THE FASCINATION OF EVIL:
MENTAL MALPRACTICE IN SHAKESPEAREAN TRAGEDY

by

JEFFREY CALLAWAY STEELE

A thesis submitted to
The University of Birmingham
for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

The Shakespeare Institute
Department of English
School of Humanities
The University of Birmingham
September 2006 Resub: October 2008

ABSTRACT

The first part of this thesis offers a study of the phenomenon of fascination as it was understood in early modern England—specifically in its relation to magic, demonology and witchcraft. It examines fascination's place within cultural traditions, and its operation within perception theory and the psychophysiology of the early modern medical understanding. It also examines some ways in which fascination operates within a theatrical context, and encounters the discourse of early modern "anti-theatricalists." The second part of the thesis is an analysis of the Shakespearean tragic hero's encounter with elements of fascinating bewitchment, and the problems of discerning reality through the mesmeric pull of misperception. The specific subjects of the dramatic analysis are Othello and Macbeth.

For Chrissy,

… without whose continued faith, support, and encouragement, as well as some timely and persistent prodding, I should never have finished this.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to express my thanks to my long-suffering supervisor, John Jowett, for his patience, encouragement and incisive help. I take full responsibility for any defects in this thesis, and deeply appreciate Dr. Jowett's help in correcting the innumerable mistakes that have gone before.

I am also privileged to have had wonderful backing and guidance from family, friends and colleagues during this period, and I am especially and eternally grateful to Lee Steele for her love, faith and support, Dick and Anita Calkins for their faith and hospitality, Dr. Barbara Caughran for her encouragement and proofreading, and Jim Shaw for his material efforts on my behalf. I would also like to thank Dr. Peter Martin for setting me on this path in the first place, which has brought with it more gifts than I could have possibly imagined.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

FASCINATION AND TRAGEDY

This dissertation was inspired by a discussion of what makes great tragedy "great." It does not claim to solve that puzzle, rather this paper is a small attempt to explore one significant aspect of the inquiry: what influences a person of noble principles or virtue to commit acts that he knows are condemned by those same principles, to the extremity of his own ruin? One often hears phrases such as "it was a tragedy that could have been avoided," or, "it was a tragedy waiting to happen." In a modern sense, tragedy can include in its definition the idea that ruination and calamity are avoidable circumstances, if the persons involved act to prevent them with sufficient grace, alacrity, wisdom, and courage. To the ancients, the avoidance or prevention of tragic events (which many times were the will of the gods, or a particular god) was often not possible, and therefore was a defining element in the drama—suffering nobly through catastrophe to show obedience to the divine will. In the early modern period of Europe, there was a new aesthetic that explored the question: how much control do individuals truly have over their own destiny? The ideas of tragic expression in the late-Renaissance drama of England began to evolve to include a sense that an individual, working from personal motivations, could become a primary influence on tragic events.

While the deities (and demons) were still powerful beliefs in the public consciousness, human actions and intentions became more important, not only for the tragic hero on the stage, but for the edification of the audience as well. In Reformation Europe, and especially Calvinism, concepts of "election" and the free grace of God through the following of the

Christ-example refined Protestant doctrine regarding behavior and ethics. As B.A. Gerrish summarizes in "The Place of Calvin in Christian Theology:"

> For Calvin, as (he thinks) for Augustine and Bernard, the condition for moral responsibility is not free choice but voluntary action—doing what, in fact, one wills to do. (295)

The classic notions of fate and divine will were sharing the English stage with concepts studying the force of human will and a greater investigation into the internal negotiations that prompted an individual's choice of action.

The scientific discoveries of the Renaissance were showing the depth and complexity of the material Creation, inspiring individuals to explore the possibilities of such miracles as perpetual motion, aviation, and combustion technology. At the same time, other experimenters were investigating the areas of alchemy, astrology, physiology and even the beginnings of psychology. Mankind was seeking power in increasingly complex ways, to combat ignorance and improve the quality of lifestyles. In Elizabethan England, one of the most interesting developments of the early modern period was taking shape in the new Protestant configuration of the church. This change in the state religion, effectively consolidating the powers of church and government in the English throne and the attendant restructuring of both ecumenical and political powers did not come easily—it continued through and past Shakespeare's lifetime. It was, by its very mandate, unsettling to the previous ways of religion and society and continued to focus thought upon the many themes within the conflict of order versus chaos. It also sought to cast its moray over the theatre, but was met with some resistance, some subversive arguments and in some cases, like *Macbeth* and *Othello*, a rich and multi-faceted study on the nature of volition and the presence of evil.

