Appendix IX. They are, Tantalus' description above, *Thyestes*, 4-12; Theseus' description of the tortures he witnessed in the underworld, *Hercules Furens*, 750; Medea's invocation of the forces of the underworld, *Medea*, 740-47; Phaedra's imagined torture for her crime, *Phaedra*, 1230-7; or the Ghost of Thyestes' desire to return to the underworld, *Agamemnon*, 15-21; or Deianira's request for punishment, *Hercules Oetaeus*, 942-7; or her later vision of her ensuing punishments, *Hercules Oetaeus*, 1011; or the Choral ode which envisages the collapse of the entire universe, *Hercules Oetaeus*, 1068-77; and the Ghost of Agrippina's desired torments for the tyrant Nero, *Octavia*, 619-23. Considering the parallel between the two sets of brothers, it is most probably this version of the description of the tortures of the underworld to which *Gorboduc* is indebted.

[68] Right from the opening passage Videna's "grieved mind" (I. i. 8) is revealed, at Gorboduc's decision to divide the kingdom between his two sons; Gorboduc's sons, we are told, are "grown / Well towards [a] riper state of mind and strength" (I. ii. 50-1); Arostus doesn't want the people to seem "with greedy minds" (I. ii. 82) to want to keep Gorboduc king, and understands that Gorboduc wants to "unload [his] aged mind" (I. ii. 90); Philander wants "to show, by certain rules / Which kind hath graft within the mind of man, / That nature hath her order and her course, / Which (being broken) doth corrupt the state / Of minds and things, even in the best of all." (I. ii. 218-222); again the first Chorus warns of Gorboduc's "tender mind" (I. ii. 382); Hermon (identified in 'The Names of the Speakers' as a "parasite") reprimands Ferrex for not having a more "grudging mind" (II. i. 7); Again Hermon criticises Gorboduc to Ferrex for giving half the realm to Porrex, "Was this not wrong, yea, ill-advised wrong, / To give so mad a man so sharp a sword"? (II. ii. 64-5); he warns again of Porrex's "fiery head" (II. i. 98); Ferrex admits to fearing his brother's "hateful mind" (II. i. 173) and his "grudging head" (II. i. 187); as spite grows between the brothers Tyndar (also identified in 'The Names of the Speakers' as a "parasite") says "the wiser sort hold down their griefful heads" (II. ii. 18); Philander encourages Porrex to communicate with Ferrex through his father to appease their "kindled minds" (II. ii. 37); The second Chorus explains the cause of the growing mental abnormality, "Woe to the prince that pliant ear inclines / And yields his mind to poisonous tale that floweth / From flattering mouth!" (II. ii, 103-5); Dordan's letter to Gorboduc warns of his younger son's "untempered wits" (III. i. 33) and the "furious pangs of his inflamed head" (III. i. 36); Eubulus warns the king against despair, "Sorrow doth dark the judgement of the wit." (III. i. 140)

> driving before them a king and a queen which, moved by Furies, unnaturally had slain their own children. The names of the kings and queens were these: Tantalus, Medea, Athamas, Ino, Cambises, Althea. (The Order and Signification of the Dumb Show Before the Fourth Act, 2-11)[69]

As before, the reference to Tantalus places the tragedy firmly in the tradition of Seneca's *Thyestes*, and Medea is clearly also another legendary figure that Seneca dramatised.[70] Ino threw herself and her son into the sea. Cambises killed his brother.[71] Althea was the mother and murderer of Meleager. In the same way that Tantalus is the key to Ferrex's classical allusions, Medea is the key to this dumb show. In a speech not unlike that of Tantalus, Seneca's Medea invokes the assistance of the agencies of hell,

> Comprecor vulgus silentum vosque ferales deos
> et Chaos caecum atque opacam Ditis umbrosi domum,
> Tartari ripis ligatos squalidae Mortis specus.
> supplicîs, animae, remissis currite ad thalamos novos:
> rota resistat membra torquens, tangat Ixion humum,
> Tantalus securus undas hauriat Pirenidas.
> gravior uni poena sedeat coniugis socero mei:

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[69] Cunliffe writes "The Chorus at the end of Act III is entirely in Seneca's style, and to the same source may be ascribed the rhetorical exaggeration of the speech of Videna which follows." (Cunliffe, *Influence*, 50) This is indicative of Cunliffe's approach, while he recognises a certain indebtedness ('influence') he fails to investigate the implications of the allusion.

[70] I shall discuss this at length in the following pages.

[71] Cambises was immortalised in a contemporary tyrant tragedy by Thomas Preston, *Cambises* (1558-69) which, though it seems immediately to declare its debt to classical sources (in particular Seneca) in the opening prologue, owes more to the allegory tradition than to the Senecan model. "That sage and wittie Seneca his words thereto did frame: / 'The honest exercise of kings, men wil insue the same; / But, contrariwise, if that a king abuse his kingly seat, / His ignominie and bitter shame in fine shalbe more great.'" (Prologue, 11-14) Quotations from *Cambises* are taken from Adams, *Chief Pre-Shakespearean Dramas*.

lubricus per saxa retro Sisyphum volvat lapis. (*Medea*, 740-7)

[I invoke the thronging silent dead, and you the gods of the grave, and sightless Chaos, and the shadowy home of dark-enshrouded Dis, the cavernous halls of squalid Death, enclosed by Tartarus' streams. Eased of your torments, run, you ghosts, to this strange marriage rite; the wheel that tortures limbs may stop, Ixion touch the ground, and Tantalus may swallow down Pirene's stream in peace. But may heavier punishment rest on one, my husband's marriage relation: over the rocks may the slippery stone roll Sisyphus back downhill.]

Further along in the same speech Medea invokes Althaea, "piae sororis, impiae matris, facem ultricis Althaea vides" (*Medea*, 780) ["See here the brand of vengeful Althaea, the loyal sister, disloyal mother."] The dumb show borrows three figures from this speech, as of course it does the three furies who will assist Medea in the murder of her sons, "quem.../...cui cruentas agmen infernum faces / intentat? Ingens anguis excusso sonat / tortus flagello. Quem trabe infesta petit / Megaera? Cuius umbra disperses venit / incerta membris?.../...fige luminibus faces, lania, perure, pectus en Furiis patet." (*Medea*, 960-6) ["At whom...is the hellish band pointing its bloody torches? A huge snake hisses, entwined in a lashing whip. Whom is Megaera seeking with her bludgeon?...Drive torches into my eyes, mutilate me, burn me: see, my breast is open to the Furies."] Videna appears alone at the beginning of the fourth act, immediately after the borrowed symbolism of the dumb show. She is clearly meant to be held in comparison with Medea.[72] Her ensuing speech promises the murder of her younger (and only remaining) son. She wishes first that Porrex's sword

[72] Cauthen also recognises a parallel between the two figures, and recommends a comparison of *Medea*, 1-55 and *Gorboduc*, IV. i. 1-81.

had not been used to murder Ferrex, but to have "pierced [her] cursed womb" (IV. i. 55) that brought him to life. She rhetorically undoes her role in raising him, "Ruthless, unkind, monster of nature's work, / Thou never suck'd the milk of woman's breast, / But, from thy birth, the cruel tiger's teats / Have nursed thee,..." (71-4) Effectively Videna undoes her mothering function in preparation for the unnatural murder that she will commit, in the same way that Medea before her invokes the spirits of the Furies to "mutilate" her, to welcome them to her breast, and dehumanise her, unwoman or unsex her so that she can murder her children.[73] This "first English tragedy" thus already shows the immediate influence of two of Seneca's mad protagonists, Thyestes and Medea. It also initiates a number of rhetorical pieces that will become hallmarks of classically styled English tragedy.

Tancred and Gismund[74]

In 1568 *The Tragedie of Gismonde of Salerne* played before the Queen at the Inner temple. It was most probably the work of five authors, one of whom, Robert Wilmot, later revised and reedited the text for publication (1591-2).[75] Though misogynistic in the extreme, the play makes Gismund, widowed daughter to the king, Tancred, the central character. Initially the portrait of the virtuous eternally mourning widow,[76] she soon succumbs to the sin of lust, and falls in love with the County Palurin. Her father (discomfortingly incapable of coping with her absence from his

[73] It is only in the light of this reference that Thersites' mother's threat to "cut [her] pappes awaye / That gave [him] sucke so manye a daye" (*Thersites*, 290-1) makes sense. I will discuss the relevance of these women and this unwomaning act to Lady Macbeth in the next chapter. A. J. Boyle notes the use of Medea's speech in contemporary Italian drama too, "The opening appeal to the Furies by Dolce's Marianna (*Marianna* 1.1) replays Medea's prologue even more self consciously than the invocation of Lady Macbeth (*Macbeth* 1.5.40ff.); so too Berenice's analogous invocation in Groto's *Dalida* (2.3)." (A. J. Boyle, *Tragic Seneca: An Essay in the Theatrical Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1997) 150).

[74] Cunliffe gives a less substantial examination of the 'echoes' (Cunliffe, *Influence*, 51) of Seneca in this play. (Cunliffe, *Influence*, 50-52)

[75] It is the 1591-2 text that I have used throughout, in Robert Wilmot, *The Tragedy of Tancred and Gismund 1591-2*, ed. W. W. Greg, The Malone Society Reprints (Oxford, Malone Society, 1914).

[76] see I. ii. 101-33.

sight for any prolonged period) has forbidden her from remarriage. She thus finds herself torn between hope (that she may love again) and fear (of the consequences of that love). These contrary emotion she explains, "[d]istract [her] into sundrie passions", she has "stormie thoughts," and an "vnquiet mind." (II. i. 336 & 340 & 341)[77] The mere suggestion that she would remarry causes Tancred to have a "crazed heart". (II. iii. 502) Meanwhile Gismund is unable to sleep for her "vnquiet mind" (III. ii. 630),

> …sharpe conflicts, disquiet her so sore,
> That heauy sleep cannot procure her rest,
> But fearefull dreames present her euermore
> Most hideous sights her quiet to molest.
> That starting oft therwith she doth awake,
> To muse vpon those fancies which torment
> Her thoughtfull heart with horror,…
>
> . . . . .
>
> …and while the quiet night
> Geves others rest, she turning to and fro
> Doth wish for day. (III. ii. 651-7 & 659-61)

[77] She prefigures the title character of Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* in a number of ways. She is a widow, forbidden from remarriage by a superior relative (whose attachment to her is suspicious) who nonetheless finds a secret means of fulfilling her desire only to have it end in bloody tragedy. I further detect a certain similarity in tone and content between Lucrece's (aunt and Pandarus figure to Gismund) assertion "well I wot, my neece was neuer wrought, / Of steele, nor carued from the stonie rocke" (II. ii. 396-7) and the Duchess' "'Tis not the figure cut in Allabaster / Kneeles at my husbands tombe". (I. i. 440-1) Compare also Wright's description of the stormy nature of such a contrariety of passions in Chapter Three above, 123.

This may echo the Chorus' description of the instability that torture's rulers in *Agamemnon*,

> metui cupiunt metuique timent;
> non nox illis alma recessus
> praebet tutos,
> non curarum somnus domitor
> pectora solvit.
> [They desire to be feared and dread to be feared; no safe respite is afforded them by gracious night, no ease comes to their hearts from sleep, tamer of cares.] (*Agamemnon*, 72-6)

The context of the debt applies more to Tancred than to Gismund, and indeed his exchanges in stichomythia with Lucrece (II. ii. 449-63) and more clearly Julio (IV. iv. 1284-97) are reminiscent of the stichomythic exchanges between Nero and Seneca in *Octavia* concerning the morality of tyranny.[78] Sleeplessness and nightmares become a recurring theme in the classically styled tragedy of this period however and it is usually the result of the Furies' presence. So it is no surprise that the dumb show at the beginning of the fourth act brings forth the Furies. Having accidentally observed the amorous embraces of Gismund and her beloved, (who arrive on stage through a secret trap door to her chamber) Tancred departs in silent wrath. "*then* [w]*as heard &*

[78] A couple of lines are clearly borrowed from *Octavia* in this exchange. Compare Tancred's "This is the soundest safetie for a king / To cut them off that vex or hinder him" (IV. iv. 1284-5) with Nero's "Extinguere hostem maxima est virtus ducis." ["The greatest virtue in a leader is to destroy an enemy."] (443); also "Tancred: Our fortune saies we must do what we may. / Julio: This is praise-worth, not to do what you may" (IV. iv. 1290-1) with "Nero: Fortuna nostra cuncta permittit mihi. /.../ Inertis est nescire quid liceat sibi. / Seneca: Id facere laus est quod decet, non quod licet." ["Nero: My good fortune gives me license to do anything. /.../ It is spineless not to understand what one can do. / Seneca: Praise lies in doing what one should, not what one can."] (451 & 453-4)

storm of thunder & lightning, in which the furies rise vp,…"[79] (Introductio in Actum 4, 19-20) The three Furies, Megaera, Alecto, and Tisiphone rise explicitly from "hell" (the same trap door that Gismund and her lover have just come out of and returned through) and dance "a hellish round". (IV. i. 851-3) Megaera then dismisses the other Furies and assumes command of the rest of "this Tragædie." (IV. i. 860) It is in this scene that the play becomes undeniably Senecan, as Megaera explains her presence,

> Vengeance and death from foorth the deepest hell
> I bring the cursed house where *Gismund* dwels.
> Sent from the grislie god that holds his raigne
> In Tartars vglie Realm, where Pelops sire
> (Who with his own sonnes flesh whom he had slain
> Did feast the Gods) with famin hath his hire.
> To gape and catch at flying fruites i[n] vaine,
> And yeelding waters to his gasping throte,
> Where stormie Æoles sonne with endlesse paine
> Rowles vp the rock: where Titius hath his lot
> To feede the Gripe that gnawes his growing heart.
> Where proud Ixion wherled on the wheele,
> Pursues himselfe: where due deserued smart
> The damned Ghosts in burning flame do feele (IV. i. 862-75)[80]

[79] The text has "mas", but the intention is clear.
[80] The text at line 868 reads, "iu" rather than in.

This speech merges two of the recurring motifs of this strand of tragic development; the Furies dumb show,[81] and the rehearsal of the tortures of hell.[82] Megaera further goes on to explain who has commanded her to intervene,

> The Senate then of hell by graue aduice
> Of Minos, Æac, and of Radamant,
> Commands me draw this hatefull aire, and rise
> Aboue the earth, with dole and death to dant
> The pride and present ioyes, wherewith these two
> Feed their disdained hartes, which now to do
> Behold I come, with instruments of death. (IV. i. 893-9)

She comes to punish "pride" and brings two snakes with which she will infect both Tancred and Gismund with "hate and wrath" (IV .i. 900) and "enuious wrath" (IV. i. 904). Though the scenery and character list is distinctly classical, the judges (Minos, Æac, and Radamant) and executioner (Megaera) are drawn from Seneca, the rhetoric has a rather Christian ring to it (pride, wrath, envy). The extraordinary cruelty of Tancred's revenge owes a debt to three separate pieces. The description of the County Palurin's execution in the one remaining tower of the old city walls (V. i. 1429 & 1432) is reminiscent of the description of the murder of Astyanax in *Traodes*, who was thrown from the "one [remaining] tower of Troy" ["una magna turris e Troia super" (*Traodes*, 1068)]. The County is not thrown from the battlements, but disembowelled in its dungeon, "foorthwith they pearce / His naked bellie, and vnript

[81] As in *Gorboduc* (The Order and Signification of the Dumb Show Before the Fourth Act, 2-11), see above, 237.
[82] As in *Gorboduc*, II. i. 14-21. See above, 235-9. Both of these motifs will recur again and again.

it so, / That out the bowels gusht". (V. i. 1549-51)[83] This act is reminiscent of Achilles' killing of Asteropaeus in form, "Full in the naville stead / He ript his belly up, and out his entrailes fell, and dead / His breathlesse body", (*Iliad*, XXI, 173-5) and the disgrace and humiliation to the corpse, is reminiscent of the "worke not worthy" (*Iliad*, XXII, 339) of Achilles in stripping the nerves of Hector's legs and dragging him behind his chariot. (*Iliad*, XXII, 340-5) Achilles is only capable of this unworthy act because of his rage and fury over the killing of his friend Patroclus. The final indignity visited upon the County's corpse is that his heart is cut out and given to Gismund in a golden chalice, (V. ii. 1594-5) perhaps recalling the fatal banquet of Thyestes.[84] Gismund's revenge for this deed is to kill herself (thus depriving her father of his only joy), the efficaciousness of which is apparent in his putting out his own eyes (recalling Oedipus) before killing himself over her dead body. She however needs to make an invocation that recalls Seneca's Medea in order to summon the strength to kill herself,

[*She vndresseth her haire.*]

So let thy tresses flaring in the winde,

Vntrimmed hang about thy bared necke:

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[83] c.f. "he unseam'd him from the nave to th'chops". *Macbeth* I. ii. 22. I will discuss this further in the ensuing chapter. Boyle is critical of the derivative nature of this messenger scene, as compared to that in *The Spanish Tragedy*, (I. ii. 22-84) "More crudely imitative is Wilmot and company's remodelling of the *Thyestes'* [sic.] messenger scene in *Gismond of Salerne* (5.1), or Thomas Hughes' *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, a play constituted, as Cunliffe shows, out of Senecan adaptations linked together sometimes by only a handful of 'original' lines." (Boyle, 147) It should be apparent that Boyle neither has the right messenger scene, nor a full understanding of the complexity or the variety of derivations in *Tancred and Gismund.* This, nonetheless, is another scene type that Boyle rightly suggests will recur a number of times.

[84] "The fatall hower I haue so looked for, / Now hath my father satisfied his thirst / With giltlesse bloud which he so coueted." (*Tacred and Gismund*, V. ii. 1606-8) and "ex vulnere ipso sanguinem calidum in tua / defundere ora debui, ut viventium / biberes cruorem." ["Straight from the wound I should have poured the hot blood into your mouth, so you could drink their lifeblood while they lived."] (*Thyestes*, 1054-6) This presentation of a heart may have suggested Giovanni's entrance with his sister's heart on his dagger in John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (published 1633). (s.d. V. vi. 9) References to *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* are taken from John Ford, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, ed. Derek Roper (Manchester: Manchester U P, 1997).

Now hellish furies set my heart on fire,

Bolden my courage, strengthen ye my hands

Against their kind, to do a kindly deed (V. ii. 1667-71)

This recalls quite clearly Medea's invocation of Hecate (*Medea*, 750-1) and untrussing of her hair (752) to strengthen her resolve to kill her children to punish Jason, but whereas Medea is destined to be raised up in a winged chariot (1025), it is made clear that Gismund will "descend" (V. ii. 74). The Epilogue, spoken by Julio, makes it clear that Gismund's lust makes her fate deserved, and warns the audience to view her as a negative exemplum, "Now humbly pray we, that our English dames / May never lead their loves into mistrust; / But that their honours may avoid the shames, / That follow such as live in wanton lust." (Epilogue, 19-22) The strong Christian overtones in the rhetoric throughout are perhaps understandable considering the fact that the principal author of the tragedy went on to take holy orders.[85]

The Misfortunes of Arthur

In 1587 Thomas Hughes' *The Misfortunes of Arthur*[86] played before Queen and court. Again, as with *Gorboduc* before it, the play stresses the apparent Roman heritage of Britain, the Nuntius of the second act explaining their descent, "Lo, here at length the stately type of Troy, / And Britain land the promis'd seat of Brute, / Deck'd with so many spoils of conquered kings!" (II. i. 1-3) And as with *Gorboduc* the first

[85] Dodsley writes, "From a passage in his Dedication to the Societies of the Inner and Middle Temples, in which he speaks of the censure which might be cast upon him from the indecorum of publishing a Dramatick Work arising from his calling, it may be conjectured that he had diverted his studies from Law to Divinity, and had then taken orders." J. Dodsley, ed., *A Select Collection of Old Plays*, vol. II. (London: J. Nicholas, 1780) 155.

[86] All references to *The Misfortunes of Arthur* are taken from Cunliffe's *Early English Classical Tragedies*. I do not wish to trace every parallel in *The Misfortunes of Arthur* to a Senecan text (this has been done already in Cunliffe's *The Influence of Seneca on Elizabethan Tragedy*. See Cunliffe, Influence, 52-4 & esp. 130-155) but rather to illustrate its position in a developing tradition of English classical tragedy.

dumb-show (after the opening argument) also brings the Furies to the Elizabethan stage,

> Sounding the musicke, there rose three furies from vnder the stage apparelled accordingly with snakes and flames about their blacke haires and garments. The first with a snake in the right hande and a cup of wine with a Snake athwart the cup in the left hand. The second with a firebrand in the right hande, and a Cupid in the left: The thirde with a whippe in the right hande and a Pægasus in the left…By the first furie with the Snake and Cup was signified the Banquet of Vther Pendragon, and afterward his death which insued by poysoned cup. The second furie with her firebrande & Cupid represented Vthers vnlawfull heate and loue conceyued at the banquet, which never ceased in his posteritie. By the third with her whip and Pægasus was prefigured the crueltie and ambition which thence insued and continued to th'effecting of this tragedie. (The Argument and Manner of the First Dumb Show, 1-7 & 10-17)

The portrayal of the Furies in this dumb-show is almost indistinguishable from that in *Gorboduc*,[87] the only significant difference being the inclusion of the further symbolism of the poisoned chalice,[88] the Cupid,[89] and the Pegasus.[90] A number of classical sources are evoked above the stated influence of the Furies. By falling in

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[87] Not quite as much the Furies "hellish round" in the dumb show at the beginning of the fourth act of *Tancred and Gismund*. See above, 242-4.

[88] This may recall the symbolism of the golden chalice that contains the heart of the County Palurin, and out of which Gismund drinks the poison with which she kills herself in *Tancred and Gismund*. The symbolism of the snake wrapped around that chalice may also recall the snake with which Megaera infects Gismund. See above, 245 & 244.

[89] This may further recall the appearance of a rather malignant Cupid in the opening scene of *Tancred and Gismund*, who gloats over the madness he has inspired in mythology and over the madness that he will inspire in the ensuing tragedy. (I. i.)

[90] By including the Pægasus, representing ambition, this dumb-show helps to establish a further role for the Furies as punishers of ambition. See also Eteocles' ambition in *Jocasta* discussed above, 225-6. This will be another recurring motif.

love with and taking by deception the love of his host Gorlois' wife Igerna at a banquet, Uther recalls Paris' theft of Helen. The breach of the host-guest relationship thus perpetrated by both Paris and Uther is the cause of the initial unleashing of the Furies, Troy's history repeated by its ancestors on Britain's soil. Mordred's insurgence against his father, Arthur, further recalls the betrayal of Agamemnon by his cousin Aegisthus, his wooing of Guenevera casting her in the role of Clytemnestra (a role which she eventually rejects by seeking enclosure in a nunnery). In the final scene of the first act, Guenevera warns Mordred to interpret the tangle of classical influences more carefully, "Looke backe to former Fates: *Troy* still had stoode, / Had not her Prince made light of wedlocks lore. / The vice, that threw downe *Troy*, doth threat thy Throne: / Take heede: there *Mordred* stands, whence *Paris* fell." (I. iv. 64-7) Again in the Senecan tradition the play opens with the Ghost of Gorlois seeking revenge for the wrongs he has suffered at Uther's hands. His opening speech begins however in a vein that recalls Tantalus' return from hell in the opening of *Thyestes*. He has returned "through channells blacke of *Limbo* lake, / And deepe infernall floude of *Stygian* poole," he has been transported back in "gastly *Caron's* boate" from "*Pluto's* pittes and glowmy shades". (I. i. 1-4)[91] Thus having evoked the tradition first from Paris' and then from Agamemnon's perspective, the focus returns again through the ghost's allusions to the origin of the Furies' role in the house of Atreus.[92] Arthur is the child of adultery and the deceived returns to seek vengeance on the offspring of

[91] The mention of Charon may also suggest Theseus' description of his journey back from the underworld with his rescuer Hercules. (*Hercules Furens*, 762ff.) The full significance of a reference to Theseus only becomes clear when a comparison between Guenevera and Phaedra becomes apparent. See below.

[92] The stress placed upon the banquet (where Gorlois was cuckolded) may also be suggested by the banquet of *Thyestes*. The bloody banquet becomes an important motif in this classically styled English tragedy.

his cuckolding, effectively, as in the house of Atreus, the sins of the father are visited upon the son.[93]

Guenevera is the first to suffer under the madness that the Furies bring. Gorlois, the ghost, explains her part in the suffering that will ensue in the drama, "Let *Guenouera* expresse what franticke moodes / Distract a wife, when wronging wedlockes rights, / Both fonde and fell, she loues and loathes at once." (I. i. 33-5) When she first speaks it is to evoke the spirit of Medea, but it is perhaps to the figure of Phaedra that this opening speech owes more.[94] Arthur, Guenevera would have it, has distained her to fight in Rome these long years. So too Theseus has gone to the underworld with Pirithous to kidnap Prosperpine from Pluto. Left behind, Phaedra cannot sleep; a fire (like the fire of Etna) burns within her.[95] She is at pains to understand the crazy (*furens*) love within her.[96] Phaedra's desertion causes her to fall in love with her stepson, in the same way that Guenevera falls in love with Mordred. Guenevera, however, also wishes for further revenge against Arthur for deserting her,[97] she wishes to "Frame out some trap beyonde all vulgar guile, / Beyonde *Medea's* wiles". (I. ii. 11-12) As her heart and mind begin to doubt the course of revenge, she makes an invocation to the Furies, to strengthen her resolve,

> Come spitefull fiends, come heapes of furies fell,
>
> Not one, by one, but all at once: my breast

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[93] Hercules also fits this tradition, being the bastard son of Jupiter, punished by Juno with a madness during which he kills his family. I shall discuss Hercules at length later in this chapter.

[94] There is perhaps also a hint of Clytemnestra, deserted by Agamemnon for the war in Troy.

[95] "non me quies nocturna, non altus spoor / solvere curis. Alitur et crescit malum / et ardet intus, quails Aetnaeo vapor / exundat antro." [No nightly rest, no deep sleep releases me from my cares. My trouble feeds and grows and burns within me, like the heat that pours from Etna's cavern.] *Phaedra*, 100-103. The image of Etna is used again a little later by Phaedra as a colder flame than the heat of the raging (furentes) fire of love. *Phaedra*, 190-1. Guenevera's sleeplessness places her in the tradition of Gismund, whose troubled sleep resembles more closely that described (of rulers) in *Agamemnon*. See above, 240-2.

[96] "quid furens saltus amas?" [What is this crazy love of the woodland?] *Phaedra*, 112.

[97] Like Medea snubbed by Jason for the love of another woman.

Raues not inough: it likes me to be filde

With greater monsters yet. My hart doth throbbe:

My liuer boyles: some what my minde portendes,

Vncertayn what: but whatsoeuer, it's huge.

So it exceede, be what it will: it's well.

Omit no plague, and none will be inough.

Wrong cannot be reueng'd, but by excesse. (I. ii. 39-47)[98]

She allows Fronia to talk down her wrath until another time,[99] but she has already invited the Furies (though already present since the initial dumb show) to infect her. The effect is catastrophic, as she resolves in the second scene to commit suicide.[100] Her sister, Anghart, explains what has happened within her, "Her breast not yet appeasde from former rage / Hath chaungde her wrath, which wanting meanes to worke / An others woe, (for such is furies woont,) / Seekes out his owne, and raues vpon it selfe." (I. iii. 7-10) Here the previously literal Furies, have become an emotional fury.[101] Divine agency has become human weakness, and as such Guenevera seeks an earthly remedy, "O gnawing easelesse griefe. Who now can heale / My maymed minde? it must be healde by death." (I. iii. 22-3) Again Guenevera is talked out of her rash and sinful action.[102] The remedy is significant; the sins of wrath

[98] Again the tradition should be becoming apparent. This is discussed above in relation to Videna (see above, 239-40) and Gismund (see above, 245).
[99] In this Fronia proves the counterpart to Phaedra's Nutrix, who tries to dissuade her from acting on her love. (*Phaedra*, 129-249)
[100] Again echoing Phaedra who resolves that the only way to avoid committing adultery with her stepson is to kill her self.
[101] In case we miss the Christian sinful nature of this emotion, Hughes has included the word "wrath".
[102] Now Anghart takes the part of the Nutrix in *Phaedra*, by dissuading Guenevera from suicide. (see *Phaedra*, 255-273)

inspired by the classical Furies are purged with Christian penance and a resolution to enter a cloister for the remainder of her life.[103]

Arthur also succumbs to a variation of madness, as is explained by the Nuntius (again following Senecan convention) at the opening of the second act. This variant of madness owes more however to Achilles and Ajax, as it is a form of battle fury and not necessarily a bad thing. Observing the rebellion of the Britons, the Roman ranks "fiercely rau'd," (II. i. 19) but their battle fury is meagre compared to the noble rage that drives Arthur. "He furious driues the Romaine troupes about:…/…/…he fiercely raues / To breake and bruse the rancks in thickest throngs," (II. i. 30 & 38-9) and vanquishes his foes, before returning home to find the army of Mordred resisting him on the shores of Britain. He again drives them to flight, but Mordred will not be vanquished and pledges to return to victory, "but now my sworde is flesht, / And taught to goare and bath in hoatest bloode. /…/ I vowe by Heauen, by Earth, by Hell, by all, / That either thou, or I, or both shall dye." (II. i. 5-6 & 10-11) In battling on the shore side, each party (Arthur and Mordred) succumbing to battle fury, Mordred's promise to bathe his sword in blood,[104] and the eventual single combat (after much spilt blood elaborately detailed) that concludes the war, *The Misfortunes of Arthur* recalls the end of the Trojan War. Should we fail to note the similarity of the two cases, Mordred's promise to bring England down with him citing Priam as precedent makes it clear, "Such was King *Priams* ende, who, when he dyed, / Closde and wrapt

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[103] Here the parallel between Guenevera and Phaedra ends. The solution reached by Phaedra and her Nutrix, who conspire first to give in to the sin of lust and then when that fails to pretend that Hyppolytus has raped Phaedra. The resolution to go to a nunnery is more reminiscent of the tale in the early fifteenth-century sermon of the sinful man who dreamt of his judgement and awoke with the book of his sins, which he then brought with him to the penitentiary at Salisbury. O'Mara, 102. See Chapter Four, 164-5.

[104] Recalling Achilles wading into the blood-stained Xanthias, "Plung'd in the streame againe to take more worke of Tragedie" (*Iliad* XXI, 34); and perhaps also the words of Polynices, "Graunt me, that I with high triumphant hande, / May bathe this blade within my brother's brest" (*Jocasta*, V. i. 52-3); and Gorboduc's references to "Simois' stained streams" and "Phrygian fields made rank with corpses" (*Gorboduc*, III. i. 4 & 5) see above, 234.

vp his Kingdome in his death. / A solemne pompe, and fit for *Mordreds* minde, / To be a graue and tombe to all his Realme." (II. iv. 90-93) It is also made clear, however, through Mordred's evocation of heaven, earth, and hell (II. i. 10) that Mordred's pride and ambition are in keeping with the growing tradition of the tyrant type of Herod and Eteocles.[105]

The Spanish Tragedy

Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*[106] (1592) stands at a point of intersection between the Senecan and classical influence and the allegorical tradition. Right from the opening the play marries the two traditions, having a ghost in the Senecan tradition and the allegorical figure of Revenge.[107] Its opening passages rehearse the journey of Don Andrea after his murder through the realm of the classical underworld. In one way this journey recalls Everyman's journey to make his account, but the scenery has changed and instead of a traditional virtue figure to guide him on his journey Andrea is accompanied by Revenge. The description of Andrea's journey may recall more closely Aeneas' description of the underworld in Virgil (*Aeneid*, VI. 264-892).[108] However, in spite of this close parallel the mood of the scene, and Andrea's return from the underworld to view and act as chorus to the tragedy in the

[105] Clearly this is developing side by side with the tradition developing out the model of Nero (*Octavia*) and other figures modelled on him, i.e. Tancred (*Tancred and Gismund*).

[106] In 1592 Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* was presented on the stage of the Rose theatre on the bank-side. It would be performed fourteen times in all during its first year. It was also printed that year and subsequently reprinted in 1592, 1599, 1602, 1603 and 1611. In 1597 the play had a major revival, playing thirteen times (only one fewer than its opening year) that year again at the Rose. (*Revels*, vol. III, 61-4 & 80-3.) Its impact cannot be overstated.

[107] Of the opening scene, Boas writes, "This Induction was probably suggested by the opening Scene of Seneca's *Thyestes*, where the Ghost of Tantalus appears in the company of a Fury." (Boas, notes)

[108] Virgil, *The Aeneid*, trans. and intro. David West, Penguin Classics (London: Penguin, 1990, 1991). This may also recall in a small part the reworking of the Senecan ghost figure in Megaera's explanation of her presence in *Tancred and Gismund*. Esp. IV. i. 893-9. See above, 243-4. The printing of the updated (and significantly altered) copy of *Tancred and Gismund* (1591) makes the matter of influence slightly problematic. Whereas the appearance of Megaera as a ghost figure in the tradition in the early performance (1567) adds to this aspect of the tradition, it does not necessarily provide any significant influence to *The Spanish Tragedy*. Her actual speech is altered in the printed version (1591-2), whether this occurred after the performance of *The Spanish Tragedy* (1592) and under its influence, or before is difficult to ascertain.

company of Revenge recalls more the role of Tantalus in Seneca's *Thyestes* or Thyestes in *Agamemnon.*[109] Furthermore it elaborates, with Virgilian detail, the tradition that has been established in English classically styled tragedies by Megaera in *Tancred and Gismund* and Gorlois in *The Misfortunes of Arthur*. Revenge's role as assistant to Andrea also recalls that of the Vyce (who claims to be Revenge) in *Horestes*. As Andrea relates the final leg of his journey to the court of Pluto and Prosperpine, Kyd seems ready to evoke the traditional trope of the tortures of the classical underworld,[110]

> The left-hand path, declining fearfully,
> Was ready downfall to the deepest hell,
> Where bloody Furies shakes their whips of steel,
> And poor Ixion turns an endless wheel;... (I. i. 63-6)

He stops short at Ixion, but the tradition has already been suggested. What should come next are the tortures of Sisyphus, Tityos and Tantalus, but like Tantalus we are made to wait (until the closing lines of the play (IV. v. 29-44)).[111] Instead Andrea continues with the suggestion of a more Christian hell,

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[109] Discussed above in relation to the ghost of Gorlois in *The Misfortunes of Arthur*. See above, 248.
[110] See Appendix IX.
[111] There is a further relation of a passage down to the underworld that is equally appropriate, but has not been previously noted, in Statius' *Thebaid.* (IIX, 1-126) Amphiaraus, one of the 'seven against Thebes,' destined for death on the battlefield wins such glory and slaughter's so many foes that the ground opens up and he is subsumed into the underworld chariot and all. The description includes a reference to the punishments of Ixion (50) and of Tantalus (51) but not of Prometheus, Tityos, or Sisyphus. The striking thing about this variation of the tradition in terms of its potential relationship to *The Spanish Tragedy* is that at the end of Amphiaraus' descent he reaches Pluto, who assumes that this new unannounced / uninvited guest to his court will make a further demand like those of Pirithous (53) (who attempted to abduct Prosperpine), Theseus (54) (who came to rescue Pirithous), Hercules (55) (who eventually prevailed in rescuing them both while also capturing Cerberus) and Orpheus (57) (who attempted to rescue his wife, Euridice), and in return for this further violation of his realm is determined to send Tisiphone (65) back to wreak revenge on the upper world, that a madness ("furor" 75) should threaten the battlefield above. If Kyd is thinking of this passage, then there is a clear parallel to be drawn between Tisiphone and Revenge. However, it seems most likely that Kyd, as elsewhere, is appealing to a tradition rather than working to a single model.

Where usurers are choked with melting gold,

And wantons are embraced with ugly snakes,

And murderers groan with never-killing wounds,

And perjured wights scalded in boiling lead,

And all foul sins with torments overwhelmed. (I. ii. 67-71)

These tortures (though the "never-killing wounds" perhaps suggest Tityos) are more reminiscent of Bosch's punishments in 'Seven Deadly Sins and Four Last Things' (c. 1490) (see Fig. IIX) where two 'wantons' (luxuria) are joined in a bed by a lizard, a murderer (ira) is cut by a devil with a sword and the avaricious are boiled in a pot.[112] These are clearly Christian rather than classical images of torment.

The second scene contains the first of three battle narratives. (I. ii. 22-84, I. iii. 59-71[113] & I. iv. 6-43) There is an apparent Senecan styling to this scene, in the Spanish General's (in the Senecan messenger's role) narrative.[114] There is an identifiable Senecan line prior to the second narrative, "*In me consumpsit vires fortuna nocendo*," (I. iii. 16).[115] But if there is a debt to Seneca in these passages it is minor at best. What is in fact being evoked is the battle narrative tradition that has developed (more or less independently of Seneca) in the classically styled English

[112] I do not suggest that Kyd has this particular picture in mind, merely that it is indicative of Christian hell-torture imagery.

[113] This second battle narrative is Villupo's "envious, forged tale" (I. iii. 93) and will not be given detailed attention.

[114] "The speeches of the Senecan messengers are here Kyd's general model, but many details are borrowed from Garnier's description of the battle of Thapsus – which in its turn is modelled on Lucan's *Pharsalia*. Thus the Latin epic, scarcely less than the Latin drama, has left its mark upon *The Spanish Tragedy*." Boas, Introduction, xxxii.

[115] "Fortuna vires ipsa consumpsit suas", ["In me, Fortune has exhausted her power of hurting"] (*Agamemnon*, 698). Cited in Edwards' notes. Philip Edwards, ed., *The Spanish Tragedy*, The Revels Plays (Manchester: MUP, 1977). There is a thematic continuity between this passage and the most substantial Senecan borrowing of the play in the speech of the Viceroy concerning fortune and kingship. (III. i. 1-11) See *Agamemnon*, 57-73. Cited in Boas' notes, and in Edwards'. Also Boyle, 155. Though speeches on the topic are common to the tradition they lend nothing substantial to the current discussion of madness.

tragedy that has been traced thus far in this chapter.[116] What is initially missing from Kyd's rendering of the tradition is any suggestion that the individual parties in the wars are infected by battle fury. The battle itself, however, does fulfil this element of the tradition in what should by now be a recognisable, if slightly altered image,

> Both battles join and fall to handy blows,
> Their violent shot resembling th'ocean's rage,
> When, roaring loud, and with a swelling tide,
> It beats upon the rampiers of huge rocks,
> And gapes to swallow neighbour-bounding lands.
> Now Bellona rageth here and there,
> The storms of bullets rain like winter's hail,
> And shivered lances dark the troubled air. (I. ii. 47-54)

The image of the battle as an ocean recalls Achilles' struggle with the river Xanthus who tries to quench his battle fury, and stop the slaughter of the Trojans. (*Iliad*, 199-359)[117] Where the Spanish General evokes Bellona, Horatio evokes "wrathful Nemesis," who, like Pallas "disguised in armour's mask, / …before proud Pergamus",

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[116] As in the Nuntius' report of the battle and single combat of Eteocles and Polynices in *Jocasta* (esp. V. iii. 86-9) see above, 229; also Trojan allusions in *Gorboduc*, (III. i. 1-10) see above, 233-4; and *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, discussed above, 250-1.

[117] Also Gorboduc's description of "Simois' stained streams / Flowing with blood of Trojan princes slain" (*Gorboduc*, III. i. 2-3) See above, 234. And Mordred's wish to "goare and bath [his sword] in hoatest bloode." (*The Misfortunes of Arthur*, II. i. 6) Also in Arthur and Mordred's battling on the shore side.. And Polynices' similar wish to, "bathe [his] blade within [his] brother's brest" (*Jocasta*, V. i. 52-3). See above, 251. The evocation of Bellona's rage also recalls her infection of Thersites with battle fury. (*Thersites*, 291) See above, 218. There may also be a hint of Agamemnon's citation of ruined citadels, kindred wars and marital disloyalty, all punished by Bellona and the Furies; "sanguinolenta Bellona manu / quaeque superbos urit Erinys". ["grim Bellona with bloodstained hand and the Erinys that dogs the proud".] (*Agamemnon*, 83-4)

(i.e. Troy) unhorsed Andrea and "dinged him to the ground." (I. iv. 16-22)[118] The battle narrative element of this classically styled tragic tradition is thus evoked, but, for the moment, in an incomplete evocation of the tradition. The expectation of the usual battle fury is frustrated. So too at the end of this scene where the court sits down to a banquet (s.d. I. iv. 115 & 128) and Hieronimo presents his first dumb-show.[119] (I. iv. 137-174) Hieronimo's dumb-show does not contain the necessary brutality to fulfil the tradition, nor does the banquet prove cannibalistic enough,[120] as Andrea's ghost is quick to point out in his complaint during the ensuing chorus, "Come we for this from depth of underworld, / To see him feast that gave me my death's wound?" (I. v. 1-2) Part of Kyd's triumph is to invoke the established conventions of this classically styled tragedy only to frustrate the expectations of its audience (of which Andrea is a part).

Bel Imperia offers a further evocation of the traditional aspects of this classically styled tragedy.[121] Bel Imperia recalls initially the figure of Gismund,

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[118] Edwards recognises a potentially borrowed phrase from Studley's translation of *Phaedra*. "And dingd against the rugged Rocks his head doth oft rebound." (Studley's *Hippolytus*, i.e. his translation of Seneca's *Phaedra*, p. 176) (Edwards, notes) Boas sees the influence of Virgil in lines 19-20, but there is a closer passage in *Hercules Oetaeus*, which links the battle narrative of the Spanish General to this of Horatio, "Bellona ferro; mitte Gradivum trucem, / armetur in me dirus: est frater quidem, / sed ex noverca. Tu quoque, Alcidae soror / tantum ex parente, cuspidem in fratrem tuum / iaculare, Pallas." ["Let Bellona break the bonds of Erebus and attack me with sword drawn; send grim Gradivus, let him put on his dread armour against me; he is my brother, true, but by my stepmother. You too, sister to Alcides by his father only: hurl your sharp spear, Pallas, against your brother."] (*Hercules Oetaeus*, 1312-6) (Boas, notes)

[119] Though Hieronimo and the King between them fulfil the role of the prologue interpreting the action, none of the actual performers speaks.

[120] As opposed to Thyestes' banquet, or Tancred's golden chalice, or perhaps Gorlois' unfortunate banquet (where he was cuckolded).

[121] "[I]t may well be because of Seneca's example (especially in the *Hyppolitus*) that Kyd was able to create the character of a bold passionate woman like Bel-Imperia." Edwards, introduction, xlix. "Bel-imperia is Lorenzo's true sister. With masculine strength of will and intellect, yet with a deep vein of affection in her nature, and with the polish and charm of a true *grande dame* she has her place amidst the band of tragedy heroines of whom Lady Macbeth is the supreme type. In her opening dialogue with Balthazar (I. iv. 80ff.) how admirable is the self-possession with which she parries his words of love, and how pithy are her rejoinders. Kyd again shows his talent for transforming ancient devices by making the Senecan *stichomythia* the vehicle of this amorous fence." Boas, introduction, xxxiv. Between them Edwards and Boas have only hinted at the line of descent from Lady Macbeth down to Phaedra and Medea that I have been tracing in the female characters in this tragic tradition throughout this chapter. No less important are the characters of Thersites' mother, Jocasta, Videna, Guenavera and Gismund. Bel Imperia is only one of two female characters in *The Spanish Tragedy*, however, who play a part in the development of this tradition, the other of course being Isabella.

engaging in a secretive love affair.[122] Then, as Horatio makes an invocation of night and darkness that, in a much-altered form, recalls a host of earlier invocations of darkness,[123] her hesitancy recalls the doubts of Guenevera,[124]

Horatio: Now that the night begins with sable wings
To overcloud the brightness of the sun,
And that in darkness pleasures may be done,
Come Bel-imperia, let us to the bower,
And there in safety pass a pleasant hour.
Bel-Imperia: I follow thee my love, and will not back,
Although my fainting heart controls my soul.
. . . . .
...my heart foretells me some mischance.
Horatio: Sweet say not so, fair fortune is our friend,
And heavens have shut up day to pleasure us.
The stars thou see'st hold back their twinkling shine,
And Luna hides herself to pleasure us. (II. iv. 1-7 & 15-19)

Though Kyd's deployment of it is innovative, the invocation of night and darkness is common to this developing tradition. What should follow is the appearance of the Furies to aid some bloody deed. When their courtship trades the rhetoric of love for

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[122] Gismund's gift of a cane to the County may be recalled in Bel Imperia's bequest of her handkerchief to Horatio (which he had retrieved from Andrea's body). Gismund's secret letter that falls from its concealment inside the cane may also be recalled in the letter that falls revealing the identity of Horatio's murderers. The letter in *The Spanish Tragedy*, however, takes up a whole new symbolic significance.

[123] The Chorus of *Jocasta* twice bid Phoebus (the sun) to withhold his rays from shining on the tragic action of the play. (I. iv. 32-5 & II. iii. 36-9)

[124] "What's this? my mind recoyls, and yrkes these threats: / Anger delayes, my griefe gynnes to asswage, / My furie faintes,..." (*The Misfortunes of Arthur*, I. ii. 29-31)

that of war by the allusion to Venus' infidelity with Mars, (II. iv. 34-5) we may be reminded of the battle fury hinted at but frustrated in the earlier battle narratives.

> *Bel-Imperia*: Set forth thy *foot* to try the push of mine.
>
> *Horatio*: But first my looks shall combat against thine.
>
> *Bel-Imperia*: Then ward thyself: I *dart* a kiss at thee.
>
> *Horatio*: Thus I retort the *dart* thou threw'st at me.
>
> *Bel-Imperia*: Nay then, to gain the glory of the field,
>
> My twining *arms* shall yoke and make thee yield.
>
> *Horatio*: Nay then, my *arms* are large and strong withal:
>
> Thus elms by vines are compassed till they fall.
>
> *Bel-Imperia*: O let me go, for in my troubled eyes
>
> Now may'st thou read that life in passion dies.
>
> *Horatio*: O stay a while and I will die with thee,
>
> So shalt thou yield and yet have *conquered* me. (II. v. 38-49)[125]

These lines of amorousness recall very clearly the Latin lines of the first battle narrative give by the Spanish General, "*Pede pes et cuspide cuspis*; / *Arma sonant armis, vir petiturque viro*." ["Foot against foot and spear against spear, arm rings on arms and man is assailed by man."[126]] (I. ii. 55-6) This time neither the battle narrative tradition, nor the invocation of night and the expected conclusion are to be frustrated. Lorenzo, Balthazar, Serberine and Pedringano fulfil the expectation of

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[125] My italics.

[126] I have used the translation of these lines as Mulryne renders them. Boas recognises a certain indebtedness to Statius' "iam clipeus clipeis, umbone repellitur umbo, / ense minax ensis, pede pes et cuspide cuspis: / sic obnixa acies." ["Now shield buffets shield, boss boss, sword threatening sword, foot foot, spear spear; so the armies strain against each other."] *Thebaid* IIX, 398-400. (Boas, notes) Also cited in Mulryne's notes.

furious murder. (II. iv. 53-5) Lorenzo's rhetoric places him quite clearly in the role of Fury, punishing pride and ambition, "Although his life were still ambitious proud, / Yet is he at the highest now he is dead." (II. iv. 60-1)[127] This is a role that Bel-Imperia seems to confirm when she next confronts Lorenzo regarding the murder, "What madding fury did possess thy wits?" (III. x. 33) Thus Bel-Imperia's participation in Horatio's invocation of night to assist their purposes places her firmly in the tradition of the other classically styled female characters in this tradition.

Bel-Imperia only fills part of this role, however, and Isabella must supply the other portion. She has three scenes in all. In the first of these Hieronimo has just discovered Horatio's murdered body, and she comes on in search of her husband out of doors in his night shirt, "My husband's absence makes my heart to throb – " (II. v. 34) She may echo the complaints of Medea, Gismund, and Guenevera against the absence of their husbands here, tying her immediately into the tradition.[128] Again in keeping with this tradition, her final scene, having already run lunatic (see s.d. III. viii. 5-6) continues to her 'unwomaning'. Having cut down and revenged herself upon the arbour in which Horatio was hung, she says, "And as I curse this tree from further fruit, / So shall my womb be cursed for his sake; / And with this weapon will I wound the breast, (*She stabs herself*) / The hapless breast that gave Horatio suck." (IV. ii. 35-8) Her suicide is in keeping with the traditional undoing of the mothering function established by Medea, and which echoes down through Thersites' mother, Videna,

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[127] The Furies are the punishers of ambition in this developing tradition (as well as maintaining their more traditional role of punishers of kindred blood murders and host-guest violations). See the discussion of Eteocles' ambition, as a cause of the tragedy of *Jocasta*, and as the cause of his madness above, 225-7; and the inclusion of the symbolism of a Pægasus, carried by the third Fury, in the first dumb-show of *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, explained as representing ambition. (The Argument and Manner of the First Dumb Show, 15-7) See above, 247.

[128] Medea for her desertion by her husband Jason for another woman (*Medea*, 116-36), Gismund bemoans her widowhood (i.e. her husband's absence) (*Tancred and Gismund*, I. ii. 101-33), and Guenevera complains for Arthur's nine year absence fighting the Romans (*The Misfortunes of Arthur*, I. ii. 1-5). Though Isabella's meaning is simple enough, as her opening lines they are suggestive of this tradition.

and Gismund.[129] Again the invocation is incomplete, the traditional call for assistance from the agencies of the underworld is left undone, and (while rhetorically calling up a part of the tradition) Isabella turns her violence inwards with her knife.

It is left up to Hieronimo to make the presence of the Furies within the play more explicit. As he pleads with the court for justice, but is thought mad, he threatens to fetch a ghost,

> I'll rip the bowels of the earth,
>
> *He diggeth with his dagger*
>
> And ferry over to th'Elysian plains,
>
> And bring my son to show his deadly wounds.
>
> . . . . .
>
> ...I'll go marshal up the fiends in hell,
>
> To be avenged on you all for this. (III. xii. 71-3 & 77-8)

He says that he shall marshal the assistance of 'fiends' to assist him in his revenge. But the play does not have a Christian god overseeing it, nor Christian devils to punish the wicked. It is rather the Furies, avenging classical gods, who Hieronimo invokes; the king, in ignorance, echoes the invocation, when he asks a moment later, "Will none of you restrain his *fury*?" (III. xii. 80)

Hieronimo returns in the following scene to complete the invocation in a more precise manner,

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[129] For the comparison of this motif in Medea (*Medea*, 966) and Videna (The *Misfortunes of Arthur*, IV. 55 & 71-4) see above, 239-40; and for Thersites mother (*Thersites*, 290-1) see above, 218. Also Gismund's undressed hair (*Tancred and Gismund*, s.d. V. ii. 1667) in relation to Medea, see above 245. This must be in Mulryne's mind when he writes (in a note on her entrance III. viii.), "Isabella will probably be dressed in this scene in the tattered garments and unbound hair conventionally associated with madness." (Mulryne, notes)

Though on this earth justice will not be found,

I'll down to hell, and in this passion

Knock at the dismal gates of Pluto's court,

Getting by force, as once Alcides did,

A troop of Furies and tormenting hags

To torture Don Lorenzo and the rest. (III. xiii. 108-113)

Where previously Hieronimo had promised to go down to hell and fetch fiends to assist him in securing revenge, he now makes it plain that it is the Furies he means; there is clearly no distinction to be made as far as he is concerned.[130]

After discovering her husband with the murdered body of her son, Isabella asks, "O where's the author of this endless woe?" (II. v. 39) The sense is clear enough, she means, 'who is responsible for murdering my son?' but the theatrical self-consciousness of the question's phrasing hints that another 'author of…endless woe' ought not to be far from our minds. When Hieronimo has decided on revenge he enters with one such author,

Enter Hieronimo *with a book in his hand*

Vindicta mihi!