The early Tudor dynasty might have overseen a period of the restoration of domestic harmony after the tempestuous contention between the houses of York and Lancaster and the

upheavals of the fifteenth century. But Henry VIII's active participation in the Reformation movement's break with Rome, by creating a separate English Christian church, put order and stability under pressure once again. Through Edward VI's short reign, Queen Mary's unsuccessful attempt at a Catholic counter-reformation, and the early part of Elizabeth's succession to the throne, domestic harmony was anything but certain. The strife born of Catholic vs. Protestant beliefs, rapid commercial expansion's influence on individual class and status concepts, and the questions of the rights and responsibilities of rulership, were all societal contentions that Shakespeare was born into and that found expression in his drama. The context of the contentions is succinctly described by Robert Watson in "Tragedies of Revenge and Ambition:"

> Tragic contradictions were everywhere in Shakespeare's London, provoking exalted ambitions and then taking revenge on those who pursued such ambitions. Protestant theology—the most obviously pressing cultural innovation—at once told Christians to aspire to direct communication with God, and told them to despair of ever knowing anything about Him; told them to focus obsessively on their prospects for eternal salvation, and to recognize that those prospects were beyond their power to control or even comprehend; to seek desperately, and yet to mistrust utterly, an inner conviction of divine favour. The terrifying instability of the new urban capitalist economic system—whose essence was to encourage but also punish ambition—was matched by the terrifying instability of this new belief system, which left many true believers vacillating wildly between a faith that God's love would exalt them beyond all comprehension, and a fear that God's just anger at such presumptuous sinners would damn them beyond any redemption. (164)

There is little hard evidence to support assertions as to what Shakespeare specifically believed, though he offered conspicuous evidence that he was interested in presenting eloquently considered views of the profound questions of his day through his art. This dissertation is an attempt to illuminate a particular phenomenon which influences the perception of some of these questions. It shows its features in, amongst other of his plays, *Othello* and *Macbeth*, centering upon themes such as the problem of perception, threats to an established order and some of the powerfully seductive influences that precipitate the fall of a

tragic protagonist. In the Elizabethan and the Jacobean age's microcosm of the stage, these plays reflect the catastrophic consequences of engendering the chaos of misguided personal will—not only upon the individual, but also upon his place and influence within the state.

In choosing the title "The Fascination of Evil," I am attempting to arrange the discussion around those "bewitching" elements of the dramatic scenarios that invite the characters to exchange their understanding of reality for a belief in appearances, initiating a causal train of events that enable chaotic elements to dominate thought. In the challenges of knowing what is true, there seems to be a distinct phenomenon at work that is largely mental in its origin and operation and that has a binding power over the victim's will, which is all but unshakeable until his ruin has been effected. The compounding tragedy of this influence is that the victims in these examples are people of great power and prestige: a noble Moor who is the Commander-in-Chief of the Venetian army and the son-in-law to a Senator, and a noble Thane of Scotland who is a hero of the realm and a possible successor to the throne. When men of this level of greatness fall, they bring down whole governments with them. They, like Shakespeare, Elizabeth I, and James I, live in volatile times; yet the playwright gives us more access to the causal phenomena than we might perceive in our everyday existence. In the plays we see the heroes wrestle with the challenges of maintaining the lines of personal virtue against the assaults of vice and temptation. This study is an examination of the mesmeric influence of those assaults from temptation, or the fascination of "evil" possibilities presented to the tragic hero.

The objective is not so much to adhere strictly to the forms of a given critical perspective, though by its nature this study is phenomenological in its essence, but instead to use points of view that create a kind of dialogue with the early modern beliefs and conventions examined herein. The ongoing critical study of what Gail Kern Paster describes

as early modern "psychophysiology" (*Humoring the Body*, 12) is still uncovering new elements of the mind / body concept of the period and its role in defining "self" and awareness of "inwardness." In addition, authors such as Stuart Clark explore several aspects of early modern occult beliefs and the expanded understanding of this period resulting from a re-evaluation of their impact. His comprehensive *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe*, presents the beliefs of witchcraft and demonology both as influences upon individuals and "to make them more intelligible in themselves…to shed light on the larger intellectual histories to which they belonged" (ix). Nathan Johnstone's recent book *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England* offers some very valuable insights into Protestant concepts of personal conduct and the struggle with the phenomenon of inner temptations. Here too, the discussion of forces of mental influence continues the critical dialogue of early modern forms of bewitchment. These are but a few of the authors currently exploring notions of early modern inwardness and there are others who contribute to the development of the ideas that invite discussion about an issue such as fascination or mesmeric suggestion.