Ay, heaven will be revenged of every ill,

[130] However, the reference is not as straightforward as it seems, for Hercules did not go down to Hades to get Furies, but to capture Cerberus. The Furies were nonetheless unleashed as a result of the same, but not to aid Hercules in securing revenge, but to assist Juno in avenging herself on Hercules for the ignominy of his birth. Hercules is the one driven mad by the Furies as a result, and Hieronimo may obliquely align himself with Hercules in tearing (seemingly in a trance, for he denies it afterwards) the petitions of the three citizens (s.d. III. xiii. 123) as Hercules had murdered (in the Fury-driven frenzy) his three children. (987-1026) In one sense now the Senex makes up the part of Hercules father, both have lost a son.

> Nor will they suffer murder unrepaid:
> Then stay, Hieronimo, attend their will,
> For mortal men may not appoint their time.
> '*Per scelus semper tutum est sceleribus iter.*'[131] (III. xiii. 1-6)

Boas finds Seneca in the opening line of this passage, but has been rather generally dismissed on the point on the grounds that '*Vindicta Mihi*!' is closer to a biblical line. Boyle articulates the standard interpretation sufficiently,

> What is striking about this passage is not only the familiarity with the Senecan text which Kyd expects from his audience, but the way that text is used dramatically, to afford a transition from the Christian view of vengeance, represented by the opening allusion to Romans 12.19 ('Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord'), to a non-Christian, more primitive code of 'justice', the private execution of revenge. The passages and the copy of Seneca's tragedies in Hieronimo's hand underscore this transition by reminding the audience of the Senecan dramatic world of violence, vengeance and the imperatives of private blood.[132]

The division of ideas is key to this interpretation, however, the two thoughts are more likely to be complimentary. If the symbolism of the book ("reminding the audience of

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[131] "The book in Hieronimo's hand is obviously a Seneca, from the excerpts read later in the speech,..." (Edwards, notes) "Hieronimo enters with a book in his hand. It is possibly a *florilegium* filled with miscellaneous quotations but more probably a copy of Seneca's tragedies, from which all the Latin quotations come (except the first, perhaps remembered rather than read)." (Boyle, 143) "C.f. Seneca, *Agamemnon*, l. 115: *per scelera semper sceleribus tutum est iter* ('The safe way for crime is always through crime')." (Edwards, notes) "An inexact form of Seneca's *Agamemnon*, 115: '*Per scelera semper sceleribus tutum est iter.*' With this quotation Hieronimo begins a new train of thought. Instead of attending on the will of heaven, he reflects that one crime opens the way for another, 'evils vnto ils conductors be,' and that therefore he should repay violence with violence." (Boas, notes)

[132] Boyle, 144.

the Senecan dramatic world of violence") counts for anything, then surely heaven will be revenged using Hieronimo as scourge (there is thus no difference in the two thoughts). Within the classical world of the play, Senecan blood for blood prevails, directed by heaven (and their ministers, the Furies) using mortals as weapons. 'Stay Hieronimo' is furthermore a rejection of the previous tokens of suicide, (i.e. the poniard and rope of the preceding scene (III. xii)) in favour of the token of revenge (i.e. his book of Seneca), 'attend' does not mean 'wait patiently', but 'serve'. If the intention were to argue Christian patience it should read 'attend His will,' but it is rather to argue service to the classical gods who promote and encourage vengeance (especially in Senecan tragedy), and so it reads 'attend *their* will'.[133] What Kyd has done is to take a biblical text and paste it to a classical text. In keeping with the rest of the play, a conflation of the two traditions is what is meant.

The Spanish Tragedy ends with what should by now be a familiar Senecan trope, as Andrea requests of Revenge the role of judge to the fates of his erstwhile earthly foes;

> Let loose poor Tityus from the vulture's gripe,
> And let Don Cyprian supply his room:
> Place Don Lorenzo on Ixion's wheel,

[133] "...Boas is surely wrong in suggesting that here Hieronimo is reading from *Octavia*, *Et hoc sat est?...haec vindicta debetur mihi?* ('And is this enough?...Is this the vengeance due to me?'). This sense would be fitting for Hieronimo's mood at this point, but the succeeding words make it obvious that Schick and Bowers are right (cf. *M.L.N.*, liii (1938), 590) in saying that Hieronimo quotes first from the biblical 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.'" (Edwards, notes) Perhaps Edwards is being slightly unfair in re-punctuating the line here. "From Seneca's *Octavia*: '*Vindicta debetur mihi.*'" (Boas, notes) In Boas' rendering the parallel is far more plausible, and without the preceding text in Seneca (added by Edwards) and the remainder of the biblical line (glossed over by Edwards, Schick, and Bowers) it should be apparent that there is as much left out of each text to allow that what is meant is a conflation of the two. What is more, in the biblical 'Vindicta mihi' (*Romans* 12:19) Paul is quoting the book of *Deuteronomy*. (32:35) Thus Kyd is blending a Christian text, which incorporates within it a meeting of Old and New Testament vengeance, with a classical allusion to the vengeance of the Roman gods.

And let the lover's endless pains surcease

(Juno forgets old wrath and grants him ease):

Hang Balthazar about Chimera's neck,

And let him there bewail his bloody love,

Repining at our joys that are above:

Let Serberine go roll the fatal stone,

And take from Sisyphus his endless moan:

False Pedringano, for his treachery,

Let him be dragg'd through boiling Acheron,

And there live, dying still in endless flames,

Blaspheming gods and all their holy names. (IV. v. 31-44)[134]

Revenge concludes the play by promising to instigate their eternal "tragedy". (IV. v. 45-8) The meta-theatrical and intertextual quality of this piece is important; Kyd the author of *The Spanish Tragedy* has allowed Revenge to act as Chorus, and in a way as another author to the action on the stage below, on which Hieronimo has also turned author to his own revenge (and *Soliman and Perseda*). Each of the three authors of revenge (Kyd, Revenge, Hieronimo) has used the master of revenge, Seneca (and the tradition established in the English vernacular imitations). The closing piece takes a Senecan set piece and adds to it a final, Christian punishment, a torment for treachery.

The Battell of Alcazar

George Peele's *The Battell of Alcazar* (1588-9)[135] blends many of the elements already seen to be incorporated from Senecan tragedy to English.[136] The play opens

[134] Boyle also notes the use of this traditional rhetorical piece from Seneca, citing *Agamemnon* 15ff., *Thyestes* 6ff. and *Phaedra* 1229ff. providing he says a "fitting climax to Kyd's Senecanesque play." Boyle, 154.

with an outline of the prehistory of the play and the basic argument. We are spared the usual underworld narrative and argument of a ghost, but the presenter fills this void by explaining what will happen in the ensuing dumb shows. The 'Moore' (son of Abdallas) and his accomplices will murder his two brethren and his uncle to secure passage of the crown straight to him,

> The passage to the crowne by murder made,
> *Abdallas* dies, and deisnes this tyrant king,
> Of whome we treate sprong from the Arabian moore
> Blacke in his looke, and bloudie in his deeds,
> And in his shirt staind with a cloud of gore,
> Presents himselfe with naked sword in hand,
> Accompanied as now you may behold,
> With deuils coted in the shapes of men. (Act I, Presenter, 16-23)

His accomplices are rhetorically turned to devils to fulfil the underworldly requirements of English Senecan tragedy. Having inherited the crown he is left to triumph in his "tyrannie,"

> Till Nemesis high mistres of reuenge,
> That with her scourge keepes all the world in awe,

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[135] Though it is not certain, Peele is generally accredited with its authorship. Printed in 1594, its references to the recent attempted invasion of England (1588) indicate a proximity to that event. See Sally Purcell, ed., *George Peele* (Oxford: Fyfield Books, 1972) 34. Purcell also provides a useful family tree (Purcell, 35). Quotations from the play are taken from the Malone Society edition, W. W. Greg, ed., *The Battle of Alcazar 1594*, The Malone Society Reprints. (Chiswick: Malone Society, 1907).

[136] Cunliffe writes, "Peele is excessively fond of the infernal machinery which Seneca so often brought into play, and in *The Battle of Alcazar* he uses it again and again, without any regard to its appropriateness." (Cunliffe, *Influence*, 61) His apparent distaste for this play accounts for the lack of attention he gives to it.

With thundering drums awakes the God of warre,

And cals the furies from Auernus crags,

To range and rage, and vengeance to inflict

Vengeance on this accursed Moore for sinne,… (Second dumb show, 48-54)

While maintaining the contemporary setting, and apparently honest historical reconstruction of the play, ("Saie not these things are faind, for true they are," Second dumb show, 44) the Furies must be evoked for bloody justice to be done in keeping with the established tradition.[137] As the troops unite and muster against the Moor, Muly Mahomet Xeque (Seth in other places in the text) reprimands Abdilmelec for his tardiness in pursuing justice, "why is *Abdilmelec* then so slow / To chastise him with furie of the sword, / Whose pride doth swell to sway beyond his reach, / Follow this pride then with furie of reuenge." (I. i. 179-182) In case it is not clear, he spells out for the audience the traditional punishment for pride, i.e. fury. Rubin Arches (late wife of Abdelmunen) leads the petition for revenge, to which Abdilmelec responds by (belatedly for the tradition) invoking his brother's ghost, "Rubin these rights to Abdelmunens ghost, / Haue pearst by this to Plutos graue below, / The bels of Pluto ring reuenge amaine. / The furies and the fiends conspire with thee, / Warre bids me drawe my weapons for reuenge / Of my deepe wrongs, and my deare brothers death." (I. i. 188-193)[138] Muly Mahomet Xeque bids the troops to join with the forces of the underworld to repay the tyrant with their fury, "follow to the gates of death and hell, / Pale death and hell to entertaine his soule. / Follow I saie to burning *Phlegiton*, / This traitor tyrant and his companies." (I. i. 198-201)

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[137] The invocation of Nemesis as the god who calls the Furies forth may recall Horatio's references to her in *The Spanish Tragedy*. (I. iv. 16-22) See above, 255.

[138] There is also a rhetorical invocation of a ghost in *Tancred and Gismund*. Gismund's mourning is accentuated by the spectre of her husband, "I know thy ghost doth houer here about, / Expecting me (thy heart) to follow thee:" (I. ii. 122-3)

As the first Act closes, the Moor has been chased from Fesse into hiding. The introduction to the first scene of the second act is spoken by the Presenter, and accompanied by a dumb show that should be recognisable as traditional by now,

Now warre begins his rage and ruthlesse raine,
And Nemesis with bloudie whip in hand,
Thunders for vengeance on this Negro moore.
Nor may the silence of the speechlesse night,
Diuine Architects of murthers and misdeeds,
Of tragedies, and tragicke tyrannies,
Hide or containe this barbarous crueltie
Of this vsurper to his progenie.
Three ghosts crying Vindicta.
Hearke Lords, as in a hollow place a farre,
The dreadfull shrikes and clamors that resound,
And sound reuenge vpon this traitors soule,
Traitor to kinne and kinde, to Gods and men.
Now Nemesis vpon her doubling drum,
Moude with this gastly mone, this sad complaint,
Larumes aloud into Alectos eares,
And with her thundering wakes whereas they lie,
In caue as darke as hell, and beds of steele,
The furies iust impes of dire reuenge,
Reuenge cries [Abdilmunens] grieued ghost,
And rouseth with the terror of this noise

These nymphs of Erybus. Wreake and reuenge

Ring out the soules of his vnhappie brethren,

And now start vp these torments of the world,

Wakt with the thunder of Ramusians drum,

And feareful ecchos of these grieued ghosts,

Alecto with her brand and bloudie torch,

Megæra with her whip and snakie haire,

Tysiphone with her fatall murthering yron,

These three conspire, these three complaine & mone,... (II. i. 308-37)[139]

The traditional dumb show of the three Furies is associated by the presenter with Nemesis and the god of War, and are now synonymous with ghosts and imps.[140] They are further linked with mad Hieronimo in crying 'Vindicta'. Thus battle-fury ('warre...his rage') in the figure of Nemesis, is blended with the more traditional role of the Furies in causing madness in punishment for the shedding of kindred blood ('kinne and kinde'), as the traditional ghost figure also gets woven into the mix.

Languishing in hiding and exile the once proud tyrant begs the assistance of the king of Portugal, who comes to the Moor's aid with a small band of catholic English men (including Tom Stukley). They have been dissuaded from their treacherous mission to conquer Ireland by the king and they all agree to wage war on

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[139] I have followed Purcell's emendation of the clearly erroneous 1594 text, which has 'Abdilmelecs' at line 327. (Purcell, 40) This error is replicated in the Malone edition.

[140] The image of Nemesis carrying a whip merges the with traditional representation of the Furies, especially Megaera. See Medea's description of Megaera (*Medea*, 63) discussed above, 239; the third Fury in the first dumb-show of *The Misfortunes of Arthur* (The Argument and Manner of the First Dumb Show, 6-7), above, 246-7; the Furies in Andrea's description of the underworld in *The Spanish Tragedy* (I. ii. 65), above, 252-3; and Peele's own description of Megaera further down in this passage. (II. i. 28)

the Moor's behalf against Abdilmelec. At the opening of the third Act, the presenter again interprets for us,

> Lo thus into a lake of bloud and gore,
> The braue courageous king of Portugall
> Hath drencht himselfe, and now prepares amaine
> With sailes and oares to crosse the swelling seas,
> With men and ships, courage and canon shot,… (III. i. 798-802)

This "lake of bloud and gore," has become a traditional image of the carnage caused in the rage of battle in these classically styled tragedies.[141] Then the presenter introduces a strange dumb show at the beginning of the fourth Act, the inspiration for which must be *Thyestes*, and the necessity of which can only be to meet the traditions of the genre,

> …warre and weapons now, and bloud and death
> Wait on the counsels of this cursed king:
> And to a bloudie banket he inuites
> The braue Sebastian and his noble peeres.
> *Enter to the bloudie banket.*
> In fatall houre ariu'd this peerelesse prince,
> To loose his life, his life and many liues

[141] The king of Portugal also makes use of this image to spur his forces on, "Cast feare aside, my selfe will leade the way, / And make a passage with my conquering sword / Knee deepe in bloud of these accursed Moores, / And they that loue my honour follow me." (*The Battle of Alcazar*, IV. ii. 1168-71) The use of this image recalls Achilles wading into blood stained Xanthias, (*Iliad* XXI, 34); and Gorboduc's description of "Simois' stained streams" (*Gorboduc*, III. i. 2); and perhaps Polynices' wish to bath his sword in Eteocles' breast (*Jocasta*, V. i. 52-3); and Mordred's wish to do likewise to Arthur (*The Misfortunes of Arthur*, II. i. 5-6). See above, 234 & 251.

Of lustie men,... (IV. i. 1063-70)

Chris Meads notes the details of this banquet as they are set down in the 'plott.' The "marginal notes call[] for 'Dead mans heads and Bones, banquett, Blood'. The heads were to be presented 'in dishes'...Peele demonstrates an awareness of the ritual aspects of the banquet and in this case uses it as a metaphor of the war, deceit, and death which follow it in the play."[142] What Peele also demonstrates is that he is conscious of the traditions of the genre in which he is writing.

The Moor's treachery and cowardice knows no bounds, and yet while he leaves the borrowed forces to conduct his battle, he calls upon the assistance of the forces of the underworld who were earlier called to remove him from the throne which he now wants back,

Now haue I set these Portugals aworke,
To hew a waie for me vnto the crowne,
Or with your weapons here to dig your graues,
You dastards of the night and Erybus,
Fiends, Fairies, hags that fight in beds of steele,
Range through this armie with your yron whips,
Driu[e] forward to this deed this christian crew,
And let me triumph in the tragedie,
Though it be seald and honourd with my bloud,
Both of the Portugall and barbarous Moore,
Ride Nemesis, ride in thy firie cart,

[142] Chris Meads, *Banquets Set Forth: Banqueting in English Renaissance Drama*, The Revels Plays Companion Library (Manchester: MUP, 2001) 81. These details are not recorded in the Malone Society edition.

And sprinkle gore amongst these men of warre,
That either partie eager of reuenge,
May honor thee with sacrifice of death,
And hauing bath'd thy chariot wheeles in bloud,
Descend and take to thy tormenting hell,
The mangled bodie of that traitor king,
That scornes the power and force of Portugall.
Then let the earth discouer to his ghost,
Such tortures as vsurpers feele below,
Rackt let him be in proud Ixions wheele,
Pinde let him be with Tantalus endlesse thirst,
Praie let him be to Tisons greedie bird,
Wearied with Sisiphus immortall toile,
And lastly for reuenge, for deepe reuenge,
Whereof thou goddesse and deuiser art,
Damnd let him be, damnd and condemnd to beare
All torments, tortures, plagues and paines of hell. (IV. ii. 1227-54)[143]

The Moor's invocation of "Fiends, Fairies, hags…/…with [] yron whips" again blends witchcraft, demonology and folk magic-lore with the classical Furies. His wish to ride, accompanied by Nemesis in his "firie cart, / And sprinkle gore amongst these men of warre," to bath the "chariot wheeles in bloud," before descending into "tormenting hell" is a clear allusion to Amphiaraus, one of the 'seven against Thebes,' who, destined for death on the battle field wins such glory and slaughter's so many

[143] The text reads "Driuc" at line 1233, but 'drive' is clearly what is intended.

foes that the ground opens up and he is subsumed into the underworld chariot and all.[144]

The final dumb show is accompanied by thunder and lightening, (1263) fireworks, (1279) a blazing star, (1276) and the proverbial "Bloud will have bloud". (V. presenter, 1267)[145] As the final battle begins to take its toll, Abdulmelec asks the state of their camp, "tell me all the newes, / Tell me what furie rangeth in our campe". (V. i. 1305-6) All seems lost as "Duke the deuill of Auero" (V. i. 1315) has wreaked havoc in the Moorish camp, and Abdulmelec theatrically speaks his last, "My sight doth faile, my soule, my feeble soule / Shall be releaste from prison on this earth: / Farwell vaine world for I haue playd my parte." (1332-4) His feeble soul departs in despair too soon, as it soon becomes apparent that the victory will fall to his side. As the battle closes in around the Moor, he calls for a horse (as Richard III will (*Richard III*, V. v. 7 & 13)), he curses his birth in a way that will be echoed by Hamlet,

> My starres, my dam, my planets and my nurse,
> The fire, the aire, the water, and the earth,
> All causes that haue thus conspirde in one,
> To nourish and preserue me to this shame,
> Thou that wert at my birth predominate,
> Thou fatall starre, what planet ere thou be,
> Spit out thy poison bad, and all the ill
> That fortune, fate or heauen may bode a man.
> Thou Nurse infortunate, guiltie of all:

[144] Statius' *Thebaid* (IIX, 1-126). The description includes a reference to the punishments of Ixion (50) and of Tantalus (51). Discussed above, 253.
[145] Used again in *Macbeth*, (as a saying) "It will have blood, they say: blood will have blood". (III. iv. 121)

Thou mother of my life that broughtst me forth,
Curst maist thou be for such a cursed sonne,
Curst be thy sonne with euerie curse thou hast,
Ye Elements of whome consists this clay,
This masse of flesh, this cursed crazed corpes.
Destroy, dissolue, disturbe, and dissipate,
What water, earth, and aire conieald.[146] (V. i. 1394-1409)

Before the play can end Stukley's part (and England's interest in the war) must be wrapped up. Hercules (who's name seems unusually arbitrary until he turns his sword on his own kind) kills Stukley with the help of two Italians, for convincing them to join the battle against the "ruthlesse furie" (V. i. 1436) of their Moorish foes. But before Stukley dies he is allowed time for a soliloquy in which he may explain how a "discontented humor" (V. i. 1466) drove him from England through various fortunes and mishaps to treachery against his queen and country and to the place of his ignominious death. When the body of the king of Portugal is brought in it is presented as the "earth and claie, / Of him that earst was mightie king of Portugall". (V. i. 1551-2) The drowned body of the Moor "the ambitious enemie, / … / Whose mallice sent so many soules to hell" (V. i. 1559 & 1561) is finally brought in, and it is decided that he shall be made an example of, "His skin we will be parted from his flesh, / And being stifned out and stuft with strawe, / So to deterre and feare the lookers on,…" (V. i. 1582-4) Effectively he is to be anatomised.[147] This is fittingly brutal for the tradition, but there is also an extremely heightened sense of the physicality of the body in these final passages. The souls of these men are ruthlessly parted from their

[146] Compare Hamlet's, "O that this too too sullied flesh would melt, / Thaw and resolve itself into a dew,…" (*Hamlet*, I. iii. 129-30)
[147] See anatomised figures in Appendix VII.

bodies, and the fore-fronting of the Furies (now synonymous with devils) makes it clear where their souls are heading.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have traced the development of a certain set of features of classically styled English tragedy that specifically relate to madness, and where Seneca is the main model. 1. A woman who enacts or wishes enacted an unmothering or unwomaning, (*Medea*, 752 & 966; *Thersites*, 290-1; *Gorboduc*, IV. i. 55 & 71-4; *Tancred and Gismund*, V. ii. 1667; and *The Spanish Tragedy*, IV. ii. 35-8). 2. A woman whose sleep is disturbed by guilt (e.g. *Phaedra*, 100-3, Gismund in *Tancred and Gismund*, III. ii. 630 & 651-7). 3. A ghost (Gorlois in *The Misfortunes of Arthur*; Don Andrea in *The Spanish Tragedy*; Gismund's husband in *Tancred and Gismund*, I. ii. 121-3; Abdelmunen in *The Battle of Alcazar*, I. i. 123-8). 4. A description of the tortures of the underworld (*Gorboduc*, II. i. ; *Tancred and Gismund*, IV. i. 861-74; *The Spanish Tragedy*, I. ii. 63-71 & IV. v. 29-44; *The Battle of Alcazar*, IV. iv. 21-8). 5. The invocation of the Furies (*Jocasta*, Chorus after Act II, 17-24; *Gorboduc*, Dumb show before Act IV, 2-11; *Tancred and Gismund*, Introductio in Actum 4; *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, First Dumb show, 1-7; Guenevera in *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, I. ii. 39-47; Hieronimo in *The Spanish Tragedy*, III. xii. 71-8 & III. xiii. 108-113; *The Battle of Alcazar*, Second Dumb show, 16-18, II. i. 1-30 & IV. iv. 4-6). 6. A tyrant figure who must be removed (Eteocles in *Jocasta*; Egisthus in *Horestes*; Tancred in *Tancred and Gismund*, II. ii. 449-467 & IV. iv. 1284-7; Mordred in *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, the Paegasus symbol in first dumb show; the Moor in *The Battle of Alcazar*). 7. A banquet (*Tancred and Gismund*, V. ii. 1 & 1594-5; *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, The Opening Argument; *The Spanish Tragedy*, I. iv. 115-128;

The Battle of Alcazar, IV. i. 4-10). 8. A battle narrative (*Thersites*, 296; *Gorboduc*, III. i. 1-10; *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, II. i. 19, 30 & 38-9, II. i. 5-6 & 10-11; *The Spanish Tragedy*, I. ii. 22-84, I. iii. 59-71 & I. iv. 6-43; *The Battle of Alcazar*, III. i. 1-5 & IV. iii. 16-19). 9. Bloody revenge (preferably ending a family line) (all of the above). These features are not present in all of the plays I have dealt with, but each play contains more than enough to make the tradition immediately recognisable and distinguishable from the other dramatic traditions of the time (parodies excepted, i.e. *Thersites*). In the final chapter I will examine the redeployment of these features in *Macbeth*. At the same time I will incorporate the implications of the research that informed the earlier sections of this thesis, and give a more complete examination of the representation of madness than was possible (prior to this chapter) in the analyses of *Richard II* and *Hamlet*.

Chapter 6: *Macbeth* - Things Mad Begun

In the last chapter I traced the development of a certain set of features of classically styled English tragedy that specifically relate to madness, and where Seneca is the main model in the early English tragedies; *Gorboduc*, *Jocasta*, *Tancred and Gismund*, *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, *The Spanish Tragedy*, and *The Battle of Alcazar*. These features are the appearance of and/or invocation of the Furies; a battle narrative; a mother who undoes her mothering function; the description of the tortures of the underworld; a bloody banquet; the appearance of a ghost; a woman whose sleep is disturbed by guilt; a tyrant figure who must be removed; bloody revenge ending a family line. In this final chapter I will examine the redeployment of these features in *Macbeth*. I will further examine how the Fury-driven madness of the characters in these plays influences the portrayal of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. This is not to suggest that Shakespeare did not have access to Seneca's own plays, rather that the composition of *Macbeth* reflects the influence of this tradition while incorporating also the more recent base text of Seneca in English translation, *Seneca, his Tenne Tragedies* and indeed perhaps in the original.[1] Furthermore, as the final play analysed in this thesis, it will be shown that there is an intricate interweave of traditions (as elucidated in the preceding chapters) that combine to give a complex portrait of the madness of both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. I will examine the influence of both the English mystery cycle tradition and the moral allegory tradition as they relate to the characterisation and plot of the play, as well as incorporating the medical literature that relates to the type of madness exhibited by Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.

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[1] See especially 'Appendix A: *Shakespeare and Seneca*' in Emrys Jones, *The Origins of Shakespeare*, (Oxford: OUP, 1977) 267-72. Also Selma Gutman, *The Foreign Sources of Shakespeare's Works*, (NY: Octagon, 1968) 39-47.

James' Furies

Arthur Magee, somewhat anachronistically, uses Burton's *Anatomy* (1621) and Jonson's *The Masque of Queens* (1609) to show that the Furies had become almost synonymous with devils and witches (and more specifically with Apollyon's horde) by the time Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth* (1606).[2] However, as has been illustrated in the previous chapter of this thesis there is no need to look so far forward as Jonson's masque or as far from the stage as Burton's medical treatise to see this association. The chorus of *Jocasta*, in a complaint to Mars, say that he raises "from the depth of hell, / The wrathfull sprites of all the furies there," who search the earth "Tenriche [sic] that pit with spoile of damned ghostes." (Chorus at the end of Act Two, 17-8 & 21) In *The Misfortunes of Arthur* the Furies are represented in opposition to Nuns. 'The Argument and Manner of the First Dumb Show' describes and explains in part the significance of the opposition, "*Whiles* [the Furies] *went masking about the stage, / there came from another place three* Nuns *which walked by them / selues. Then after a full sight giuen to the beholders, they all / parted, the furies to* Mordreds *house, the* Nuns *to the Cloister.../.../ By the* Nuns */ was signified the remorse and despaire of* Gueneuora*, that wanting / other hope tooke a Nunrie for her refuge*." (The Argument and Manner of the First Dumb Show, 7-10 & 17-19) The Furies and the Nuns represent, respectively, sin and abstinence, evil (and its punishment) and good (or at least repentance and, thereby, the hope of salvation). The association of the Furies with more Christian evil is made even clearer when the Nuntius reports the desperate battle fury of Mordred as his forces are losing the battle,

[2] Arthur Magee, ''Macbeth' and the Furies,' *Shakespeare Survey 19,* (1966) 55 & 56. The dating of the play is by no means certain, but I have followed Muir's best guess in the Arden edition. Muir, introduction, xv-xxv.

And he himselfe the spurre of fiends

And Gorgons all, least any part of his

Scapt free from guilt, enflamde their mindes to wrath,

And, with a valure more, then Vertue yeelds,

He chearde them all, and at their backe with long

Outreached speare, stirde vp each lingring hand.

And furielike frounst vp with frantick frets. (IV. ii. 123-9)[3]

Fury-like, Mordred pursues 'fiends' and 'Gorgons' (his maddened troops) into battle in 'wrath' (one of the seven deadly sins) and 'frantick frets', contrary to the valour of virtuous warfare. In *Tancred and Gismund*, Megaera brings "Vengeance and death from forth the deepest hell" (IV. i. 3) after dancing a "hellish round" with her "Sisters", (IV. i. s.d. & 1) and although the ensuing description is classical, the three sisters emerge from 'hell,' (IV. i. s.d. & 3) and Megaera comes to punish "pride" (IV. i. 38) (first of the seven deadly sins) for, she concludes, "Furies must aid, when men surcease to know / Their gods: and hell sends forth revenging pain / On those whom shame from sin cannot restrain." (IV. i. 47-9) Characteristically, while the imagery of the scene is classical, the focus on sin is Christian. In the same way that *The Misfortunes of Arthur* places "wrath" in opposition to "Vertue" (above, IV. ii. 125 & 126) *Tancred and Gismund* here places "pride" and "sin" in opposition to "shame". (IV. i. 38 & 49) In *The Spanish Tragedy*, Hieronimo promises first to "marshal up the fiends [from] hell" (III. xii. 77) to assist him in his revenge, and then to get, by force, a "troop of Furies and tormenting hags" (III. xiii. 112). It is clear that he makes no distinction between fiends and Furies, and that the Furies are associated in his mind

[3] Magee also notes the association of the Furies with Gorgons in Virgil and Ovid, (Magee, 55) but, as before, the association is also made in an error in the notes of *Jocasta*, see Chapter Five above, 226.

with witches (or at least "tormenting hags"). So too in *The Battle of Alcazar*, Nemesis "vpon her doubling drum" (II. i. 321) moved with the shrieking complaint of three ghosts crying 'Vindicta' (II. i. 316) "Larumes aloud into Alectos eares, / And with her thundering wakes whereas they lie, / In caue as darke as hell, and beds of steele, / The furies iust impes of dire reuenge". (II. i. 323-6) Again, as before, the Furies (specifically Allecto here) are related with other supernatural figures, and with war. So in the course of the tradition traced, the classical Furies become synonymous with fiends or devils (as in *Jocasta*, *The Misfortunes of Arthur* and *The Spanish Tragedy*) and imps or sprites (i.e. spirits) (in *The Battle of Alcazar* and *Jocasta*) are conflated with Gorgons (in *Jocasta* and *The Misfortunes of Arthur*), are associated with storms (in *The Battle of Alcazar*), with war (*Jocasta*, *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, *The Battle of Alcazar*), with witches (*The Spanish Tragedy*) and above all there is a sense that they are a three-faceted dark sisterhood inciting and punishing Christian sin.

So when Francis Meres, quoting his friend Richard Barnfield in *Palladis Tamia, Wits Treasury* (1598),[4] writes, "The King of Scots now liuing is a Poet, / As his *Lepanto* and his *Furies* show it", there can be little question that the King of Scots' "*Furies*" refers to James VI of Scotland's *Of Demonologie* (1597). So too when the three Witches enter to thunder and lightning[5] in the opening scene of *Macbeth*, their brief rhyming, rhythmic chant should suggest the first element of

[4] *Palladis Tamia*, the second part of *Wits Commonwealth*, in G. Gregory Smith, ed., *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, vol. II (London: OUP, 1904, 1959).

[5] The closest parallel to this entrance of the three Witches is, "Then was heard and seen a storm of thunder and lightening, in which the furies rise up,..." (*Tancred and Gismund*, Introductio in Actum Quartum). The Witches' chant, "Fair is foul, and foul is fair", also seems reminiscent of the Chorus of *The Misfortunes of Arthur*'s " Seek not the faire, that soone will turne to fowle" (Chorus after the Second Act, 2) but there should be no need for a direct parallel for the evocation of the tradition to be recognisable.

classically styled English tragedy, and the pervading presence throughout the play (though never specifically referred to) of the Furies.[6]

Bellona's Battle Narrative

Where the Furies are associated in *Jocasta* with Mars, the Roman god of war, with Nemesis in *The Battle of Alcazar*, and with war and battle more generally in *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, so too in *Macbeth* the Witches' only functional act (beyond the immediate evocation of a tradition) in the opening scene is to arrange to meet with Macbeth after the "hurly-burly" of the battle is over. In keeping with the tradition established in the previous chapter, the second scene involves the first battle narrative of the play, and our first insight into the character of Macbeth. This first battle narrative comes in two phases; the bleeding Captain relates the initial portion, (I. ii. 7-43) and Rosse narrates the conclusion. (I. ii. 49-64) For both parts the main source is Holinshed's *Chronicles*,[7] but there are a number of allusions and references that are worth isolating in relation to the dramatic tradition traced in the last chapter.

The Captain's opening image seems unusual at first, "Doubtful it stood; / As two spent swimmers, that do cling together / And choke their art." (I. ii. 7-9) The image is of two armies personified flailing arms against each other in combat. Why this should bring the swimmers to mind will only become apparent as the Captain comes to the end of his portion of the battle narrative. Speaking of Macbeth and

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[6] As with the Furies in the English classical tragic tradition, the Witches are called a range of different things in *Macbeth*, "The Weïrd Sisters" (I. iii. 32, I. v. 8, II. i. 20, III. iv. 132, IV. i. 136) "Weïrd Women" (III. i. 2) (spelled 'wayward' and 'weyard' in the folio, 'weïrd' is Theobald's spelling. (see Muir, note I. iii. 32)) "the Sisters" (III. i. 56) "beldams" (III. v. 2) "Like elves and fairies" (IV. i. 42) "secret, black, and midnight hags!" (IV. i. 48) "filthy hags!" (IV. i. 115)

[7] I have used Bullough's reprint of the relevant sections of R. Holinshed, *The Chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Ireland* (1587) in Geoffrey Bullough, ed., *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare. Vol. VII. Major Tragedies: Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth* (London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973). Bullough's notes detail the most significant parallels. See especially, Bullough, vol. VII, 488-94, where Holinshed relates the events at Fife and Forres which are merged in Shakespeare into the one continuous battle.

Banquo, he completes the invocation of a traditional battle image, "So they / Doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe: / Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds, / Or memorize another Golgotha". (I. ii. 38)[8] These two captains, representatives of Duncan's forces, doing combat with the opposing army are steeped in a river of blood.[9] The image is reminiscent of Achilles' rage against the river Xanthias, at which point his cause had seemed most doubtful,[10] and is a recurring motif in the classically styled tragedy traced in the previous chapter. So too, in *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, Arthur and Mordred battle on the shore side, each party succumbing to battle fury. Or in *The Spanish Tragedy*,

> Both battles join and fall to handy blows,
> Their violent shot resembling th'ocean's rage,
> When, roaring loud, and with a swelling tide,
> It beats upon the rampiers of huge rocks,
> And gapes to swallow neighbour-bounding lands.
> Now Bellona rageth here and there,
> The storms of bullets rain like winter's hail,[11]
> And shivered lances dark the troubled air. (*The Spanish Tragedy*, I. ii. 47-54)

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[8] There is a direct echo in these lines of Tancred's request of assistance in revenging himself upon himself for causing his daughter the unhappiness that lead to her suicide, "Iulio set to thy helping hand, / *Redouble stroke on stroke*, and driue the stab / Down deeper to [my] heart, to rid [my] soule." (*Tancred and Gismund*, V. iii. 1836-8) My italics.

[9] The Captain uses the image again when describing the unfortunate arrival of enemy reinforcements, where Macbeth's valorous actions should have brought a proverbial break in the clouds, instead "Shipwracking storms and direful thunders break, / So from that spring, whence comfort seem'd to come, / Discomfort swells." (I. ii. 26-8)

[10] Achilles "Plung'd in the streame againe to take more worke of Tragedie" (*Iliad* XXI, 34)

[11] This may suggest Rosse's "As thick as hail, / Came post with post" though the image is used to describe messengers reports rather than cannon shot. (I. iii. 97-8)

The most gory description of the battle is of Macbeth's slaughter of the traitor Macdonwald, "[Macbeth] Like Valour's minion, carv'd out his passage, / Till he fac'd the slave; / Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him, / Till he unseam'd him from the nave to th'chops". (I. ii. 19-22) In this act his sword is said to have "smok'd with bloody execution". (I. ii. 18) This also recalls Mordred's promise to bathe his sword in blood, that it shall be "flesht, / And taught to goare and bath in hoatest bloode." (*The Misfortunes of Arthur*, II. i. 5-6) So too Polynices' plea, "Graunt me, that I with high triumphant hande, / May bathe this blade within my brother's brest" (*Jocasta*, V. i. 52-3). Closer still is the description of the indignity done to the County Palurin in *Tancred and Gismund*, "forthwith they pierce / His naked belly, and unripp'd it so, / That out the bowels gush'd." (*Tancred and Gismund*, V. i. 180-2)

In the Nuncius' report of the final assault of the battle between Arthur and Mordred, which has claimed both their lives, he also makes an association with Bellona,

> There lay the chosen youths of Mars, there lay
> The peerelesse Knights, Bellona's brauest traine.
> There lay the Mirrours rare of Martiall praise,
> There lay the hope and braunch of Brute suppress.
> There Fortune laid the prime of Brytaines pride,
> There laide her pompe, all topsie turvie[12] turned. (*The Misfortunes of Arthur*, IV. ii. 231-6)

[12] 'topsy turvy' is used also in *The Misfortunes of Arthur* in relation to the fall of the entire realm. (V. i. 150) Gascoigne uses this same phrase in describing the effects of Eteocles' greed for power and the civil war that will ensue, which has caused, Bailo (governor to the Queen's sons) says, "Full many men to haue broke the lawes of truth, / And topsieturuie turned many townes". (*Jocasta*, I. i. 79-80) It is not surprising then that it appears in the opening chorus of Studley's *Agamemnon*. (See Appendix IX) Shakespeare also has Hotspur use it in relation to overturning a kingdom. (*1 Henry IV*, IV. i. 81)

The evocation of Bellona and Mars is common to the battle narrative element of this tradition, but in "Bellona's bravest traine", there may be a precedent for the description of Macbeth as "Bellona's bridegroom". (I. ii. 55)

Implicit in all of this is that Macbeth is a violent and worthy warhorse. What is also suggested by the evocation of the tradition is that in battle he is susceptible to battle fury. As is often the case in the tradition, this is seen, for the present, as a positive type of fury (as is especially the case in Arthur's defence of his realm). However, later on, when he is preparing to defend his ill-gotten crown, the problematic nature of this (potentially positive) fury is made explicit by Cathness, "Some say he's mad; others, that lesser hate him, / Do call it valiant fury: but, for certain, / He cannot buckle his distemper'd cause / Within the belt of rule." (V. iii. 13-16)[13] The distinction between a positive battle fury and sheer madness is not clearly defined, and often battle fury (as in the case of Eteocles and Mordred) goes hand in hand with the madness of ambitious tyranny.

Vaulting Ambition

Though traditionally the Furies punish mainly the spilling of kindred blood, in the English classical tragic tradition they assume the further function of punishing pride and ambition (e.g. Eteocles, Mordred, and the Moor).[14] This is the point of Macbeth's character on which the Witches primarily practise their art of temptation. Their initial greeting hails him Glamis, Cawdor, and King "hereafter". (I. iii. 48-50)[15]

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[13] There is a double meaning in this phrase that is worth explaining; Macbeth is both at pains as a king to stem the rebellion within his realm (he cannot buckle his distempered, or volatile kingdom) and is unable to rule with reason his distempered (mad) cause (tyrannical ambition).

[14] See above, 227-8, 247, 266.

[15] Coleridge sees Macbeth's reaction to this ("*Ban.* Good Sir, why do you start, and seem to fear / Things that do sound so fair?" (I. iii. 51-2)) as evidence of "guilty thoughts". Coleridge, notes.

There is a scene in *Jocasta* that gives precedent to this first prophetic revelation scene in *Macbeth.* Tiresias, under protest (he wishes to flee "fortune foule and fell" (III. i. 151)), is forced by Creon (under the instruction of the ambitious tyrant Eteocles) to disclose the fate of Thebes. He makes a sacrifice to Bacchus to reveal the future and to give the opportunity for the people of Thebes to plant peace where previously war and discord grew. Included in this prophecy are things foul and fair, the victory will be secured, but only with the death of Creon's son Meneceus, and Creon will rule thereafter. Creon's distress at the required death of his son, and his invective against the injustice of the gods leads him to the conclusion that Tiresias is a deceiver, "There can no ill thing come from heauens aboue." But Tiresias answers, "Then this that heauen commaunds can not be ill." (III. i. 215-6) So too, when the first portion of the witches' prophecy has been fulfilled and Macbeth has been heralded Thane of Cawdor by Rosse, he says, "[Aside.] This supernatural soliciting / Cannot be ill; cannot be good: -" (I. iii. 130-1) The difference of course is that Tiresias' prophecies come from Jove and Bacchus, whereas Macbeth's comes from the Devil via the witches. Banquo asks, "What! can the Devil speak true?" (I. iii. 107). This same question is dealt with in the opening sections of James' *Of Demonologie.* Philomathes questions Epistemon of the truth about the existence of witches and the possibility that the Devil could tell the future through them, "For prophecy proceedeth only of God, and the devil hath no knowledge of things to come." But Epistemon explains that it is possible for the Devil to know and communicate future events, "...as to the devil's foretelling of things to come, it is true that he knows not all things future, but yet he knows part...Not that he hath any prescience which is only proper to God,...[but]...by God's employing him in a turn".[16] Banquo's question must have

[16] *Of Demonology*, Book 1, Chapter 1, reprinted in Lawrence Normand and Gareth Roberts, eds.,

resonated for the King, when it was performed before him,[17] and for any audience member who had read his '*Furies*' (*Of Demonologie*). So while Macbeth's association with the ambitious tyrant figures from the classically styled English tragic tradition is being established, he is also associated with those evil men of whom James had written, and to whom witches prophesise on the devil's behalf. In both the classical tradition and the Christian there will be divine retribution.

Ambition and Dissembling

Catherine Belsey has drawn a link to the representation of Pride as a toppling rider and Macbeth's assertion that he has "no spur / To prick the sides of [his] intent, but only / Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself / And falls on th'other – " (I. vii. 25-8).[18] These two sins are linked in the earlier play *Godly Queen Hester*.[19] Pryde and Ambition[20] lament the fact that they have nothing left to do because Aman has taken over their jobs. (337-580) They make a will and bequeath their roles to Aman. Pryde also uses this coursing image, leaving Aman "Al [his] presumptuous pryde, whether he goe or ryde," (516) and wishing that his train will be content, "If pryde have a fall". (524) Aman's 'fall' is to be hanged on his own fifty cubit high gallows (997 & 1000-1). These vices are made specifically relevant to the court, and it is a prominent courtier who appropriates their roles. Macbeth's further vices also recall the (again

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Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland: James VI's 'Demonology' and the North Berwick Witches (Exeter: U of Exeter P, 2000) 359 & 360.

[17] Muir, introduction, xvii.

[18] Catherine Belsey, 'Shakespeare's "Vaulting Ambition,"' *English Language Notes*, 10 (1972) 198-201. An alternative explanation might be that 'vaulting' here refers to the matter of mounting the horse in which case over-ambition would cause the rider to go right over the top of the horse and fall the other side. However, the need for spurs to prick the sides of intent suggests that the intended rider is already mounted. Both senses may be active, what is clear here and in the following example from *Godly Queen Hester* is that a relationship is drawn between coursing, and pride and ambition.

[19] Ambition is in fact a branch of Pride, but is very often distinguished from it as it is in *Godly Queen Hester*. *Godly Queen Hester* is discussed in greater detail Chapter One above, 10-11.

[20] Adulation also accompanies Pryde and Ambition in this scene, but his presence is not of particular relevance to *Macbeth*.

specifically courtly) vices of Skelton's *Magnyfycence*, who claim to be called Good Demeynaunce, Sure Surveyaunce, Sober Sadnesse and Lusty Pleasure, but are in fact Counterfet Countenaunce, Crafty Conveyaunce, Cloked Colusyon and Courtly Abusyon in disguise. When Macbeth is initially greeted with the title Thane of Cawdor, his immediate response is, "why do you dress me / In borrow'd robes?" (I. iii. 108-9)[21] His asides, however, betray a truth that is far from the good demeanour, sure surveyance, and sober seriousness of his pretence, as later his simulation of lusty pleasure during the banquet scene will unravel to reveal his true nature. Macbeth is engaged in the kind of extreme courtly self-fashioning that amounts to the excessive dissembling that Francis Bacon's 'Of *Simulation* And *Dissimulation*' warns against as dangerous to moral individuality.[22] Though court society required a certain level of dissimulation to survive and prosper, over-indulgence might cause one to lose the knowledge of oneself.[23]

It is Lady Macbeth who actually articulates the need for her husband to dissemble, warning him that his pretence is too easy to read, "bear welcome in your eye, / Your hand, your tongue: look like th'innocent flower, / But be the serpent under't." (I. v. 64-6) Here she recalls the words of the Chorus in their warning against Gismunda's sinful desire, "wisely looke / What slie snake lurkes vnder those flowers

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[21] It is worth noting that in *Kynge Johan* Sedition must "chaunge [his] apparel" to "accomplych [sic] [his] dysyre" in winning over Nobility to his intent. (*Kynge Johan*, p.12) Prudentius provides an allegorical example of the utility of a deceptive costume change in the midst of a battle. Having failed to prevail in open battle (for man's soul) against the virtues, Avaritia says she will try guile, "dixerat et torvam faciem furialique arma / exuit inque habitum sese transformat honestum; / fit Virtus specie vultuque et veste severa quam memorant Frugi". ["With these words she puts off her grim look and her fiendish weapons, and changes to a noble bearing. In appearance, with austere mien and dress, she becomes the Virtue men call Thrifty".] (*Psychomachia*, 551-4) The scene in *Mankind* where New Gyse shortens Mankind's cloak to correspond to current trends is of a slightly different order. (*Mankind*, 672-719)

[22] Agnes Heller interprets the principle behind this part of Bacon's thesis in the essay, "if dissembling turns into a person's regular behaviour, if it becomes hypocrisy, then that person is lost once again, for he loses what is most important, his moral individuality. *Absolute sincerity and hypocrisy are the extreme forms of conduct. A 'mean' between them has to be sought.*" Heller, 210.

[23] See Chapter One for a detailed discussion of Bacon's essay and of ambition and dissembling. See above, 14-20.

gay, /…/ Ye may repent, and buy your pleasure deare, / For seldome times is Cupid wont to send / Vnto an idle loue a ioyful end." (*Tancred and Gismund*, III. iii. 847-8 & 851-3) Her secret and sinful love brings forth the Furies from hell in the ensuing dumb show. (IV. i. 855-7) While Macbeth's character in his ambition and pride is indebted to Senecan styled tyrant figures like Eteocles and Mordred,[24] and with courtly vices and motifs incorporated from the allegorical tradition, Lady Macbeth adopts a phrase borrowed from the English classical tradition that associates her with a female figure punished by the Furies for her sin. She too, in keeping with the tradition, is tempting the forces of divine retribution.

Invocation and Unsexing

Inga-Stina Ewbank was the first to compare Lady Macbeth's invocation of the sources of night with the invocation of the Furies by Medea in Seneca's play.[25]

> Come, you Spirits
>
> That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
>
> And fill me from the crown to the toe, top-full
>
> Of direst cruelty! Make thick my blood,
>
> Stop up th'access and passage to remorse;
>
> That no compunctious visitings of Nature
>
> Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between

[24] Even when Macbeth seems to argue against action, he continues to be cast in the mould of the ambitious tyrant figure, "If Chance will have me King, why, Chance may crown me, / Without my stir." (I. iii. 144-5) This echoes Mordred's, "Chaunce hath made me king." and Gawin's response, "As Chaunce hath made you King, so Chaunce may change" (*The Misfortunes of Arthur*, II. iii. 44-5)

[25] Inga-Stina Ewbank, 'The Fiend-Like Queen: A Note on *Macbeth* and Seneca's *Medea*' in *Shakespeare Survey* 19 (1966) 82-94. It is further elaborated by Bullough (Bullough, vol. VII, 521-3) and reiterated by Kenneth Muir (Kenneth Muir, *The Sources of Shakespeare's Plays* (London: Methuen, 1977) 208-17.) and by Robert Miola. (106-9)

Th'effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,

And take my milk for gall, you murth'ring ministers,

Wherever in your sightless substances

You wait on Nature's mischief! Come, thick Night,

And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of Hell,

That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,

Nor Heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,

To cry, 'Hold, hold!' (I. v. 38-54)

There is, however, precedence for Lady Macbeth's lines in the tradition traced in the previous chapter, independent of Seneca's Medea, though she is undoubtedly the prototype for the character type that Shakespeare here remodels for an original effect.[26] Guenevera in *The Misfortunes of Arthur* makes this invocation, "Come spitefull fiends, come heapes of furies fell, / Not one, by one, but all at once: my breast / Raues not inough: it likes me to be filde / With greater monsters yet." (I. ii. 39-42)[27]

Lady Macbeth continues in the tradition of Fury-driven queens from the English classically styled tragic tradition a couple of scenes later,

I have given suck, and know

How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:

I would, while it was smiling in my face,

Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,

And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn

[26] See above, 238-40.

[27] Darmesteter has also observed this parallel. James Darmesteter, ed., *Macbeth*, William Shakespeare, Classiques Anglais (Paris: 1881) notes (I. v. 40). Cit. Muir, notes.

As you have done to this. (I. vii. 54-9)

This may echo Videna, who rhetorically undoes her role in raising Porrex in *Gorboduc*, "Ruthless, unkind, monster of nature's work, / Thou never suck'd the milk of woman's breast, / But, from thy birth, the cruel tiger's teats / Have nursed thee,..." (IV. i. 71-4) Further, there is a dumb show in *The Misfortunes of Arthur* that perhaps gives precedent to this rhetorically vicious act, and which also offers an insight into her later behaviour,

> During the music appointed after the third act, there came in a Lady courtly attired with a counterfeit child in her arms, who walked softly on the stage. From another place there came a king crowned, who likewise walked on another part of the stage. From a third place there came four soldiers all armed who, spying this Lady and King, upon a sudden pursued the Lady, from whom they violently took her child, and flung it against the walls; She in mournefull sort wringing her hands passed her way. Then in like manner they set on the king, tearing his crown from his head, and casting it in pieces under feet, drave him by force away,... (Dumb Show before Fourth Act, 1-11)

There is an association in this description that is clearly echoed in Lady Macbeth's brutal use of imagery. The killing of an infant is placed side by side with the destruction of a king. Again it is not as important to isolate one particular 'source' for Lady Macbeth's speeches, as it is to recognise that this 'unsexing' is in keeping with the evocation of the classically styled English tragic tradition.