This is currently a rich field in which to work, yet to my knowledge there is little work being done on the phenomenon of fascination, and nothing specifically applying it to Shakespearean drama. Exploring the background for something like mental malpractice has been, to employ an appropriate synonym, "overlooked" to a large extent. In light of this fact, my attempt will be to examine the essence of the phenomenon both in the early modern concept and in its development beyond its classical associations with "the evil eye." The first section of the thesis will undertake this task while the second section focuses on the phenomenon's presence and influence within the causal events of *Macbeth* and *Othello*. In citing texts, the main intent has been to find passages from original or facsimile editions of the

selected works. With regard to biblical citations, the main source is the 1560 edition of the Geneva Bible which was popular enough to posit that Shakespeare may have formed some of his understanding of the bible from that version. This is not to say that he turned exclusively to the Geneva for study; but as a source text, it provides excellent support for this thesis. With regard to citations from Shakespeare, the *Oxford Complete Works: Original Spelling Edition* is the main source. An examination of various folio and quarto versions of *Othello* and *Macbeth* finds that for the purposes of this argument, the lines recorded in the Original Spelling edition provide both an inspiring source for general textual interpretation and an elegant visual consanguinity with texts from Shakespeare's era—especially the Geneva Bible. As editors Stanley Wells, Gary Taylor, John Jowett and William Montgomery assert:

> Shakespeare's power over generations later than his own has been transmitted in part by artists who have drawn on, interpreted, and restructured his texts as others have drawn on the myths of antiquity; but it is the texts as they were originally performed that are the sources of his power, and that we attempt here to present with as much fidelity to his intentions as the circumstances in which they have been preserved will allow. (xiii)

One problem to be surmounted in the first section involves the early modern scepticism of witchcraft's efficacy in the late sixteenth century. For a phenomenon such as fascination—"bewitchment"—to have an influence, it must by necessity have potency. Yet witchcraft sceptics such as Reginald Scot largely denied the power of occult devices, and such scepticism has proven itself to be the fact as modern science has advanced. From whence, then, did such bewitching phenomena obtain their power? I propose to trace a causal line of "mind into matter" using Renaissance understandings of the mind / body relationship and sense theory, supported by a brief application of perception theory and susceptibility and suggestion theory. I shall present a representative model of an early-modern-style process whereby "maleficium," mentally entertained or directed, can produce an effect upon a material situation by its subsequent governance of human action.

The model should be useful as a tool in the analysis of the second section. Though different groups during Shakespeare's day might have argued for agency in the application of the power of something like fascination, this study will concentrate mainly on the mechanics and context of the phenomenon. Diabolical agency, revenge theory and other important elements within the examination of this period and of the culture, must be left to future writings in order to adhere to the spatial limitations governing this particular study. The primary focus here is the illumination of the phenomenon and how it might have been perceived in a dramatic context.

The aggressively mental elements of the attacks upon the tragic hero's psyche seem readily apparent to me in the selected dramas. When examined in light of the early modern understanding of the phenomenon's operation and the additional weight of the cultural traditions surrounding demonology and Christian practice, a deeper understanding and a finer appreciation of the scope of Shakespeare's interrogations becomes very clear. Shakespeare may or may not have intended it, but the power of his tragic constructs are made all the more devastating when the audience perceives that there is a possible and readily available means of salvation at hand for the hero. To watch as a great one falls because his thought is bound, fixed to an unshakeable and subtly introduced misperception or crafted ambiguity of truth is certainly a blatant overtone of Shakespearean tragedy, if it is not one of its central elements.

PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE

ORDER VS. CHAOS AND FASCINATION DEFINED

Order vs. Chaos

When Elizabeth Tudor ascended to the throne of England in 1558, she inherited a chaotic mix of religious upheaval, cultural transformations, and political uncertainty. From the manuscripts and publications of the sixteenth century, it is apparent that, while the thinking of medieval moral treatises carried over into the Elizabethan period, writers and scientists like Niccolo Machiavelli and Copernicus added new dimension and alternatives to the accepted order. Like the medieval period, the early modern period was very preoccupied with the tension between order and chaos.

Chaos, in the Greek creation myths, was the primordial void from which the earth was formed and represented unrestricted potential and randomness—a lack of unity that surrounded everything in material creation: the earth, the seas and the heavens. Before monotheism and its concept of the omnipresence of God, chaos was seen as a force that massed outside the created world ready to push through any available opening. In a more figurative aspect, it coincided with daily human activity, entering in whenever reason and virtue lacked sufficient strength to keep it out. In an early modern Christian context, it found agency in the idea of the Devil, where chaos was not a simple absence of God's presence—a vacuum with no influence—it was a counterforce to God's goodness, providing a foil to deific sovereignty and a cosmic tension in which man and Nature existed.

In Arthur Golding's 1567 translation of the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid describes the disordered mass out of which the "Creator" was later to separate land, sky and sea:

> Before the Sea and Land were made, and Heaven that all doth hide,
> In all the worlde one onely face of nature did abide,
> Which Chaos hight, a huge rude heape, and nothing else but even
> A heavie lump and clottred clod of seedes togither driven
> Of things at strife among themselves for want of order due.
>
> No kinde of thing had proper shape, but ech confounded other.
> For in one self same bodie strove the hote and colde togither,
> The moyst with drie, the soft with hard, the light with things of weight.
> This strife did God and Nature breake, and set in order streight.
> The earth from heaven, the sea from earth he parted orderly,
> And from the thicke and foggie ayre, he tooke the lightsome skie,
> Which when he once unfolded had, and severed from the blinde
> And clodded heape, He setting ech from other did them binde
> In endlesse freendship too agree. (21)

Many of the dominant philosophical and religious postulates of the Elizabethan age were drawn from ancient Greek and Roman philosophers and from the collection of Jewish and Christian writings gathered in the Bible. The core beliefs of the Protestant English church included the idea that man and the animal kingdom existed in an environment called Nature, which was a direct result of a divine creation event. John (Jean) Calvin introduces a conveniently apt metaphor when he describes the biblical Creation in his 1559 *Institutes of the Christian Religion*:

> Meanwhile, being placed in this most beautiful theatre, let us not decline to take a pious delight in the clear and manifest works of God. For, as we have elsewhere observed, though not the chief, it is, in point of order, the first evidence of faith, to remember to which side soever we turn, that all which meets the eye is the work of God, and at the same time to meditate with pious care on the end which God had in view in creating it.
>
> …God, by the power of his Word and his Spirit, created the heavens and the earth out of nothing; that thereafter he produced things inanimate and animate of every kind, arranging an innumerable variety of objects in admirable order, giving each kind its proper nature, office, place, and station; at the same time, as all things were liable to corruption, providing for the perpetuation of each single species… (156)

In the ancient pagan model this creation event was generated out of a state of chaos (which, interestingly, had primacy) through an act of divine will. The world appeared as an ordered whole, as the *Metamorphoses* goes on to describe it:

> Now when he in this foresaid wise (what God so ere he was)
> Had broke and into members put this rude confused masse:
> Then first bicause in every part, the earth should equall bee,
> He made it like a mighty ball, in compasse as we see. (21) (I, 33-36)

In the sixteenth century, England was wracked with dissent and turmoil, a legacy of the impact of the Reformation. The stability and prosperity of English society relied heavily upon the population's adherence to the order of the established social hierarchy, the laws of the land, the laws of God (as interpreted by the Church of England), and the recognition that this order (from the Creation event to the present era) was supported by divine right. However, the upheavals that preceded Elizabeth's succession made it difficult to maintain a national harmony and hegemony. In "Religion and Shakespearean Tragedy," Huston Diehl lists some of the challenges that English society faced in the following passage:

> Although the doctrinal controversies debated by theologians, the biblical scholarship produced by reform-minded humanists, and the political struggles waged between the English monarchs and the Pope were far removed from most people's daily lives, the Reformation profoundly altered the English people's devotional and ritual practices, putting an end to Roman Catholic traditions that had endured for more than a thousand years. It changed how they worshipped their God, how they confessed their sins, how they buried their dead, how they celebrated their holy days (holidays), how they practised charity, how they constructed their relationships to their families and communities, how they organized their days and ritual year, how they viewed the physical world, and how they understood their place in the cosmos. (87)

In 1559, Elizabeth signed the *Act of Uniformity* and also published the first of a series of "Injunctions" to encourage both uniformity and conformity to her own personal brand of order. Elizabeth was right to be concerned about the volatile state of her nation and the uncertain state of her sovereignty. According to the Papal Bull issued in 1570, she was not only formally excommunicated from the Catholic Church, but as Kate Aughterson records the

documentation from the Holy See in *The English Renaissance*, she was declared "a heretic and favourer of heretics" (37). In seeking to exert its authority in the religious and political power struggles of sixteenth-century Europe, the Vatican went even further in the following denunciations of Elizabeth:

> 4. And moreover [we declare] her to be deprived of her pretended title to the aforesaid crown and of all lordship, dignity and privilege whatsoever.
> 5. And also [declare] the nobles, subjects and people of the said realm, and all others who have in any way sworn oaths to her, to be forever absolved from such an oath and from any duty arising from lordship, fealty and obedience; and we do, by authority of these presents, so absolve them and so deprive the same Elizabeth of her pretended title to the crown and all other the abovesaid matters. (qtd. in Aughterson, 37)

In spite of the tribulations and difficulties, however, her reign was spectacularly successful in most respects and she put her stamp on an age that saw the blossoming of a national poetic art form in one of the most remarkable and fertile periods in human history.

Elizabeth's *Injunctions Given by the Queen's Majesty* (1559) were an attempt to bind her subjects to a paradigm that was at once traditionally Christian, but also reconstituted in the newly Protestant forms. With Anglican Christianity at its center, English society was tethered and accountable to the moral code of the Bible—as interpreted by the Church of England. Of particular note in the *Injunctions* are:

> Item, that no man shall wilfully and obstinately defend or maintain any heresies, errors, or false doctrine contrary to the faith of Christ and his Holy Scripture.
> Item, that no person shall use charms, sorceries, enchantments, witchcraft, soothsaying, or any such like devilish device, nor shall resort at any time to the same for counsel or help…
> Item, that no man shall talk or reason of the holy scriptures rashly or contentiously, or maintain any false doctrine or error, but shall commune of the same when occasion is given reverently, humbly and in the fear of God, for his comfort and better understanding. (qtd. in Aughterson 5)

This new order from Elizabeth placed an onus on English subjects that was essentially the same onus placed upon the adherents of St. Paul's early church establishments: to demonstrate reason over passion, knowledge over supposition, and righteousness over

iniquity. These admonitions echoed the mission of Paul as Elizabeth advanced her cause to maintain the faith of a predecessor, her father, during a time when adherents to the new church were faced with manifold temptations either to return to the old ways, or to abandon them entirely to follow the ways of the flesh.

The second item in this passage from the *Injunctions* brings to light an interesting phenomenon of early modern society: the perception that there existed "devilish devices" that could be resorted to for "counsel or help." This indicated, perhaps, that there were still apparent difficulties in marshalling individuals to follow the admonitions of basic Christian doctrine: to rely on divine guidance rather than personal will and occult practices. The society over which Elizabeth began her reign must have resembled, in some respects, that primordial chaos out of which she was impelled to create, or rather maintain, a cohesive kingdom bound, as Ovid would say, "In endlesse freendship to agree" (21). Her methods attempted sweeping and pervasive control as Kate Aughterson notes in her introduction to *The English Renaissance*:

> This document is a comprehensive and fascinating social and political text: in a short space it encompasses, delineates and sets up ways of controlling all social, religious, political, intellectual and educational life…*The Injunctions* are therefore one of the most central texts of the period: marking, as they do, the birth of the modern State…(1)

If "devices" such as witchcraft and sorcery were deemed seditious and unrighteous in Elizabeth's Christian state (enough of a threat to warrant a royal injunction), and if such phenomena truly possessed a power that could, say, render monarchs, peers and knights helpless and subservient to an agency that could use their bodies, minds or offices to serve the cause of iniquity, it would be a force to be feared as much as high treason or a direct invasion.