Banquet 1

Macbeth makes use of a blend of Christian and classical imagery at the end of the fourth scene, when the victory against the traitors has been secured and the natural order of succession to the throne established, giving a hint of the carnage to come,

> The Prince of Cumberland! – That is a step
> On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap,
> For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires!
> Let not light see my black and deep desires;
> The eye wink at the hand; yet let that be,
> Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see. (I. iv. 48-53)

The initial image calls upon the tradition of the 'ladder of salvation' common especially in church murals.[28] That there is a step which must be 'o'erleaped' suggests either a broken rung or a rung close to which a devil (representing a temptation) has been tugging at the legs of those climbing the ladder of salvation. Should Macbeth 'fall down' he would land in hell. The image here is distorted however as Macbeth envisages the ladder not as leading to heaven but to the crown. It is the second image that is the key to what will follow. Appeals to the heavens to close their eyes to sinful action, for darkness or the forces of darkness to hide sinful deeds are a common feature in the Senecan and the classically styled English tragic traditions. The Chorus of *Jocasta* make a plea to Phoebus (the sun) to withhold his rays from shining on the tragic action of the play. (I. iv. 32-5 & II. iii. 36-9) Horatio fatally invokes night to conceal the love between himself and Bel Imperia, "in darkness pleasures may be

[28] See Appendix X.

done,.../.../...heavens have shut up day to pleasure us. / The stars thou see'st hold back their twinkling shine, / And Luna hides herself to pleasure us." (II. iv. 3 & 16-19) In Seneca's *Thyestes* there is an impressive example spoken by a messenger to the chorus, "O Phoebe patiens, fugeris retro licet / medioque raptum merseris caelo diem, / seo occidisti!.../.../...verterit currus licet / sibi ipse Titan obvium ducens iter, / tenebrisque facinus obruat taetrum novis / nox missa ab ortu tempore alieno gravis, / tamen videndum est." [O long-suffering Phoebus! (i.e. the sun) Though you have fled backward, snatched the day from mid-heaven and drowned it, you set too late!...Though the Titan (i.e. Phoebus) has turned his chariot, tracing a path counter to himself, and though the foul deed is smothered in strange darkness by this oppressive night, released from the East and at an alien time, yet see you must."] (*Thyestes*, 774-6 & 784-8)[29] This example of the traditional rhetorical piece is perhaps particularly significant when we note Duncan's lines following Macbeth's aside (which he has of course not heard) "in his commendations I am fed; / It is a banquet to me." (*Macbeth*, I. iv. 55-6) The 'foul deed' that causes the heavens to hide their light in *Thyestes* is the slaughter of the sons of Thyestes by his brother Atreus in preparation for the bloody cannibalistic banquet that he will present to him. So too will Duncan's visit to Macbeth's castle end with wine and murder, and an unnatural darkness covering Scotland. The expectation of a cannibalistic end to this first 'banquet' in *Macbeth* is satisfied by the strange fate of Duncan's horses who "Turn'd wild in nature," and "eat each other" (II. iv. 14 & 19) on the night of his murder.

[29] Compare *Hamlet*, "'Tis now the very witching time of night, / When churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out / Contagion to this world. Now could I drink hot blood, / And do such bitter business as the day / Would quake to look on." (III. iii. 379-383) The connection of this invocation of night and the image of Hell as a mouth breathing contagion into the world becomes all the more apt in the following section.

Hell Mouth

In the classically-styled English tragedy the most commonly used rhetorical motif is that of the description of the torments of hell, listing the tortures suffered by Tantalus, Prometheus, Tityos, Sisyphus, and Ixion. The "Porter of Hell Gate," (II. iii. 1-2) as he hypothetically dubs himself, has an alternative list, "Here's a farmer, that hang'd himself on th'expectation of plenty:...here's an equivocator, that could swear in both the scales against either scale;...here's an English tailor come hither for stealing out of a French hose...I had thought to have let in some of all professions, that go the primrose way to th'everlasting bonfire." (II. iii. 4-5, 8-10, 13-4 & 18-9) This list of sinners and their punishments is most definitely Christian in its imagery. Further, Glynne Wickham has traced the history of stage representations of hell-mouth and the keeper of the door or gate to the biblical pageants of the harrowing of hell. The traditional medieval stage representation of hell was as a castle, "more particularly as a dungeon or cesspit within a castle, one entrance to which was often depicted as a dragon's mouth".[30] This representation is given pictorial form in the depiction originally in fresco on the church arch in the Chapel of the Holy Cross, Stratford-upon-Avon.[31] In it five of the seven deadly sins are represented, the guilty being herded into hell by several assorted devils. In the stage representation of the harrowing of hell, a janitor or porter guarded its gate.[32] It is most likely this traditional character that the Porter of Macbeth's castle is intended to evoke, the knocking at the gate reminiscent of the knocking that heralds Christ's arrival to the gate of hell.[33] Interestingly, in the York cycle, having resisted the entrance of Jesus for only a brief

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[30] Glynne Wickham, 'Hell-Castle and its Door-keeper,' in Kenneth Muir and Philip Edwards, eds., *Aspects of Macbeth: Articles Reprinted from Shakespeare Survey* (Cambridge: CUP, 1977) 39.
[31] See Appendix XI.
[32] Wickham, 39. In the York and Towneley plays the porter is called Rybald (ribald). As Wickham says, "A more succinct and apposite description of Macbeth's porter could scarcely be found." Wickham, 42.
[33] Wickham, 42.

time, the devils are distraught at his entrance, and when Jesus enlists the assistance of the angel Michael to help drive them back down into their "selle," (*York Plays*, 'The Harrowing of Hell,' 342) Satan has a bout of madness,

> *Sattan.* Owt, ay! herrowe! helpe mahounde!
> Nowe wex I woode oute of my witte.
> *Belsabub.* Sattan, this saide we are,
> Now schall thou fele thi fitte.
> *Sattan.* Allas! for dole, and care,
> I synke in to helle pitte. (*York Plays*, 'The Harrowing of Hell,' 343-8)[34]

This may forewarn of the eventual suppression of Macbeth's tyrannical reign and, perhaps, of his madness in his insecurity about the threat posed by Fleance's escape, "Then comes my fit again" (III. iv. 20).[35]

So while the tradition of the classically-styled English tragedy is maintained in one way, it is done so in a way that evokes the imagery and associations of an entirely different English dramatic tradition. Lest we forget the other classical tradition in the light of this Christian imagery, Macduff bids the others, "Approach the chamber, and destroy [their] sight / With a new Gorgon." (II. iii. 70-1) He uses a classical figure familiar from the conflations and associations of Furies and Gorgons to be found in the English classical tradition.[36] Macbeth then murders the apparently guilty parties in "fury," (II. iii. 104) unable, he says, to be wise and "furious" (106) all at once.

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[34] The Towneley 'The Deliverance of Souls' is very close to the York play. In the Towneley version this passage runs, "*Sathan.* Alas, for doyll and care! / I synk into hell pyt! / *Rybald.* Sir sathanas, so saide I are, / now shall thou haue a fytt." (*Towneley Plays* XXV, 'The Deliverance of Souls,' 359-362) George England, ed., *The Towneley Plays*, notes and intro. Alfred W. Pollard, EETS (London: OUP, 1897, 1966).

[35] I shall discuss this insecurity later in relation to Herod.

[36] See Chapter Five above, 226 and 278.

Though it is his (pretended) passions that he means, preceded by the imagery of hell and a reference to a Gorgon, the resonance of this 'fury' avenging a murder must recall the classical tradition. Knowing that Macbeth is in fact no avenger, but guilty of the murder of a guest, a kinsman, and soon to become a usurping tyrant, we must expect the Furies to drive him mad until he is brought to bloody vengeance.

Banquet II, Banquo's Ghost

Banquo's entry alone and ruminating on the "Weïrd Women" (III. i. 2) at the beginning of the third act serves to remind us of this third party whom Bradley considers involved in the murder of Duncan by way of conspiracy of silence.[37] Though he can hardly be considered a co-conspirator, his soliloquy does reveal his suspicions, "I fear, / Thou play'dst most foully for't", and the danger that he is in as a result of the knowledge that he shares with Macbeth and Lady Macbeth about the witches' prophecy, "myself should be the root and father / Of many kings." (III. i. 5-6) In the rhetoric of the ensuing exchange between him and the newly crowned king and queen there is a fixation on the banquet and the future that must augur ill for Banquo. Macbeth greets him as "our chief guest", and his wife makes up the remainder, "If he had been forgotten, / It had been as a gap in our great feast, / And all-thing unbecoming." (III. i. 11-3)[38] He is the one problem with the prophecy from Macbeth's point of view. If his issue lives it must end Macbeth's line. There is to be a "solemn supper" (III. i. 14) that evening, Macbeth reiterates, and, as with the banquet promised to Duncan in the earlier scene, the 'chief guest' becomes a euphemism for the victim. Informed that Banquo is to ride too soon to lend his advice presently,

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[37] A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy: Lectures on Hamlet, Othello, King Lear and Macbeth*, Foreword John Bailey (London: Penguin, 1904, 1991) 348-355.

[38] There as a pun here worth elucidating; if Banquo had been forgotten at the feast, that would be unbecoming in terms of decorum; if he had been forgotten in terms of the prophecy, all Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's hopes for the future would fail (i.e. would not become).

Macbeth feigns disappointment, "but we'll take tomorrow." (III. i. 22) The immediate meaning is that he will take his counsel tomorrow instead, but there is also a suggestion, within the context of Banquo's issue in the prophecy, that Macbeth, knowing when Banquo will be on the road, can grasp control of the future, i.e. 'take tomorrow'. Even Banquo himself responds to the question of how far he rides in terms of the proposed banquet, "As far, my Lord, as will fill up the time / 'Twixt this and supper". (III. i. 24-5) Having recognised the previous evocations of the classically styled English tragedy, we must expect a bloody banquet. In the Senecan tradition we may expect that Banquo and Fleance will make up the food of the feast, and at the end of the next scene Macbeth closes an invocation of night (echoing his wife's earlier Senecan invocation) with an image that indeed makes them the metaphorical food of his blood lust, "Good things of Day begin to droop and drowse, / Whiles Night's black agents to their preys do rouse. / … / Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill." (III. ii. 52-3 & 5) He closes the invocation of night with what may be a Senecan parallel, echoing Studley's "The safest path to mischiefe is by mischiefe open still - " (Studley's *Agamemnon*, p106.)[39]

When Banquo's ghost appears at the banquet (III. iv. 40 s.d.) it is appropriate first to view him in the context of the Senecan ghost type. The Ghost of Agrippina prophesies the death of Nero. She imagines the Furies planning a worthy death and torture to suit the tyrant, inspired by thoughts of the tortures assigned to Tantalus, Sisyphus, Tityos and Ixion, (*Octavia*, 619-23)[40] "veniet dies tempusque quo reddat suis / animam nocentem sceleribus, iugulum hostibus, / desertus ac destructus et cunctis egens." ["there will come a day and time when he will pay for his crimes with his guilty spirit and pay his enemies with his throat, deserted and thrown down and

[39] Another line that may contribute here is "The thing he feares he doth augment who heapeth sinne to sinne." (Studley's *Agamemnon*, p. 108)
[40] This passage is quoted in Appendix IX.

utterly destitute."] (*Octavia*, 629-631) The Ghost of Tantalus also considers the tortures of Tantalus, Sisyphus and Tityos (*Thyestes*, 3-12) before succumbing to the command of the Fury to infect his house with a murderous frenzy, "Hunc, hunc furorem divide in totam domum." ["Distribute *this* very frenzy throughout the house!"] (*Thyestes*, 101) The Ghost of Thyestes refers to the same tortured souls of Dis, (*Agamemnon*, 15-21) before prophesying the murder of Agamemnon, "iam iam natabit sanguine alterno domus." ["Soon now the house will swim in blood answering blood."] (*Agamemnon*, 44.)[41] Hector's Ghost appears to Andromanche to warn her of the imminent mortal danger to their son. His face, "squalida obtectus coma. /...tum, quassans caput" [was "masked by filthy hair...Then he shook his head and spoke"]. (*Troas*, 450-1)[42] Laius too cuts a grisly figure, "stetit per artus sanguine effuso horridus, / paedore foedo squalidam obstentus comam" ["He stands caked in the blood that poured over his body, with his hair covered in squalid filth"] (*Oedipus*, 624-5) and he promises the extinction of his polluted line, "mecum Erinyn pronubam thalami traham, / traham sonantes verbera, incestam domum / vertam et penates impio marte obteram." ["with me I shall bring the Erinyes who attended your bride chamber, bring those whose whips resound; I shall overthrow this incestuous house, and wipe out its lineage in unnatural warfare."] (*Agamemnon*, 644-6) Banquo does not have to speak to evoke the same impression, Macbeth says all that we need to recognise this type of ghost character, "Thou canst not say, I did it: never shake / Thy gory locks at me." (III. iv. 49-50) He is caked in blood and shakes his head. There is a crime to be punished and within the context of the classical tradition Banquo's ghost brings the

[41] After Banquo's ghost has departed Macbeth echoes this line, ruminating, "It will have blood, they say: blood will have blood:" (III. iv. 121-2)
[42] Talthybius relates the appearance of Achilles' ghost to the Trojans at the beginning of this play, demanding the sacrifice of Polyxena. (*Troas*, 195-6) Medea sees a vision of her dead brother in the midst of her invocation of the furies. (*Medea*, 964)

promise of the tyrant's downfall and the termination of his line (and the passage of the crown to Fleance).

There is also an important ghost figure in the English classical tradition. The prehistory of the actual action of *The Misfortunes of Arthur* begins in the Senecan tradition with a fatal banquet, perhaps inspired by *Thyestes*. 'The Argument of the Tragedy' explains, "At a banquet made by Uther Pendradon for the solemnising of his conquest against the Saxons, he fell enamoured of Igerna, wife of Gorlois, Duke of Cornwall", the Duke perceived Uther's enamoured state and departed the feast with his wife to prepare to wage war against Uther. Uther had Merlin transform him into the likeness of Gorlois, and transported to Igerna's keep where he fathered Arthur and Anne upon her before returning to the battle where he slew Gorlois. The action proper of the play opens with the Ghost of Gorlois seeking revenge for the wrongs he has suffered at Uther's hands. His opening speech recalls Tantalus' return from hell in the opening of *Thyestes*. "Come therefore bloomes of setled mischiefes roote, / Come ech thing else, what furie can inuent, / Wreake all at once; infect the ayre with plagues, / Till badd to worse, till worse to worst be turned." (*The Misfortunes of Arthur*, I. i. 18-21)[43] Gorlois prophecies the uprooting of the line of Uther, "Thus, thus Pendragon's seed, so sown and reap'd, / Thus cursed imps, ill-born and worse consum'd, / Shall render just revenge for parents' crimes,..." (I. i. 49-51) Banquo may echo this imagery when he says to the Witches, "If you can look into the seeds of time, / And say which grain will grow, and which will not, speak then to me,..." (I. iii. 58-60) In the following scene of *Macbeth*, Duncan directs similar harvest imagery towards Macbeth, "I have begun to plant thee, and will labour / To make thee full of growing."

[43] This is perhaps as likely a source for Macbeth's, "Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill." (III. ii. 55) as the alternative suggestions in from Studley's translation of *Agamemnon*, "The safest path to mischiefe is by mischiefe open still" (Studley's *Agamemnon*, II. i. p. 106) or "The thing he feares he doth augment who heapeth sinne to sinne." (Studley's *Agamemnon*, II. i. p. 108) See above, 295.

(I. iv. 28-9) But it is Banquo who responds to the imagery, "There if I grow, / The harvest is your own." (I. iv. 32-3) Gorlois closes his call for revenge by promising a plague on the land, and the death of Uther's line, but as in the case of Banquo, the horror and strife of the present and the near future will be followed by a time of peace, "ye heavenly powers,.../.../ For you there rests / A happier age, a thousand years to come; / An age for peace, religion, wealth, and ease, / When all the world shall wonder at your bliss". (I. i. 57 & 61-4) This is also in part what Banquo's ghost silently invokes; his presence at the banquet recalls the entrance of Gorlois immediately after the narration of Uther's fatal banquet, and as such promises the death of the tyrant, the end of his line, and a distant future that will bring unity and peace. In the case of *The Misfortunes of Arthur* the prophecy relates to Elizabeth, in *Macbeth* it relates to James VI and I, the apparent descendant of Fleance.

Banquo's ghost must also be considered in terms of the *memento mori* ghosts described in Chapters One and Four.[44] The ghost of Guenevere's mother in the *The Awntyrs off Arthur* returns to explain to Guenevere that her earthly sins have caused her to be followed by "fendes of helle" (186) and to warn Guenevere that she will suffer the same fate if she commits the same sin, and finally to prophecy the fall of Arthur's kingdom.[45] The slothful sergeant in *Handlyng Synne* (1303) returns also to make an example of himself that others may clear their accounts before dying. At the sight of the book of his sins brought by the devils who come to take him to hell, he fears he will "wax nygh wode for dred." (4462)[46] In the allegory from the *The Sawles Warde*, Reason must defend his house from potential thieves (i.e. the Devil). Visited by Fear, Death's messenger (a ghost figure in the *memento mori* tradition), he and his

[44] See Chapter One and Chapter Four above, 28 and 161-7.
[45] See Chapter Four above, 161-3.
[46] See Chapter One above, 28; and Chapter Four above, 163.

family are warned of the dangers of sin and encouraged to go to confession.[47] Banquo does not, however, need to show Macbeth a book of his sins, or to speak to explain the torments of hell; he is after all the physical embodiment of Macbeth's sin. And unlike Reason in *The Sawles Warde*, who has defended his house from the Devil, Macbeth and his wife have welcomed the forces of evil into their lives; their castle has even become hell itself on a rhetorical level with a hell-mouth at its gate. Neither will repent. Macbeth is rather at pains to deny his guilt, "Thou canst not say, I did it: never shake / Thy gory locks at me." (III. iv. 49-50) Macbeth is still in the madness of sin, and simultaneously is being driven mad by the guilt of his sin.

Emrys Jones has drawn a number of parallels between Macbeth and another evil tyrant from another Christian tradition. The three episodes from English mystery plays (no particular cycle need be specified at this point) that involve Herod, the adoration of the magi, the massacre of the innocents, and the death of Herod are of primary importance to the characterisation of Macbeth.[48] The most glaring parallel is that in both Macbeth's and Herod's cases there is a prophecy; a (child) king shall apparently supplant the tyrant.[49] In the *Ludus Coventriae*, 'The Death of Herod,' there is a celebratory feast, when Herod has received news of the execution (literally) of his commanded slaughter of the innocents, "Lord we han spad / as ye bad / barnis ben blad / *and* lyne in dych". (*Ludus Coventriae*, 'The Death of Herod,' 113-6) While the

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[47] See Chapter Four above, 165-6.

[48] Jones, 79-83. Jones uses the *Ludus Coventriae* to exemplify the dramatic treatment of Herod in this tradition. I have used the texts from K. S. Block, ed., *Ludus Coventiae or The Plaie called Corpus Christi*, EETS (London: OUP, 1922, 1974). In this cycle the three episodes occur in two plays, 'The Adoration of the Magi,' and the second (divided in two parts) 'The Massacre of the Innocents' and 'The Death of Herod.' Jones also argues for a link between the figures of Judas and Macbeth in the murder of the sanctified figure of Duncan after a feast that may compare with the last supper. He compares, "If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well / It were done quickly" (I. vii. 1-2) and "*Quod facis fac cicius*, / That thou schall do, do sone." (York 'The Last Supper,' 90-91) (Jones, 83) I have used the texts in Lucy Toulmin Smith, ed., *York Plays* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1963). I will return to the figure of Judas a little later. It is, however, the figure of Herod who is most interesting as regards Macbeth's madness.

[49] Jones makes much of the fact that the prophecies are revealed by two groups of three (three kings and three witches) and that both tyrants must dissemble their feelings at the revelation. (Jones, 82)

feast is in full swing Mors enters unnoticed, "I am deth goddys massangere" (*Ludus Coventriae*, 'The Death of Herod,' 177) and waits onstage before taking Herod, "*Hic dum buccinant mors interficiat herodem et duos milites subito et diabolus recipiat eos*." ["Here, while the trumpets blow, Death shall kill Herod and the two Soldiers suddenly, and the Devil shall receive them."[50]] (*Ludus Coventriae*, 'The Death of Herod,' s.d. 233) As Jones suggests, this scene may have given something to the appearance of Banquo's ghost. But Macbeth's relationship to Herod may be explored further in the terms of this tradition. *The Shearmen and Tailors' Play* in the Coventry cycle potentially offers an extra element to Macbeth's characterisation. Herod runs mad on two instances in this play; first, when he learns that the kings have deceived him and returned another way rather than giving him the location of the magi ("now run I wode!" *The Shearmen and Tailors' Play*, 781); second, when his soldiers initially refuse to execute his commanded slaughter ("*Erode ragis ageyne*" s.d. 801).[51] Thus, he runs mad in the two instances in which he believes that the child will escape. When the first Murderer reveals that Fleance has escaped, Macbeth responds, "Then comes my fit again". (III. iv. 20) Very shortly after this the Ghost of Banquo enters (s.d. III. iv. 40) and Macbeth seems to go mad, seeing things that are apparently not there and falling into an inexplicable rage.

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[50] I have used the translation from Peter Happé, *English Mystery Plays*, Penguin Classics (London: Penguin, 1975).

[51] This play is dealt with in greater detail in Chapter One. See above, 47-9. Herod also rages in the Towneley cycle when the soldiers tell him that three kings have passed another way, and when his counsellors have read the prophecies of Emanuel from their books, "Shuld a carll in a kafe / bot of oone yere age, /Thus make me to rafe?" (*Towneley Plays XVI*, 'Herod the Great', 244-5)

Tyranny and Kindermord

Fleance is only the first child Macbeth attempts to murder;[52] he is successful in his second, the murder of the children of Macduff. Again in the cycle plays there is an incident that may have offered something to this scene. The York cycle dramatises a single exemplary incident in the slaughter of the innocents. Two soldiers come to kill two 'fondelyngis' (*York Plays*, 'The Massacre of the Innocents,' 193) and are beset by two mothers. Though the incident offers little in the way of verbal echo, there are yet elements, beyond the simple fact of a tyrant's murder of children to secure his thrown, which are of interest to *Macbeth*. Confronted with the mothers' resistance the first soldier says, "The deuell myght spede you bothe, / False wicchis, are ye woode?.../.../...Yf ye be woode or wrothe, / Ye schall noght skape fro skathe,..." (*York Plays*, 'The Massacre of the Innocents,' 220-1 & 223-4) The close rhetorical proximity of witches and madness in a scene that involves the murder of children for the protection of a tyrant's throne is hard to ignore. Further, in both episodes the intended victim escapes. Once the children have been killed the second mother says, "certis, ther nott is noght, / The same that thei haue soughte, / Schall thei neuere come till." (*York Plays*, 'The Massacre of the Innocents,' 231-3) When the murderers ask where Macduff is, his wife says, "I hope, in no place so unsanctified, / Where such as thou may'st find him." (IV. ii. 80-81) In both instances the escaped target ultimately returns to fulfil the threat that he posed to the tyrant.[53]

While Macbeth is thus paralleled with the ultimate biblical tyrant figure through his kindermord, child murder is also the ultimate unnatural act in Senecan tragedy, and as Robert Miola explains, "Macbeth joins the company of other Senecan

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[52] This not the first suggested piece of kindermord. Lady Macbeth has already rhetorically dashed the brains out of her hypothetical child, linking her with Medea and Videna.

[53] In Herod's case the prophecy is misunderstood, and the kingdom he fears to lose is not that which is under threat. Jesus' kingdom is not bounded by borders in the same way that Herod's is. This misunderstanding is not, however, out of keeping with the events of *Macbeth*.

tyrants; like Atreus, Medea, Hercules and their many descendants, notably Richard III, Macbeth turns into a child-killer."[54] Atreus murders his nephews, driven to revenge by the Fury-inspired madness infecting his house. Medea invokes the Furies to infect her with a madness that will give her the strength to murder her own children. Hercules kills his children in ignorance, driven mad by Juno with the aid of a Fury.[55] Richard III does not fit so well in this tradition as he shows no substantial sign of madness. The English classically styled tragedy does offer an example that fits more appropriately in the tradition. Videna kills her own son, Porrex, in *Gorboduc*, in a scene that is preceded by a dumb show of the Furies (Dumb show before Act IV, 2-12) and her invocation of the "gods…in hell" (IV. i. 33) to assist her. It is likewise the presence of the Witches, and the invocations of the forces of darkness (I. iv. 50-3, I. v. 40-54 and III. ii. 46-9) (in place of the Furies) that has driven Macbeth to madness and given him the ability to commit kindermord.

Medical Madness

The medical literature of the time also makes reference to the Eumenides, but in terms that accommodate both Christian and classical guilt. This is a feature of the representation of the Furies and Eumenides that has been evident during the development of the classically styled English tragic tradition detailed in the preceding chapter. Timothie Bright writes,

> Whatsoeuer molestation riseth directly as a proper obiect of the mind, that in that respect is not melancholicke, but hath a farther ground then fancie, and

[54] Miola, 108.
[55] As the darkness that represents the onset of his madness descends on Hercules he says, "flammifera Erinys verbere excusso sonat / rogisque adustas propius ac propius sudes / in ora tendit;" ["The fire-bearing Fury is cracking her scourge, and pushing in my face stakes charred in pyres, closer and closer."] (*Hercules Furens*, 982-4)

> riseth from conscience, condemning the guiltie soule of those ingrauen lawes of nature, which no man is voide of, be he neuer so laborious. This is it, that hath caused the prophane poëts to haue fained Hecates Eumenides, and the infernall furies; which although they be but fained persons, yet the matter which is shewed vnder their maske, is serious, true, and of wofull experience. This taketh nothing of the body, nor intermedleth with humour, but giueth a direct wounde with those firie dartes, which men so afflicted make their mone of.[56]

This is the great difference between Hamlet's apparent melancholy madness,[57] which would seem to be mainly a physiological problem and Macbeth's, which is more clearly a matter of the soul, regardless, as Bright suggests, of what gods, Christian or classical, will be responsible for the punishment of that soul.

Some of the effects that Bright lists as ensuing from such a molestation of the soul are "…vaine feares, and false conceits of apparitions, imagination of a voice sounding in your eares, frightfull dreames, distrust of the consumption, and putrifying of one part or other of your bodie…."[58] Many of these symptoms may be seen in Macbeth. When the murder of Duncan is first committed he says, "Methought, I heard a voice cry, 'Sleep no more! / Macbeth does murther Sleep,'" (II. ii. 34-5) ('imagination of a voice') prompting Lady Macbeth to upbraid him with thinking "brainsickly of things." (II. ii. 45) Indeed his sleep is disturbed, by "the affliction of these terrible dreams, / That shake [him] nightly" leaving him "on the torture of the

[56] Bright, 193.
[57] This is by no means to say that Hamlet's conscience is clear or that the classical or classically styled traditions had no influence upon the characterisation of Hamlet. The matter of conscience and of the role of the Furies is, however, far more clear-cut in relation to Macbeth.
[58] Bright, 195.

mind to lie / In restless ecstacy." (III. ii. 18-19 & 21-2) ('frightfull dreames'.)[59] When he hears the first knocking he starts, "Whence is that knocking – / How is't with me, when every noise appals me? / What hands are here? Ha! they pluck out mine eyes." (II. ii. 57-9) ('vaine feares, and false conceits of apparitions'). The image of the hands plucking out his eyes seems to refer to Oedipus. (Macbeth is envisioning his own hands plucking out his eyes; they are unrecognisable because they are bloodstained.) Oedipus gouges out his eyes when it has become clear that he is responsible for the king, his father's murder.[60] Macbeth has just murdered a father figure (king and kinsman).[61] Two further apparent apparitions torment Macbeth (not including the visions shown to him by the Witches). As he prepares himself for Duncan's murder he is assailed by a "dagger of the mind, a false creation, / Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain". (II. i. 38-9) When he has had word of the murder of Banquo, fulfilling his command, he alone sees his ghost, "Why do you make such faces?" asks his queen, "When all's done, / You look but on a stool." (III. iv. 66-7) Bright goes on to say that other symptoms, melancholic in kind, will ensue from this taint of the soul. The heart being constrained by the soul's fear of divine judgment will cause it to retain the vital spirits that are required around the body.[62] As the knocking is heard again after Duncan's murder and before the Porter's scene, Lady Macbeth draws

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[59] These lines may also owe something to the opening chorus of Studley's translation of Seneca's *Agamemnon*, and the complaint against the instability of rule. See Appendix VI. Particularly relevant to this passage are the lines, "Sleepe that doth overcome and breake the bonds of griefe, / It cannot ease theyr heartes, nor mynister reliefe:" (Studley's *Agamemnon*, p. 104) I will look at sleep again a little later in relation to Lady Macbeth.

[60] In Sophocles, rather than plucking, Oedipus gouges his eyes out with Jocasta's brooches. But in Seneca's version he uses his hands and nails. (*Oedipus*, 960-79) This is also how it is described in *Jocasta*, "he him selfe by stresse of his owne nayles, / Out of his head did teare his griefull eyne, / Unworthy more to see the shining light." (*Jocasta*, I. i. 128-130) Oedipus also has the further shame of the simultaneous discovery of his incestuous marriage to his mother, but this is not pertinent to Macbeth's situation.

[61] There is no need to seek a direct parallel in a particular classical source for an image that is central to a story that has been so frequently rendered, but that might have been encountered in Seneca's *Oedipus*, or indeed in Gascoigne and Kinwelmersche's *Jocasta*. Alternatively, but perhaps less likely, is the figure of Tancred who put out his own eyes after his daughter's suicide, for which he was indirectly responsible. (*Tancred and Gismund*, V. iii. 1841-9)

[62] Bright, 195.

attention to Macbeth's pallor, "My hands are of your colour; but I shame / To wear a heart so white." (II. ii. 63-4) Though this is a rhetorical inversion,[63] it is clear that he is pale at the horror of what he has done.

The humoural distemper thus ensuing from what are only the symptoms of a disease of the soul, it follows that any treatment given to the patient for melancholy will only cure the melancholy part of the illness, and not for very long. Bright writes,

> Here no medicine, no purgation, no cordiall, no tryacle or balme are able to assure the afflicted soule and trembling heart, now painting vnder the terrors of God:...In this affliction, the peril is not of body, and corporall actions, or decay of servile, and temporall vses, but of the whole nature soule and body cut of from the life of God, and from the sweet influence of his fauour, the fountaine of all happiness and eternall felicity.[64]

It is in under these terms that the Doctor in *Macbeth* can give no satisfaction to Macbeth's questions about his wife, "How does you patient, Doctor?" he asks. The Doctor obliquely tells him that the problem is not a medical one, "Not so sick, my Lord, / As she is troubled with thick-coming fancies, / That keep her from her rest." "Canst thou not minister to a mind diseas'd,...?"[65] Macbeth asks, and the Doctor replies, "Therein the patient / Must minister to himself." (V. iii. 37-46)[66]

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[63] Macbeth's and Lady Macbeth's hands are red (with blood). Macbeth's face is white (with fear). Lady Macbeth criticises him for wearing a 'heart' so white, but if his face (what he is 'wearing') is white from fear, his heart is not. Rather, it has drawn the blood to itself and away from the rest of the body including the face.

[64] Bright, 189-190.

[65] It is interesting to note that at this point in his notes on the play Kenneth Muir compares, "Sleepe that doth overcome and breake the bonds of griefe, / It cannot ease theyr heartes, nor mynister reliefe:" (Studley's *Agamemnon*, p. 104. See Appendix VI) with "Canst thou not.../ Raze out the written troubles of the brain, / And with some sweet oblivious antidote / Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff / Which weighs upon the heart?" (V. i. 40-5) Muir, notes. The evocation of a written

While Bright's treatise offers an adequate medical explanation for this sleeplessness, there is also a tradition of this in the classically styled English tragedy detailed in the last chapter. Gismunda is unable to sleep for her "unquiet mind" (III. ii. 5), "…sharp conflicts disquet her so sore, / That heavy sleep cannot procure her rest, / But fearful dreams present her evermore / Most hideous sights her quiet to molest; / That starting oft therewith, she doth awake, / To muse upon those fancies which torment / Her thoughtful heart with horror,…/…/…And while the quiet night / Gives others rest, she, turning to and fro, / Doth wish for day:…" (III. ii. 26-32 & 34-6)[67]

Lady Macbeth

The key difference Miola notes between Seneca's Medea and Lady Macbeth is that where Medea transcends in a dragon drawn chariot at the end of Seneca's play, Lady Macbeth by contrast will descend "fiend-like" (V. ix. 35) to hell. Where Medea mixes the brew at her own cauldron, Shakespeare transfers that function to the witches in *Macbeth*. As Miola says, Lady Macbeth "remains intransigently human, subject to supernatural forces outside her control not master of them."[68] As such her end also comes in an all too human manner. The devastation that she suffers, and which distinguishes her from Medea in Miola's mind (her sleepless madness, and

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record of sins also recalls the ghosts and devils who return with books of sin to sinners to recommend confession. See Chapter One and Chapter Four above, 27-9 & 162-8.

[66] To Macbeth's demand of the doctor, "Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased..." (*Macbeth*, V. iii. 40) Muir compares, "nemo polluto queat / animo mederi." ["No one could cure an infected spirit;…"] (*Hercules Furens*, 1268-9). (Muir, notes) It is interesting that the Doctor says 'himself' at this point. It may simply be that he is giving a general answer to a general question. Alternatively, it may be that he is now thinking of Macbeth, perhaps even suggesting that Macbeth treat himself (in the same way that Lady Macbeth will 'minister' to herself).

[67] Again, this may also echo the Chorus' description of the instability that tortures rulers in *Agamemnon*, "metui cupiunt metuique timent; / non nox illis alma recessus / praebet tutos, / non curarum somnus domitor / pectora solvit." ["They desire to be feared and dread to be feared; no safe respite is afforded them by gracious night, no ease comes to their hearts from sleep, tamer of cares."] (*Agamemnon*, 72-6) See also Appendix VI for Studley's rendering.

[68] Miola, 106.

tormenting dreams, her somnambulist hand washing and eventual suicide),[69] may find closer analogues once more in the biblical pageant tradition.

In the same way that Jones links the figures of Herod and Macbeth, we could likewise parallel Pilate's and Lady Macbeth's washing of hands, "bring me watyr I pray the / and what I wole do ye shall se / As I wasche with watyr my handys clene / so gyltles of hese deth I mut ben." (*Ludus Coventriae*, 'The Trial of Christ and the Thieves before Pilate', 620-3)[70] In both cases the simple act of washing their hands becomes profoundly significant. But Lady Macbeth may owe more to Pilate's wife (or rather something of an inverse version of her) who encourages Pilate to release Jesus. The stage directions in the episode of 'Pilate's Wife's Dream' in the *Ludus Coventriae* offer us an interesting perspective on Lady Macbeth's sleepless nights,

> *here xal the devyl gon to pylatys wyf – the corteyn drawyn as she lyth in bedde* and *he shal no dene make but she shal sone After that he is come in – makyn a rewly noyse – comyng* and *rennyng of the schaffald* and *here shert – and here kyrtyl in here hand – and sche shal come beforn pylat leke A mad woman* (*Ludus Coventriae*, 'Pilate's Wife's Dream', s.d. 523)

She warns her husband that if he judges Jesus he will be damned and that the Jews will deceive him. Her husband's guilt is the cause of her vision and her disturbed sleep in which she seems like a mad woman.

Judas' final words, in the pageant episode only a little earlier in the sequence, are also of interest. He returns to the Jews to give back the thirty pieces of silver,

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[69] The "*cry...of women*" (s.d. V. v. 8) offstage immediately prior to Lady Macbeth's death being abruptly announced implies either accident or suicide. We may imagine that the patient has 'ministered to herself' in a way not intended by the Doctor. (V. iii. 45-6) This suspicion is shared by Malcolm, "as 'tis thought, by self and violent hands / [she] Took off her life". (V. ix. 35-6)

[70] Lady Macbeth initially says, "A little water clears us of this deed". (II. ii. 66)

I judas haue synyd – *and* treson haue don

ffor I haue be-trayd this rythful blood

here is *your* mony A-yen All And som

Ffor sorwe *and* trowth – I am wax wood.

(*Ludus Coventriae*, 'The Death of Judas,' 229-232)

He has gone mad for sorrow and gravity, having facilitated the capture and eventual murder of 'this rythful blood', (i.e. his king) in the same way that Lady Macbeth has gone mad for guilt at having assisted in the murder of her "most sainted King". (IV. iii. 109) Judas then throws the money down and goes and hangs himself (s.d. 237).

The Revenge of the Allegory

It is possible to read Macbeth as an allegory in the tradition of the medieval moral allegories (such as *Everyman*) discussed in Chapter One. In such a reading, Scotland is the protagonist. Like Infans in *Mundus et Infans*, Scotland changes her name on a number of occasions during the course of the play; she is first Duncan, then Macbeth and finally Malcolm, but she is always Scotland. This is a simple extension of the 'body politic.' By suggestion and extension she will eventually be James VI and I through his apparent ancestor Fleance. In this hypothetical reading Scotland is initially in a state of Innocence represented by Duncan, she is tempted by the agencies of hell represented by the Witches (vices), then fallen into the sin of Ambition represented by Macbeth, and through the intercession of Confession represented by Edward the Confessor (the virtue figure), is restored to a pure state represented by Malcolm and the promise of a line of kings that will lead eventually to James. This

reading is tempting, but inaccurate. The play is after all drawn from historical material and the main characters have individual names, are complex and are not restricted in action and speech to the same extent that medieval moral allegorical figures are. However, this reading may also be extended to some length before it becomes entirely absurd. The reason for this is that the play and its language has borrowed a great deal from the allegory tradition. It is this debt that will be explored in this penultimate section of the analysis of *Macbeth.*

Macbeth is the first to engage in extended allegorical speech and sets up a recurring set of themes,

> Now o'er the one half-world
> Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
> The curtain'd sleep: Witchcraft celebrates
> Pale Hecate's off'rings; and wither'd Murther,
> Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
> Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
> With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
> Moves like a ghost. (II. i. 49-56)

Nature seems dead,[71] and Murder stalks the night with malignant intent. In the following scene Lady Macbeth explains that she has drugged the grooms watching Duncan's room, and "Death and Nature do contend about them, / Whether they live or die." (II. ii. 7-9) Macbeth has already said that Nature seems dead, and now we learn

[71] Nature appears as an allegorical character in Pickering's *Horestes*, and Naturae Lex (The Law of Nature) is a character in John Bale's *The Three Laws. Nature* (printed c. 1530) is also the title of a moral interlude by Henry Medwall in which the seven deadly sins are characters. (Henry Medwall, *Nature* in Alan H. Nelson, ed., *The Plays of Henry Medwall*, (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1980).) We may wonder how 'natural' it is to personify Nature.

that Nature is fighting with Death.[72] These apparent allegorical characters are of course not to be taken literally, but their recurrence adds a significant extra metatheatrical layer to the rhetoric of the play. As the scene progresses Macbeth hears a voice that he says cries, "'Macbeth does murther Sleep'". (II. ii. 35) Macbeth elaborates on the character of Sleep, "the innocent Sleep;.../.../...great Nature's second course". (II. ii. 35 & 39) This early allegorical rhetoric alerts us to the removal of virtue figures from the play. Nature seems dead, Sleep is murdered, Death and Murder remain. When the Porter comes to answer the knocking at the gate he invokes Belzebub, a further vice. As the murder of Duncan (and Sleep) is revealed, Macduff seems to blame further allegorical vices, "Confusion now hath made his masterpiece! / Most sacrilegious Murther hath broke ope / The Lord's anointed Temple, and stole thence / The life o'th'building!" (II. iii. 65-8) Rosse draws attention to the metatheatrical quality of the rhetoric, while at the same time allegorising Night, "Thou seest the heavens, as troubled with man's act, / Threatens his bloody stage: by th'clock 'tis day, / And yet dark [N]ight[73] strangles the travelling lamp." (II. iv. 5-7) He further complains of "Thriftless Ambition, that will ravin up / Thine own life's means!" (II. iv. 28-9)[74] He refers to the supposed guilt of Malcolm and Donalbain, but at this point it is the introduction of another traditional vice figure that is significant. Macbeth's invocation of Night and "Night's black agents" (III. ii. 46-55 & 53) has already been discussed, still there is no sign in the rhetoric of a strong virtue type allegorisation. (Nature and Sleep may represent virtue types, but Sleep is murdered

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[72] Death appears as an allegorical character in *Everyman*. He is not a vice figure in *Everyman*, but in rhetorically fighting with Nature, and by association with Murder he becomes a negative force in the rhetoric of *Macbeth*.

[73] The Arden edition does not capitalise Night here, but in order to strangle Night must have hands, and is thus a personification.

[74] Ambition is an allegorical character familiar to us from *The Enterlude of Godly Queen Hester*. See Chapter One above, 10-11. Ambitio is also a character in John Bale's, *The Three Laws*, and in Middleton's *The Revenger's Tragedy* (1607) there is a character called Ambitioso.

and Nature seems dead. Effectively, at this stage in the rhetoric of the play, virtues are being threatened and defeated by vices.)

At the end of the third act, Lennox and a Lord discuss the events that have unfolded in recent times in Scotland. With some sarcasm, Lennox relates the murder of Duncan and Banquo and the disgrace of the apparently guilty parties, Malcolm, Donalbain and Fleance. The anonymous Lord who accompanies him informs him of the gathering of benevolent forces in England, and the rhetoric of Lennox's concluding speech conveys a sense of hope for the first time in the play,

> …Some holy Angel
> Fly to the court of England, and unfold
> His message ere he come, that a swift blessing
> May soon return to this our suffering country
> Under a hand accurs'd! (III. vi. 45-9)

Like the failed interventions of the Good Angel in Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*, Scotland is in need of the intervention of some virtue figure to bring her back to the path of Salvation.

In the ensuing scene Macbeth solicits the further prophecies of the Witches. The first apparition warns him to beware the Thane of Fife (i.e. Macduff). (IV. i. 72) The second assures him that none "of woman born" (IV. i. 80) shall harm him. His interpretation of this is interesting. He erroneously believes that this second apparition negates the first and yet to facilitate for the first he determines to take action, "I'll make assurance double sure, / And take a bond of Fate: thou shalt not live". (IV. i. 83-4) He will murder Macduff. The third apparition assures him that none shall vanquish

him "until / Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill / Shall come against him." (IV. i. 92-4) Again the rhetoric of his interpretation of the prophecy is important, "our high-plac'd Macbeth / Shall live the lease of Nature". (IV. i. 98-9) He assumes he will die a natural death. Within the rhetoric of these two interpretations that he makes he includes two allegorisations that prove important. Fate and Nature both hold and keep legal documents. If this is the case Fate must hold the promise of Macbeth's downfall, as guaranteed by the Witches earlier prophecy to Banquo, and Nature has a score to settle with him for the disruption of the natural line of kings. Unwittingly Macbeth's rhetoric predicts the means of his own fall, Nature will indeed move against him in the form of the forest of Birnam.[75] This of course is the darker elements of Nature rebelling against an evil tyrant, and recalls an argument that occurs between Horestes and Nature in Pickering's rendering of the story of Orestes. Nature warns Horestes,

> Canst thou (a lacke, unhappey wight!) consent revenged to be
> On her whose pappes, before this time, hath given foud to the?
> In whom I, Nature, formyd the, as best I thought it good.
> Oh now requight her for her pain; withdraw thy hands from bloud.
>
> (*Horestes*, 416-9)[76]

The timing of this argument is significant. Horestes, kneeling, calls upon the Gods to aid him in his campaign against Egistus and Clytemnestra, but instead Nature arrives to issue him a warning. Nature's warning to Horestes comes immediately before he

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[75] This motif is made use of to great effect in Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*.

[76] This warning aligns Nature and Clytemnestra with other female figures who curse their breasts for nourishing ungrateful children, discussed in Chapter Five. i.e. Thersites' mother (see above, 219), Medea and Videna (see above, 240-1), Guenevera (in her case, her breasts do not represent motherhood, but womanhood, see above, 250) and Isabella (her child is not so much ungrateful as he is dead, see above, 259).

takes his troops into battle. So too does Nature move against Macbeth, in the form of the forest of Birnam, immediately prior to the battle.

In the moral allegories dealt with in the first chapter, the progress of the protagonist towards redemption could only be achieved after the recognition of his/her sin.[77] As in the penitential literature, the seven deadly sins must be represented in order for this recognition to occur. Malcolm makes a pretence of his own sinful state, saying "I…in whom I know / All the particulars of vice so grafted,…" (IV. iii. 50-51) that Macbeth shall seem pure. Malcolm's defensive dissimulation[78] in discussion with Macduff provides a variant of this trope. Pretending to be as sinful as Macbeth to test the character of Macduff, he warrants that Macbeth is "bloody, / Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful, / Sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin / That has a name". (IV. iii. 57-60) He elaborates a while on the sin of lechery, but Macduff is willing to excuse such a negligible vice to an extent. Malcolm declares his "staunchless avarice," (IV. iii. 78) that he will be willing to engage in unjust quarrels and destruction to feed it. (IV. iii. 78-84) Again Macduff can tolerate these when balanced against Malcolm's graces. "I have none:" Malcolm replies, "the king becoming graces, / As Justice, Verity, Temp'rance, Stableness, / Bounty, Perseverance, Mercy, Lowliness, / Devotion, Patience, Courage, Fortitude, / I have no relish of them". (IV. iii. 91-5) Having detailed the sins of which Scotland is guilty (by the terms of the body politic)[79] the means to cure her of the madness of sin would be confession.

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[77] See Chapter One above, 30-40.
[78] See Chapter One above, 16-17.
[79] As king, Macbeth is the head of the body of Scotland. See Chapter Two above, 58-9.

Confession and Purgation

The first traitor to Scotland who wore the title Cawdor ends his life more favourably than he had lived it. As Malcolm reports,

> ...I have spoke
> With one that saw him die: who did report,
> That very frankly he confess'd his treasons,
> Implor'd your Highness' pardon, and set forth
> A deep repentance. Nothing in his life
> Became him like the leaving it: he died
> As one that had been studied in his death,
> To throw away the dearest thing he ow'd,
> As 'twere a careless trifle. (I. iv. 3-11)

The resonance of the rhetoric of confession in this passage draws is reminiscent of the confessional rhetoric in the abdication scene of *Richard II*.[80] Now again, in *Macbeth* there is a king, (Cawdor's successor as traitor) this time a merciless tyrant whose sinful reign is causing a sickness in the realm. Rosse articulates the effect of tyranny on the people of Scotland, "cruel are the times, when we are traitors, / And do not know ourselves" (IV. ii. 18-9) This apparent lack of self knowledge is a symptom of the sickness that is ravaging the body politic.

Malcolm also describes a more physical malady, a physical injury enacted upon the body of Scotland by her tyrant king, "I think our country sinks beneath the yoke; / It weeps, it bleeds; and each new day a gash / Is added to her wounds" (IV. iii.

[80] See Chapter Two above, 96-9.

39-41) Having described the illness of Scotland, and feigned an addition to its woes (by claiming to want the throne for his own tyrannical ambitions) a Doctor enters with news of King Edward's progress, "there are a crew of wretched souls, / That stay his cure: their malady convinces / The great assay of art; but at his touch, / Such sanctity hath Heaven given his hand, / They presently amend." (IV. iii. 141-5) Malcolm further explains the heavenly quality of this miraculous king, whose touch cures this seemingly incurable disease,

> 'Tis call'd the Evil:
> A most miraculous work in this good King,
> Which often, since my here-remain in England,
> I have seen him do. How he solicits Heaven,
> Himself best knows; but strangely-visited people,
> All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
> The mere despair of surgery, he cures;
> Hanging a golden stamp about their necks,
> Put on with holy prayers: and 'tis spoken,
> To the succeeding royalty he leaves
> The healing benediction. With this strange virtue,
> He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy;
> And sundry blessings hang about his throne,
> That speak him full of grace. (IV. iii. 146-159)

In case we have missed the proximity of the description this diseased country Scotland and the relation of the King of England's miraculous gift for curing

seemingly incurable diseases, Rosse enters next to restate the illness of Scotland, again stressing the lack of self knowledge caused by its sickness. "Alas, poor country! / Almost afraid to know itself.../.../...Where sighs, and groans, and shrieks that rent the air / Are made, and not mark'd; where violent sorrow seems / A modern ecstasy" (IV. iii. 164-5 & 168-170) Edward the Confessor's forces will assist in the purging of the madness of sin (i.e. Macbeth) from Scotland, and our attention is drawn to the monarch for whom the play was performed in 1606.[81] James' "furies" as Francis Meres would have it, or his *Of Demonologie*, was written at least in part as a proof of the existence of witches (against the accusation that they were a fiction) and as a justification for, or exposition of, his actions as presiding monarch over the witch hunts in Scotland and England.[82] In many ways James is a confessor figure in England and Scotland (or at least portrays himself as such in *Of Demonologie*) as Edward was before him. Both have united England and Scotland under the project of eradicating the effects of witchcraft (in Edward's case the dramatic representation presented before James is more important than the reality) from the island.

Conclusion

While an allegorical reading of *Macbeth* is tempting, and while much of the rhetoric of the play encourages such a reading, Macduff's entrance at the end carrying Macbeth's severed head (s.d. V. ix. 20) places the play firmly back in the tradition of the classically styled English tragedy, and fulfils the final requirement of that tradition, i.e. bloody revenge. The play has incorporated the features of that tragedy and Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's madness is crafted in such a way as to be

[81] Muir, introduction, xiv & xvii.
[82] As he says himself in the preface to the work, "My intention in this labour is only to prove two things,...the one, that such devilish arts have been and are; the other, what exact trial and severe punishment they merit." *Of Demonologie*, 'Preface to the Reader,' Normand and Roberts, 354.

reminiscent of the Fury-driven madness of the protagonists of that tradition. However, the characterisation of their madness also incorporates elements discussed in the first chapter of this thesis. In part, Macbeth's madness is caused by an over-reliance on dissembling to feed his ambition in the court environment. In a sense, he loses himself to his pretence. Even more so, he and his Queen are guilty of the madness of sin, incorporating and recalling earlier stage characters, such as Herod whose heinous sin leads them to and is itself madness. The madness that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth exhibit is further entirely compatible with the medical literature detailed in Chapter Three of this thesis. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's madness is constructed from a complex interweave of traditions, religious, social, medical, and theatrical that contribute to Shakespearean ideas of madness.

Conclusion

This thesis has re-evaluated the contemporary understanding of madness in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in order better to understand and interpret characters that are portrayed as suffering from it in the drama of the period. Two factors crucial to the understanding of early modern madness had not previously been explored in critical material dealing with madness except on a purely superficial level. First, the age's understanding of the 'self', the part of humankind most heinously disfigured by madness; understanding the 'self' is vital to understanding how madness affects it. Second, the influence characters affected by madness in Greek and Roman literature have had on the portrayal of their counterparts on the renaissance stage. The combination of these factors, with an examination of contemporary medical writings on madness (which has been previously explored, but in a limited way) has provided a more complete understanding of the conception of madness in the age. The more complete understanding that this combined approach has provided has facilitated a more informed reading of *Richard II*, *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* and a better understanding of the characters affected by madness in those plays.

Because of the great scope of research necessary to illustrate this complexity of influence on the understanding of madness in the age, it would not have been possible to effect this novel approach in a single leap of research and explication. For this reason the thesis was divided into three sections, whereby a single area of influence (on madness theory in the age) was explored and elucidated before a reading of a single play. Each subsequent reading took the research material covered up to that point into account. For this reason and because it was the first play to be examined *Richard II* was explored almost entirely from the point of view of problems

of the 'self.' *Richard II* was chosen for this section because (as I have shown) it deals directly with the literatures, traditions, and theories illustrated in the preceding chapter as it does with the effect of identity confusion and the loss of a maintainable idea of self in one particularly prominent character (i.e. Richard).

However, the rhetoric and symbolism researched and explained in this first section of the thesis also has major implications for Shakespeare's other works. For example, for *Measure for Measure* and *Twelfth Night*, in which dissimulation and role-play are perhaps even more prominent themes, a better understanding of how pretence and dishonesty are perceived to affect self-knowledge in the age will undoubtedly give us an improved understanding of the representation of the characters and issues in these plays. The rhetoric of confession also plays a major role in *Measure for Measure*, with the disguised Duke explicitly becoming a confessor figure for his court. So too in *Twelfth Night*, Feste becomes a farcical version of the confessor figure to the apparently mad Malvolio.

Hamlet was examined in the fourth chapter with the benefit of the traditions and literatures explored in both the first and third chapters; i.e. the tension between courtly self-promotion and older religious means of establishing identity, and contemporary medical theory. Again, *Hamlet* was chosen because it deals directly with the medical literature dealt with in the third chapter. However, it also draws attention to the contradictions and incompatibilities of the ideas of madness exposed in the religious literary tradition examined in the first chapter and the more scientific approach of the medical literature. These two approaches are polarised in the characters of Hamlet (whose madness is described in terms of medical rhetoric) and Ophelia (whose madness is established under the rhetoric of sin). Here again the implications of the differing available theoretical approaches to madness exposed in

this section should effect how we read Shakespeare's other plays. *King Lear* should perhaps be re-examined in a similar way to *Hamlet*. In such a re-examination Lear ought to be read in terms of the sections of the medical literature that deal with the melancholy and dotage of old men as contrasted with the more superstitious and supernatural and demoniac rhetoric under which Edgar couches his disguise as Mad Tom O'Bedlam. The erotomania, or madness of love described in the medical literature should also lend something to our readings of the comic madness of Malvolio and the nearly tragic madness of the Jailer's Daughter in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*.

Macbeth, the last play examined in this thesis, was likewise chosen because (as has been shown) it is specifically constructed within the rhetorical and theatrical traditions illustrated in the fifth chapter. Once again, it was examined taking into account the literatures and traditions exposed in all of the preceding chapters. Once again, *Macbeth* was shown to balance the rhetoric of sin with the rhetoric of medical theory, but at the same time, likewise, to balance the Christian traditions of madness theory with classical representations of madness and the continued presence of characters like them in sixteenth-century drama. The traditions, literary and dramatic, illustrated in this section of the thesis have huge implications for other plays by Shakespeare. *Titus Andronicus*, for one thing, contains many of the same features from the English Senecan tradition as *Macbeth* was shown to make use of. So too *Richard III* shows many signs of Senecan influence.

While I have used three of Shakespeare's tragic works to illustrate the theories exposed, it may be beneficial to examine the comic presentations of madness in his plays in the light of the traditions exposed in this thesis. The tragedies proved a more serious and grave arena in which to expose the conclusions of the research work in

this thesis, but the comedies are not without their more serious and illustrative moments when it comes to madness. This is an area of study that would benefit by examination at some point in the light of the work of this thesis.

It should also be apparent that the interpretations of many other plays of the period that engage with the idea of madness are likewise effected in no small way. The roles of clerical characters, such as the Cardinal in Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (1614) and Friar Anselmo (keeper of Bedlam) in Middleton and Dekker's *The Honest Whore, part 1* (1604), bear examination in the light of the investigation of confessional rhetoric in the first section of this thesis. Attempts to cure madness in Ford's *The Lover's Melancholy* (1628) and Brome's *The Antipodes* (1638) deserve examination in the new light cast on the medical literature explored in the third chapter. In the same way Middleton and Rowley's *The Changeling* (1622), Fletcher's *The Humourous Lieutenant* (1619) and Middleton and Dekker's *The Honest Whore, part 1* (1604) would all benefit from an examination of the recommended treatments for madmen explored in the third chapter. As a parodic take on both *Hamlet* and *The Spanish Tragedy* (and revenge tragedy of the age in general) our understanding of Marston's *Antonio's Revenge* (1600) would benefit from its examination in terms of its relationship to the classically styled English tragedy explored in the fifth chapter. Our readings of many other plays from the age will likewise be affected in no small way by the theories and traditions relating to the perceptions of madness exposed in this thesis.

Appendix I

The following is 'The Epistle Dedicatorie' of Timothy Bright's *Treatise of Melancholie*.

Of all other practise of phisick, that parte most commendeth the excellency of the noble facultie, which not only releeueth the bodily infirmity, but after a sort euen also correcteth the infirmities of the mind. For the instrument of reason, the braine, being either not of well tempered substance: or disordered in his parts: all exercise of wisedome is hindred: and where once vnderstanding lodged, wit, memorie, & quick conceit, kept residence, and the excellencie of man appeareth aboue all other creatures: there vnconsiderate iudgement, simplicitie, & foolishnes make their seat, and as it were dispossessing reason, of her watch tower, subiecteth the nature of man vnto the annoyance of infinite calamities, that force vpon vs in the course of this fraile life, & baseth it farre vnder the condition of brute beasts. The heart the seate of affection (and neither immoderate in temper, nor in figure or quantitie otherwise disposed then is expedient for good action) the seate of temperancie, of iustice, of fortitude and liberalitie, dayly practice of phisicke sheweth how much it is disposed and framed to mediocritie of affection wherin vertue consisteth, by such meanes as nature ministreth, & the phisitian hir great steward according to her will, dispenseth where need requireth: in so much that what reason bringeth to passe by perswasion and counsell, that medicine and other helpes of that kinde seeme to worke by instinct of nature. The dayly experience of phrensies, madnesse, lunasies, and melancholy cured by this heauenly gift of God, make manifest demonstration hereof. The notable fruit & successe of which art in that kinde, hath caused some to iudge more basely of the soule, then agreeth with pietie or nature, & haue accompted all manner affection

thereof, to be subiect to the phisicians hand, not considering herein any thing diuine, and aboue the ordinarie euents, and naturall course of thinges: but haue esteemed the vertues themselues, yea religion, no other thing but as the body hath ben tempered, and on the other side, vice, prophanenesse, & neglect of religion and honestie, to haue bene nought else but a fault of humour. For correcting the iudgement of such as so greatly mistake the matter, and partly for the vse of many that may neede instruction and counsel, in the state of melancholy, & affection of braine and hart, & wold haue both to satisfie their owne doubts, and to answer the prophane obiections of others, I haue taken this paines to confute the absurde errour of the one, & to satisfie the reasonable and modest inquiry of the other that seek to be enformed. I haue layd open howe the bodie, and corporall things affect the soule, & how the body is affected of it againe: what the difference is betwixt natural melancholie, and that heauy hande of God vpon the afflicted conscience, tormented with remorse of sinne, & feare of his iudgement: with a Christian resolution according to my skill for such as faint vnder that heauie burthen. And that I might to the vttermost of my endeuor (as other businesse wold permit me) comfort them in that estate most comfortless, I haue added mine aduise of phisicke helpe: what diet, what medicine, and what other remedie is meete for persons, oppressed with melancholie feare, & that kind of heauinesse of hart. I haue enterlaced my treatise besides with disputes of Philosophie that the learned sort of them, and such as are of quicke conceit, & delited in discourse of reason in naturall things, may find to passe their time with, and knowe the grounds and reasons of their passions, without which they might receaue more discomfort, and greater cause of error.[735]

[735] Bright, 'The Epistle Dedicatorie'.

Appendix IIa

The following is the opening section of Laurentius' *A Discourse of the Preservation of Sight: of Melancholike Diseases; of Rheumes, and of Old Age.*

The Soule of man (that most noble and perfect forme, that is vnder the face of heauen, bearing for a signe and token of his excellencie, the liuely and true image of the Creator) although it bee in all poynts like vnto it selfe, not consisting of matter, or subiect to any diuision, and by consequent whole in all the bodie, and wholie in euery part of the same: yet the case so standeth, that in respect of the diuersitie of his actions, of the difference of his instruments wherewith it serueth it selfe, and of the varietie of obiects set before it: that it may seeme and appeare to the common people (after a certaine maner) to consist of diuers parts. The Philosophers themselues seeing the noblest powers thereof to shine more in one place then in another, haue gone about to lodge, and (as it were) to bound the limits thereof within the compasse of one onely member: in like maner the Diuines (carried away by the wonderfull things which more cleerely manifest themselues in the heauens, then in any other part of the world) doe say that the heauens are the throne of God, although his essence bee infinite, incomprehensible, and stretching in selfe through euery thing that is).[736]

. . . . .

I say then that the principall seate of the soule is in the braine, because the goodliest powers thereofdoe lodge and lye there, and the most worthie actions of the same doe there most plainly appeare. All the instruments of motion, sence, imagination, discourse and memorie are found within the braine, or immediately depending therevpon. Anatomie manifesteth vnto our eyes, how that there issue out from the

[736] Laurentius, 1-2.

lower part of the braine seuen great paire of sinewes, which serue at a trice to conuey the animall spirit vnto the instrument of the sences, and doe not any of them passe out of the head except the sixt paire, which stretch out themselues to the mouth of the stomacke. We see also that from the hindermost part of the braine (where the great and little braine doe meete together) doth proceede the admirable taile, the beautifull and white spinall marrow, which the Wiseman in his booke of the Preacher calleth the siluer threed, how it is carefully preserued within a sacred chanell, as Lactantius calleth it. From the same, men see that there rise a million of little sinewes, which conuey the powers of mouing and feeling, vnto all such members as are capable of the same.[737]

Appendix IIb

The following is the opening section of Laurentius' *Discourse of Melancholike Diseases.*

Abdalas the Sarrasin being impotunatelie pressed, and as it were forced to speake and tell, what it was that hee found to bee most wonderfull in all the world: answered at last with great commendation, that man alone did surpasse all other wonder whatsoeuer. An answere in trueth beseeming a great Philosopher, rather than a rude and vnlettered man. For man hauing the image of God engrauen in his soule, and representing in his body the model of the whole world, can in a moment transforme himselfe into euery thing like a Proteus, or receiue at an instant the stampe of a thousand colours like to the Chamelion. *Phauorine* acknowledged nothing to be great here on earth but onely man. The wise men of Egypt haue vouchsafed him such

[737] Laurentius, 3-4.

honour. As to call him a mortall God. Thrice renowmed *Mercurie* calleth him the liuing creature full of diuine parts, the messenger of the Gods, the Lord of the things below, and fellow companion with the Horizon of things hauing and not hauing bodies: *Zoroaster* in a certaine kinde of rauishment proclaimed him, the mightie worke and wonder of nature: *Plato*, the marueile of marueiles: *Arisotle* the politike liuing creature, furnished with reason and counsaile, which is all, as possessing all things by power, though not really and in very deede (as *Empedocles* would haue it to be) but by the comprehending and conceiuing of the formes and seuerall sorts of things: *Plinie* the ape or puppie of nature, the counterfeit of the whole world, the abridgement of the great world. Amongst the Diuines, there are some which haue called him, euery maner of creature, because he hath intercourse with euery maner of creature; he hath a being, as haue the stones; life, as haue the plants; and sence or feeling as the beasts; and vnderstanding, as haue the Angels. Othersome haue honoured him, giving him the title of vniuersall gouernour, as hauing all things vnder his empire and iurisdiction, as being he to whom euery thing yeeldeth obedience, and for whose sake the whole world was created. In briefe, this is the chiefe and principall of Gods worke, and the most noble of all other creatures. But this his excellencie, whereby he is more glorious then all the rest, is not in respect of his bodie, although the shape thereof bee more exquisite, better tempered, and of more comely proportion then any other thing in the world, seruing as Polycletus his rule for the fashioning of other things, and being as a platforme, whereby the master builders may frame and contriue their buildings. This nobleness (I say) commeth not of the bodie, which consisteth of matter and is corruptible: no, the extract thereof, or that which is indeede excellent therein, is further fetcht: It is the soule alone whereby he is so renowmed,

being a forme altogether celestiall and diuine, not taking his originall from the effectuall working of any matter, as that of plants and beasts doth.[738]

[738] Laurentius, 72-3. Laurentius' italics.

Appendix III

The following is Robert Burton's opening passage to his *Anatomy of Melancholy* where he discusses the excellence of man, and his fall from grace.

Man, the most excellent, and noble creature of the World, *the principall and mighty worke of God, wonder of Nature*, as *Zoroastes* calls him; *audacis naturæ miraculum, the marvaile of marvailes*, as *Plato*; *the Abridgment and Epitome of the World, as Pliny*; *Microcosmus*, a little world, model of the World, Soveraigne Lord of the Earth, Viceroy of the World, sole Commander and Governour of all the creatures in it: to whose Empire they are subject in particular, and yeeld obedience, farre surpassing all the rest, not in body only, but in soule; *Imaginis Imago*, created to Gods owne *Image*, to that immortall and incorporeall substance, with all the faculties and powers belonging unto it; was at first pure, divine, perfect, happy, *Created after God in true holinesse and righteousnesse*; *Deo congruens*, free from all manner of infirmities, and put in Paradise, to knowe God, to praise and glorifie him, to do his will,

Ut diis consimiles parturiat deos;

(as an old Poet saith) to propagate the Church. But this most noble Creature, *Heu tristis, & lachrymosa commutatio* (one exclaimes) O pittifull change! is fallen from that he was, and forfeited his estate, become *miserabilis homuncio*, a cast-away, a caitiffe, one of the most miserable creatures of the World, if he be considered in his owne nature, an unregenerate man, and so much obscured by his fall that (some few reliques excepted) he is inferiour to a beast. *Man in honour that understandeth not, is like unto beasts that perish*, so *David* esteemes him: a monster by a stupend Metamarphosis, a fox, a dogge, a hogge, what not? *Quantum mutates ab illo*? How much altered from that he was, before blessed and happy, now miserable and

accursed; *He must eat his meat in sorrow*, subject to death and all manner of infirmities, all kinde of calamities. *Great travail is created for all men, and an heavy Yoke on the sonnes of Adam, from the day that they goe out of their mothers wombe, unto that day they returne to the mother of all things. Namely their thoughts, and feare of their hearts, and their imagination of things they wait for, and the day of death. From him that sitteth in the glorious Throne, to him that sitteth beneath in the earth and ashes, from him that is clothed in blew silke, and weareth a Crowne, to him that is cloathed in simple linen. Wrath, envy, trouble, and unquietnesse, and feare of death, and rigor, and strife, and such things come to both Man and Beast, but seavenfold to the ungodly.* All this befalls him in this life, and peradventure eternall misery in the life to come.[739]

[739] Burton, 121. Burton's italics.

Appendix IV

The following is the opening chapter of Thomas Wright's *Passions of the Mind in General*, 'Chapter 1: The end and profit of this discourse; wherein are declared the Passions and Affections of our Souls.'

There can be no man who works by right reason, but when he first intends his work, he aimeth at some end, he levels at some good; viz. either to insruct [sic] the wit with doctrine, move the will to virtue, delight the mind with pleasure, or, in fine, direct the Reader to do something that may be either commodious to himself or profitable to the common weal. This Treatise, therefore, of the Passions of the Mind cannot but carry with it a goodly and fair gloss of profit and commodity; not only becuase it concerneth every man s particular, but also for that there be few estates or conditions of man that have not interest in this matter. The Divine, the Philosopher, the curers both of the body and the soul (I mean the Preacher and Physician), the good Christian that attendeth to mortification, and the prudent civil Gentleman that procureth a grateful conversation may reap some commodity touching their professions; and, in fine, every man may by this come to a knowledge of himself, which ought to be preferred before all treasures and riches.

The Divine herein may first challenge his part, because [sic] the inordinate motions of Passions, their preventing of reason, their rebellion to virtue, are thorny briars sprung from the infected root of original sin; the which Treatise wholly concerneth Divines, and all the deformed brood thereby engendered. The Passions likewise augment or diminish the deformity of actual sins; they blind reason, they seduce the will, and therefore are special causes of sin; whereupon among Divines grew that common distinction of sins, that some are of Passion, others proceed from

ignorance, others from malice and wilfulness. Finally, Passions are means to help us, and impediments to withdraw us from our end. The Divine, therefore, who specially entreateth of our last end, and of the means to achieve it and difficulties to obtain it, must of necessity extend the sphere of his knowledge to this subject of our Passions; and for this respect of Divines, they are divinely handled.

The Philosopher, as well natural as moral, the one for Speculation, the other for Practice, wade most profoundly in the matter of our Passions. The natural Philosopher contemplating the natures of men and beasts sensitive souls (for Passions are common to both) consequently enter into discourse about the actions and operations thereof; for, without the knowledge of them, it were impossible to attain unto the perfect understanding of either of them. The moral Philosopher, describing manners, inviting to virtue, dissuading from vice, showeth how our inordinate appetites must be bridled with fortitude and temperance. He declareth their natures, their craft and deceit, in what sort of persons they are most vehement, and in whom more moderate; and to be brief, he spendeth well nigh in this disputation all his moral Philosophy in teaching how they may be used or abused.

The Christian Orator (I mean the godly Preacher) perfectly understanding the natures and proprieties of men's passions, questionless may effectuate strange matters in the minds of his Auditors. I remember a Preacher in Italy who had such power over his Auditors' affections that when it pleased him he could cause them to shed an abundance of tears, yea, and with tears dropping down their cheeks presently turn their sorrow into laughter; and the reason was becuase [sic] he himself being extremely passionate, knowing moreover the Art of moving the affections of those Auditors. And besides that, the most part were women that heard him, whose passions are most vehement and mutable; therefore he might have persuaded them what he

listed. The same commodity may be gathered by all other Orators, as Ambassadors, Lawyers, Magistrates, Captains, and whosoever would persuade a multitude, because if once they can stir a Passion or Affection in their Hearers, then they have almost half persuaded them, for that the forces of strong Passions marvellously [sic] allure and draw the wit and will to judge and consent unto that they are moved. Many things more might be said concerning this matter, but in all the other Chapters following, except this first, I mean to touch this point very largely.

As this Treatise affordeth great riches to the Physician of the soul, so it importeth much the Physician of the body, for that there is no Passion very vehement but that it alters extremely some of the four humours of the body. And all Physicians commonly agree that among divers other extrinsical causes of diseases one, and not the least, is the excess of some inordinate Passion; for although it busieth their brains, as also the natural Philosophers', to explicate the manner how an operation that lodgeth in the soul can alter the body and move the humours from one place to another (as for example recall most of the blood in the face, or other parts, to the heart, as we see by daily experience to chance in fear and anger), yet they consent that it may proceed from a Certain sympathy of nature, a subordination of one part to another, and that the spirits and humours wait upon the Passions as their Lords and Masters. They Physicians therefore knowing by what Passion the malady was caused may well infer what humour aboundeth and consequently what ought to be purged, what remedy to be applied, and after, how it may be prevented.

If all the aforesaid Professions may challenge each one a part in this Discourse, surely the good Christian, whose life is a warfare upon earth - - he who if he love his soul killeth it; he whose study principally standeth in rooting out vice and planting of virtue; he whose endeavour specially is employed in crucifying old Adam and in

refining the iamge [sic] of Christ; he who pretendeth to be ruled by reason and not tyrannized by preposterous affection - - this man, I say, may best peruse this matter, he may beet meditate it; he may best know where lieth the cave of those Serpents and Basilisks who suck out the Sweet blond of his soul; he may see where the thorn sticketh that stingeth his heart; finally, he may view his domestical enemy which never permits him to be quiet but molesteth in prosperity, dejecteth in adversity, in pleasure makes him dissolute, in sadness desperate; to rage in anger, to tremble in fear, in hope to faint, in love to languish. These were those temptations of the flesh that St. Paul did punish, saying Castigo corpus meum et in servitutem redigo, "I chasten my body and bring it into servitude;" these were those members the same Apostle exhorted us to mortify upon earth: Mortificate membra vestra quae sunt super terram. Seeing then how all the life of a spiritual man ought to be employed in the expugnation of these molestful Jebusites, without all doubt it imports him much to know the nature of his enemies, their stratagems and continual incursions even unto the gates of the chiefest castle of his soul: I mean the very wit and will.

Not only the mortified Christian had need to know well his passions (becuase [sic] by bridling them he wins a great quietness of mind, and enableth himself better to the service of God), but also the civil Gentleman and prudent Politician, by penetrating the nature and qualities of his affections, by restraining their inordinate motions, winneth a gracious carriage of himself and rendereth his conversation most grateful to men. For I myself have seen some, Gentlemen by blood and Noblemen by birth, yet so appassionate in affections that their company was to most men intolerable; for true is that Solomon said, Vir iracundus provocat rixas, qui patiens est mitigat suscitatas, "An angry man raiseth brawls, but a patient man appeaseth them after they be raised." And therefore how ungrateful must his company seem whose

passions overrule him; and men had need of an Astrolabe always to see in what height or elevation his affections are, lest by casting forth a spark of fire his gunpowdered mind of a sudden be inflamed. I omit how he may insinuate himself into other men's love and affections; how in travelling [sic] in strange countries he may discover to what passion the people are most inclined; for as I have seen by experience, there is no Nation in Europe that bath not some extraordinary affection either in pride, anger, lust, inconstancy, gluttony, drunkenness, sloth, or such like passion. Much it importeth in good conversation to know exactly the company's inclination; and his society cannot but be grateful whose passions are moderate and behaviour circumspect. I say nothing of Magistrates, who may by this matter understand the inclinatons [sic] and dispositions of their inferiors and subjects. But, finally, I will conclude that this subject I entreat of comprehendeth the chief object that all the ancient Philosophers aimed at, wherein they placed the most of their felicity: that was Nosce teipsum, "know thyself"; the which knowledge principally consisteth of a perfect experience every man bath of himself in particular, and an universal knowledge of men's inclinations in common. The former is greatly helped by the latter, the which knowledge is delivered in this Treatise.[740]

[740] Wright, 89-93.

Appendix V: Figures from Andreas Vesalius's *De humani corporis fabrica* (1543)

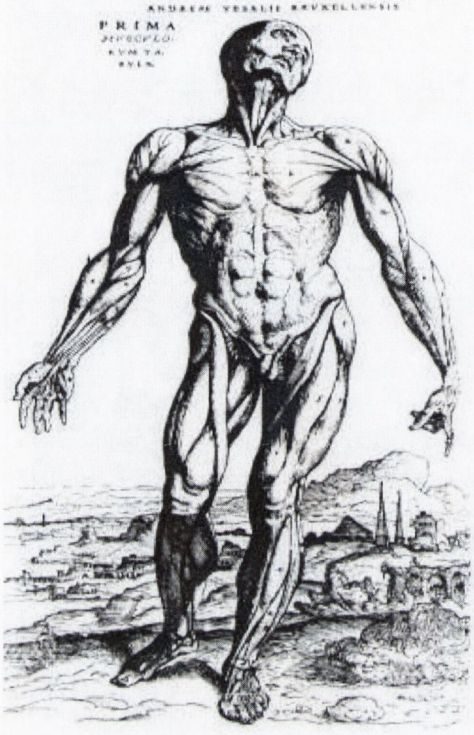

fig. V.a



fig. V.b



fig. V.c



fig. V.d

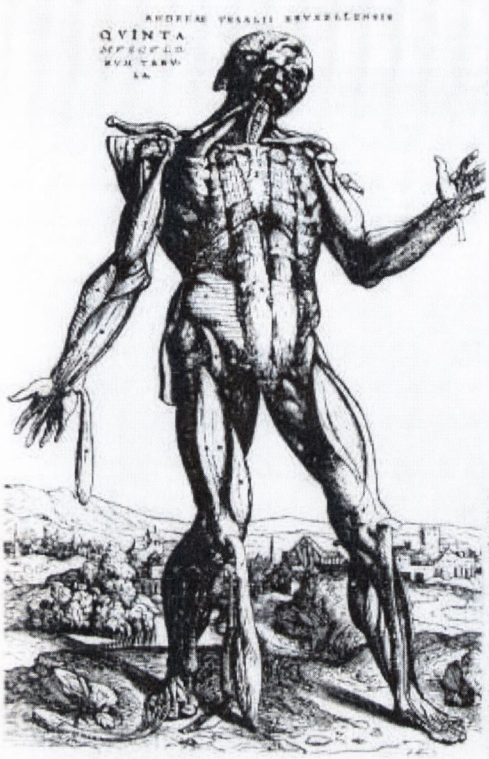

fig. V.e



fig. V.f

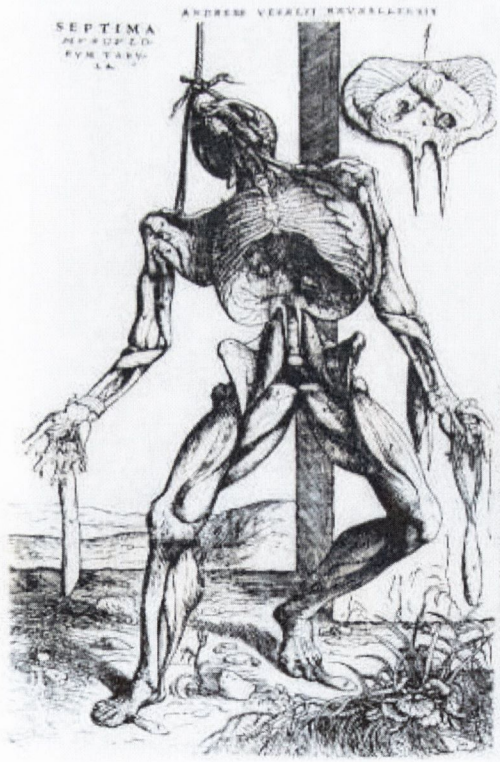

fig. V.g

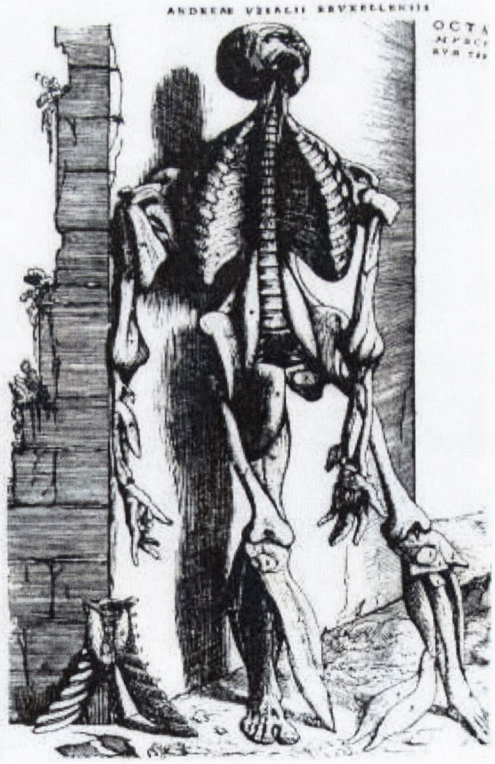

fig. V.h

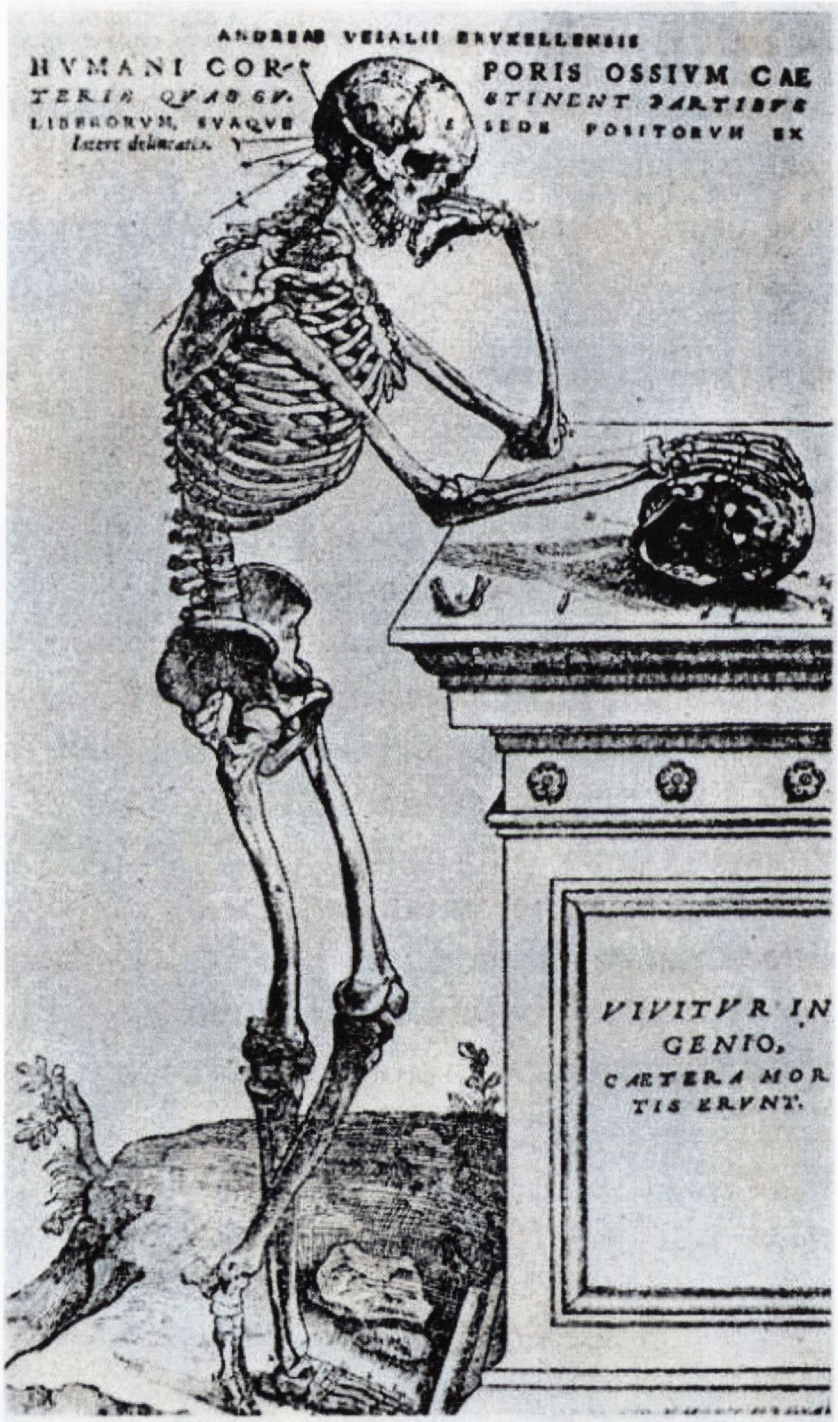

fig. V.i.

Figs. V.a-h are copied from Devon L. Hodges, *Renaissance Fictions of Anatomy* (Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1985) 7-14. [copied by Hodges from Vesalius's *De humani corporis fabrica* (1543) in Library of Congress]. Fig. V.i is copied from Aubrey Kail, *The Medical Mind of Shakespeare* (Balgowlah: Williams & Wilkins, 1986). [Copied by Kail from A. Castiglioni, *A History of Medicine*, (New York: Knopf, 1941).]

Appendix VI: Anatomy Theatres



Fig. VI a. Title-page of Andreas Vesalius, *De humani corporis fabrica*, (Basel, 1543). Taken from Jonathan Sawday. 'The Fate of Marsyas: Dissecting the Renaissance Body' in *Renaissance Bodies: The Human Figure in English Culture c. 1540-1660*. Eds. Lucy Gent & Nigel Llewellyn (London: Reaktion Books, 1990) 121.

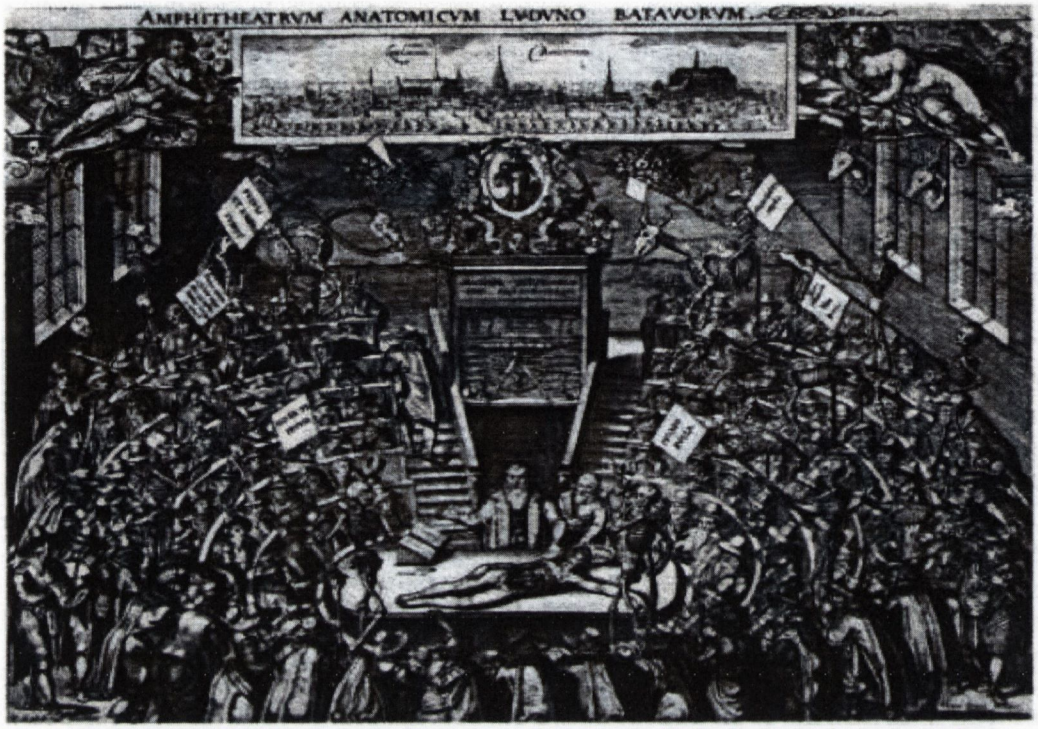

Fig. VI b. 'Interior of Leiden Anatomy Theatre c. 1640'. First published by Jacob Marcus. University Library Leiden, Collection Bodel Nijenhuis. (Sawday, 132.)

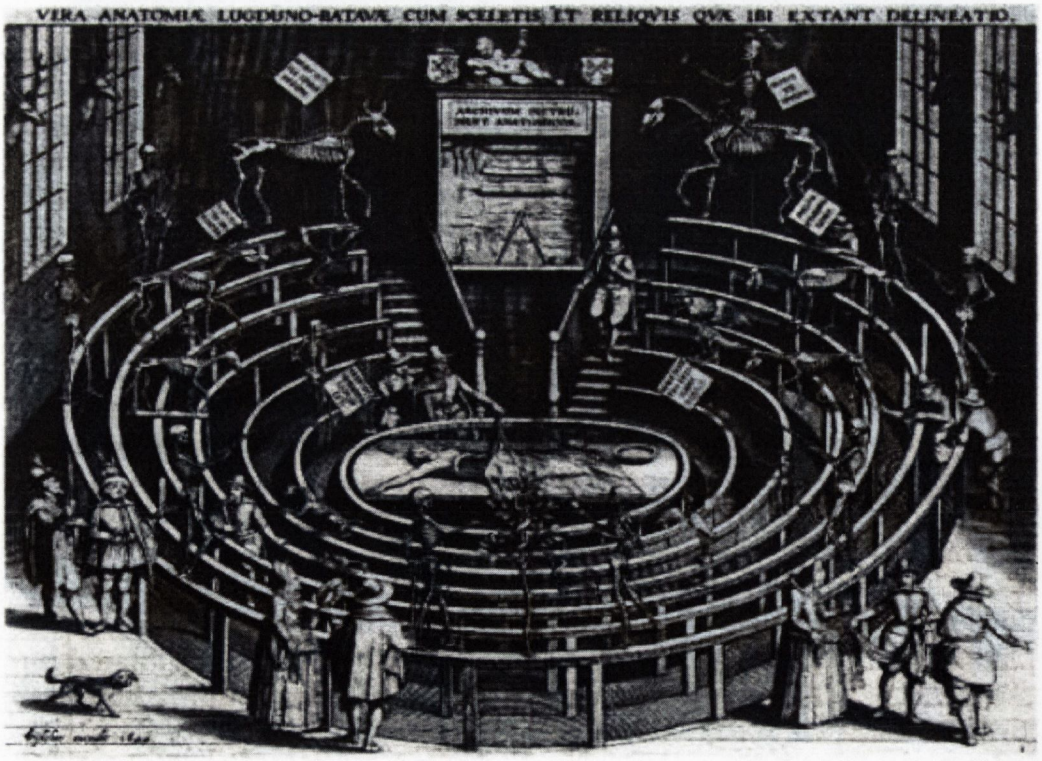

Fig. VI c. 'Interior of the Leiden Anatomy Theatre 1644'. First published by Andreas Clouk. University Library Leiden. Collection Bodel Nijenhuis. (Sawday, 133.)

Appendix VII: The Tree of Vice

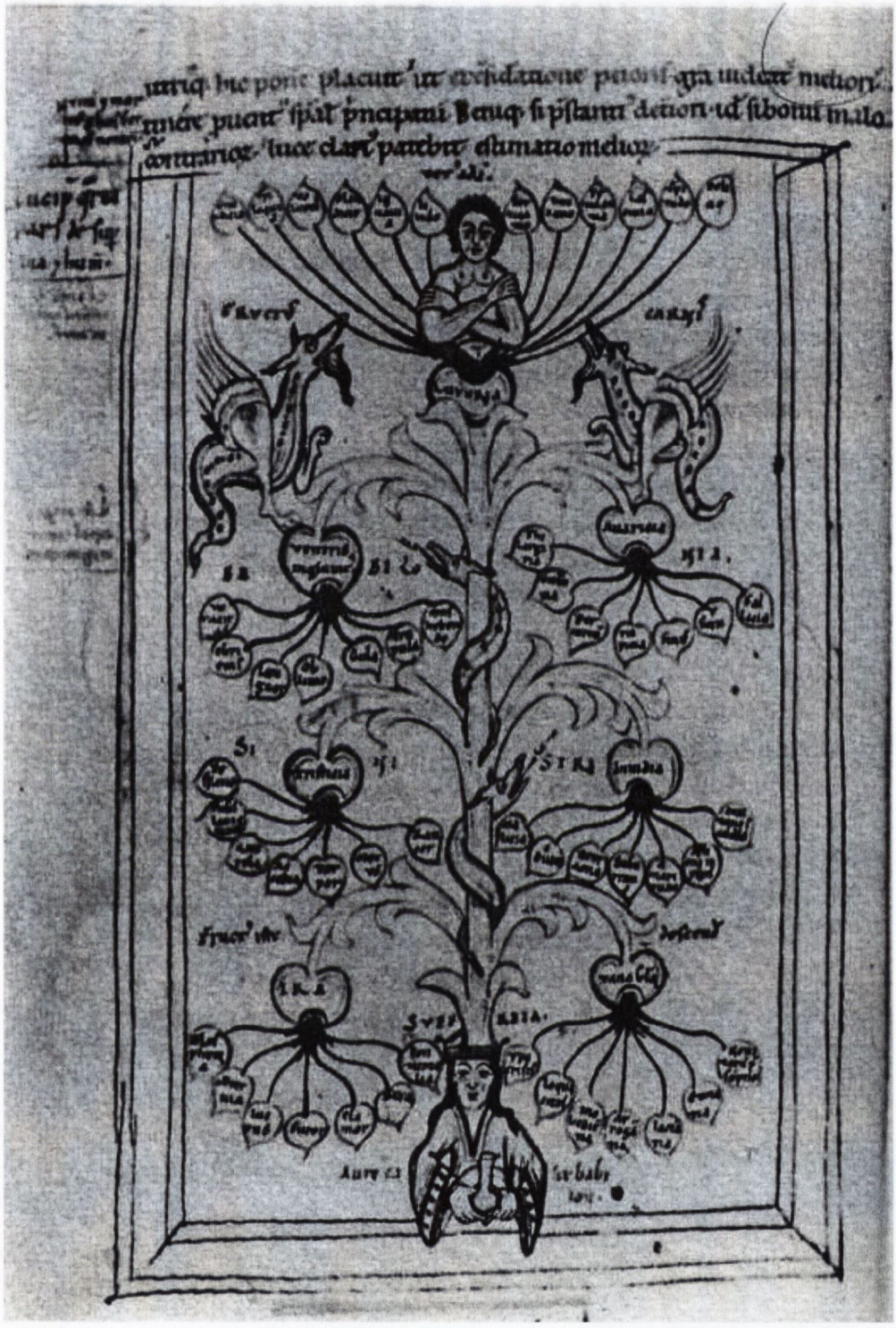

Fig. VII. The Tree of Vice from the *Speculum Virginum*. Taken from Constant J. Mews, ed., *Listen, Daughter: The Speculum Virginum and the Formation of Religious Women in the Middle Ages* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001).

Appendix IIX: The Punishment of the Seven Deadly Sins



Fig. IIX. Detail from Hieronymus Bosch, 'Seven Deadly Sins and Four Last Things' (c. 1490) taken from Laurinda Dixon, *Bosch*, Art & Ideas (London: Phaidon, 2003) 53.

Appendix IX: Tortures in the Classical Underworld

The description of the tortures of the underworld is something of a recurring rhetorical motif in Seneca. The following are the full quotations of each relevant passage.

Theseus' description of the tortures he witnessed in the underworld,

> Rapitur volucri torsus Ixion rota;
> cervice saxum grande Sisyphia sedet;
> in amne medio faucibus siccis senex
> sectatur undas; alluit mentum latex,
> fidemque cum iam saepe decepto dedit,
> perit unda in ore, poma destituunt famem.
> praebet volucri Tityos aeternas dapes,
> urnasque frustra Danaides plenas gerunt;
> errant furentes impiae Cadmeides,
> terrerque mensas avida Phineas avis.

["Ixion is whirled and racked on a speeding wheel; a huge rock rests on Sisyphus' neck. In mid-river an old man with parched jaws pursues the water; it laps against his chin, and after inspiring his trust, though so often deceived, it vanishes from his mouth; the fruits his hunger cheated. Tityos furnishes the vulture with an eternal feast, and the Danaids carry full pitchers to no avail. The unnatural Cadmeids wander in madness, and gluttonous birds threaten Phineus' table."] *Hercules Furens*, 750-9.

Medea's invocation of the forces of the underworld,

Comprecor vulgus silentum vosque ferales deos
et Chaos caecum atque opacam Ditis umbrosi domum,
Tartari ripis ligatos squalidae Mortis specus.
supplicîs, animae, remissis currite ad thalamos novos:
rota resistat membra torquens, tangat Ixion humum,
Tantalus securus undas hauriat Pirenidas.
gravior uni poena sedeat coniugis socero mei:
lubricus per saxa retro Sisyphum volvat lapis.

[I invoke the thronging silent dead, and you the gods of the grave, and sightless Chaos, and the shadowy home of dark-enshrouded Dis, the cavernous halls of squalid Death, enclosed by Tartarus' streams. Eased of your torments, run, you ghosts, to this strange marriage rite; the wheel that tortures limbs may stop, Ixion touch the ground, and Tantalus may swallow down Pirene's stream in peace. But may heavier punishment rest on one, my husband's marriage relation: over the rocks may the slippery stone roll Sisyphus back downhill.] *Medea*, 740-47.

Phaedra's imagined torture for her crime,

his repositum degravet fessas manus
saxum, seni perennis Aeolio labor;
me ludat amnis ora vicina alluens;
vultur relicto transvolet Tityos ferus
meumque poenae semper accrescat iecur.
et tu mei requiesce Pirithoi pater:
haec incitatis membra turbinibus ferat

nusquam resistens orbe revoluto rota.

["Let the rock be repositioned on *this* neck and burden my weary hands, the ancient Aeolid's perennial task. Let *me* be mocked by the river that flows close to one's lips. Let the savage vulture fly over to me, abandoning Tityos, and let my liver grow constantly for torment. And you take rest, father of my own Pirithous; let *these* limbs be carried in a whirling gyre on the revolving orbit of the never ceasing wheel."] *Phaedra*, 1230-7.

The Ghost of Thyestes' desire to return to the underworld,

ubi ille celeri corpus evinctus rotae
in se refertur, ubi per adversum irritus
redeunte totiens luditur saxo labor,
ubi tondet ales avida fecundum iecur,
et inter undas fervida exustus siti
aquas fugaces ore decepto appetit
poenas daturus caelitum dapibus graves.

["Where the one whose body is bound to a swift wheel circles back on himself; where uphill toil is vain and mocked as the stone repeatedly descends; where the greedy bird crops the ever growing liver; and one parched mid-river with burning thirst seeks the fleeting water with his often cheated lips, doomed to pay dearly for his feast with the gods."] *Agamemnon*, 15-21.

Tantalus' opening speech in Seneca's *Thyestes*,

peius inventum est siti
arente in undis aliquid et peius fame
hiante semper? Sisyphi numquid lapis
gestandus umeris lubricus nostris venit,
aut membra celeri differens cursu rota,
aut poena Tityi, qui specu vasto patens
vulneribus atras pascit effossis aves
et nocte reparans quidquid amisit die
plenum recenti pabulum monstro iacet?

[Has something worse been devised than thirst parched amidst water, worse than hunger that gapes forever? Can it be Sisyphus' stone comes to be carried – so slippery – on my shoulders, or the wheel that racks limbs in its swift rotation? Or the punishment of Tityos, who with his cavernous vast opening feeds dark birds from his quarried wounds – who regrows by night what he lost by day, and lies as a full meal for the fresh monster?] (*Thyestes*, 4-12)

Deianira's request for punishment,

Sisyphia cervix cesset et nostros lapis
impellat umeros; me vagus fugiat latex
meumque fallax unda deludat sitim;
merui manus praebere turninibus tuis,
quaecumque regem Thessalum torques rota;
effodiat avidus hinc vultur fibras

["Let Sisyphus' neck rest, and his stone push down on my shoulders. Let the inconstant water flee, the fraudulent stream delude my thirst. I deserve to surrender my hands to the spinning of the wheel that racks the Thessalian king. Let the greedy vulture on each side root out my guts."] *Hercules Oetaeus*, 942-7.

Her later vision of her ensuing punishments,

> quaenam ista torquens angue vibrato comam
> temporibus atras squalidis pinnas quatit?
> quis iste saxum immane detritis gerit
> iam senior umeris? ecce iam victus lapis
> quaerit relabi. membra quis praebet rotae?
> hic ecce pallens dira Tisiphone stetit,
> causam reposcit. parce verberibus, precor,
> Megaera, parce, sustine Stygias faces:
> scelus est amoris.

["Who is this whose hair writhes with quivering snakes, who flails the black wings at her fetid temples? Why do you pursue me with that blazing torch, dread Megaera? Demanding retribution for Alcides? I shall pay it. Are the underworld's judges already seated, goddess? But look, I see the prison doors open. Who is that man, now old, carrying a huge rock on his grazed shoulders? See, though mastered the boulder is already trying to roll back. Who surrenders his body to the wheel? See here, dread Tisiphone stands white-faced and demands my account of myself. Spare your lashes, I pray, Megaera, spare them, hold off your Stygian torches: my crime is one of love."] *Hercules Oetaeus*, 1003-15.

The Choral ode which envisages the collapse of the entire universe,

haesit non stabilis rota
victo languida turbine;
increvit Tityi iecur,
dum cantus volucres tenet;
et vinci lapis improbus
et vatem potuit sequi.
tunc primum Phrygius senex
undis stantibus immemor
excussit rabidam sitim
nec pomis adhibet manus.

["The restless wheel stayed put, inert, its spinning quelled; Tityos' liver grew as the vultures were held by song; and the shameless stone could at last be mastered and follow the bard [Orpheus. This is the culmination of his prophecy as the chorus sees it]. For the first time then the old Phrygian, heedless of now still waters, shook off his rabid thirst, did not stretch his hands to the fruit."] *Hercules Oetaeus*, 1068-77.

The Ghost of Agrippina's desired torments for the tyrant Nero,

ultrix Erinys impio dignum parat
letum tyranno, verbera et turpem fugam
poenasque quîs et Tantali vincat sitim,
dirum laborem Sisyphi, Tityi alitem

Ixionisque membra rapientem rotam.

["The avenging Erinys is planning a worthy death for that unnatural tyrant: lashes, and shameful flight, and torments to surpass the thirst of Tantalus, Sisyphus' dreadful labour, the vulture of Tityos, and the wheel that spins Ixion's limbs."] *Octavia*, 619-23.

Appendix X: Ladder of Salvation



Fig. X. Twelfth century 'Ladder of Salvation' extending upwards towards heaven and potentially, like Jacob's ladder, down to hell. Demons, vices, and tempters all distract those on their journey upwards from their course. It is also worth noting that the rungs on this ladder are unevenly spaced. This image is taken from Andrew McCall, *The Medieval Underworld.* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1979) 16.

Appendix XI: Hell-Mouth



Fig. XI. Hell-mouth and castle into which, an assortment of devils lead sinners guilty of "Sup[er]bia" (pride), "Inuedua" (invidia / envy), "Ira" (wrath), "Auaricia" (greed) and "Gula" (gluttony) as indicated by the legend. Sloth and Lechery are not represented. Taken from Glynne Wickham, 'Hell-Castle and its Door-Keeper,' in *Aspects of Macbeth: Articles reprinted from Shakespeare Survey*, eds. Kenneth Muir and Philip Edwards (Cambridge: CUP, 1977) 39-45, plate II. Wickham's description reads, "Hell-castle as represented in the Doom, formerly in fresco on the church arch in the Chapel of the Holy Cross, Stratford-upon-Avon".

Appendix XII: Opening Chorus from Studley's 1566 translation of Seneca's *Agamemnon*

Of fortune, that dost fayle the great estate of kynges,
On slippery slydyng seat thou placest loftie thynges
And sytst on tottring sort, where perlys do abounde
Yet never kyngdome calme, not quyet could be founde:
No day to sceptres sure, doth shyne, that they might saye,
To morrow shall we rule, as we have don to daye.
One clod of croked care another bryngeth in,
One hurlye burlye done, another doth begin:

.....

O how doth fortune tosse And tomble in her whele
The staggering states of kynges, that reddye be to rele?
Fayne wold they dreded be, and yet not settled so
When as they feared are, they feare and lyve in woe.
The silent Ladye nyght so sweete to man and beast,
Can not bestow on them her safe and quyet rest:
Slepe that doth overcom and breake the bondes of greefe,
It cannot ease theyr hartes, nor minister releefe:
What castell stronglye buylt, what Bulwark, tower, or towne,
Is not by mischyfes meanes, brought topsye turvey downe?
What ramperd walls are not made weake by wicked war?
From statelye courtes of kynges doth justice flye afar:
In pryncelye pallacies, of honestie the lore,

And wedlock now devoute, is set by lytle store.

The bloodye Bellon those doth haunt with gorye hand,

Whose light and vayne conceit in paynted pomp doth stand.

And those *Erinnys* wood turmoyles with frensyes fitts,

That ever more in proud and hautie howses sitts,

Which fycle fortunes hand in twynklyng of an eye,

From hygh and proud degre dryves down in dust to lye.

(*Agamemnon*, Chorus Act I.)

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