Certain elements of the new church, such as the Puritans, were vehemently opposed to anything that would operate in violation of scriptural authority. The absolute centrism of

scriptural authority to the Puritan ethic (as well as to Anglican Conformism) helped to reinforce a marked intolerance towards the support of superstitious practices amongst those who embraced them yet still considered themselves "faithful." Under a general movement towards an orthodoxy that worked to separate itself from Catholic doctrine, there was special emphasis placed not only upon the Mosaic Law and the Gospels, but upon the Pauline writings as well. John S. Coolidge notes, in *The Pauline Renaissance in England* that, "conversion to faith in Christ takes the form of the reapprehension of the scriptures in their vital Pauline unity" (143), but that sometimes the resultant understanding of faith "is bound up with scripture in a way that Paul himself could never have foreseen, even though it evolves out of his work" (143).

Though the Puritans were more extreme in their practices than the general populace, it is safe to say that the exempla of Paul, especially that which is found in his Epistle to the Romans, formed a fundamental platform of the evolving sense of morality. Wulfert de Greef claims, in "Calvin's Writings," that "the Pauline model remains an important principle for the way in which Calvin orders his material" (44). As such, those seeking a higher sense of order—or a more prominent status within the moral dialogues—in Elizabethan society did not need to go much further than the books of the Bible for their justifications in teaching, preaching and legislating against what were considered to be chaos-inducing magical or superstitious practices.

Occult practice seems to be a widespread, yet misunderstood element of early modern society. Books, sermons, pamphlets and plays described the different classifications of these practices, which were categorized anywhere from "natural philosophy" to "witchcraft." Though many of the practices might be familiar by name to individuals in the Renaissance, few could speak with expertise as to how they operated. Perhaps this was due largely to the

fact that occult practices, which departed from what we now recognize as scientific processes, did not actually work. Or if they seemed to have an effect, it was due more to misplaced belief, the operations of outright fraud, or other more psychological causes. These psychological effects, what an early modern thinker might term "imaginings," are of special interest to a study of mental phenomena that were anciently believed to captivate a person's will, or do damage to his property and person. Outside of the spells, incantations and charms of "orthodox" witchcraft there existed under the names of "bewitchment" and "fascination," a type of purely mental malpractice. Though bewitchment signified a variety of superstitious elements and magical practices, fascination described a largely mental and mesmeric influence against another person or their property. In 1584, John Veron's *Dictionary in Latin and English* glossed the term "fascinatum" as: "to bewitch." At that time the two terms were virtually synonymous, though fascination was more commonly a word that had associations with the ancient superstition of the "evil eye," and hence implied a more non-corporeal type of malicious subversion than the more tangible or material concepts of bewitchment. Even today, the second edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* shows the synonymy of the two terms while detailing the aggressive mental nature of fascination's perceived power:

> **bewitch**
>
> 1. *trans*. To affect (generally injuriously) by witchcraft or magic. Sometimes with complemental phrase defining the result.
> 2. *fig*. To influence in a way similar to witchcraft; to fascinate, charm, enchant. Formerly often in a bad sense; but now generally said of pleasing influences.
>
> **bewitchment**
>
> 1. The fact or power of bewitching; 'fascination, power of charming.' J.
>
> **bewitched**, *ppl. a*.
>
> 1. Influenced by witchcraft; under, or having, magical influence.
> 2. *fig*. Under a fascination; fascinated.

fascinate, *v*.

1. *trans*. To affect by witchcraft or magic; to bewitch, enchant, lay under a spell. *Obs*.
2. **a**. To cast a spell over (a person, animal, etc.) by a look; said esp. of serpents. **b**. In later use disconnected from the notion of witchcraft: To deprive of the power of escape or resistance, as serpents are said to do through the terror produced by their look or merely by their perceived presence.
3. *fig*. **a**. To enslave (the faculties), the judgment of (a person) (*obs.*). **b**. To attract and retain the attention of (a person) by an irresistible influence.

Whatever terminology might be used, the "fascination," or binding power of evil was thought to be one of the most "devilish devices" that might assail the true English Christian. As will be shown later, the belief in the power of evil influence predated and postdated Shakespeare's society. Although the method of its operation may not have been clearly understood in the early modern period, what was of great concern was the malice intended towards the victim and any subsequent damaging effects.

In the late Elizabethan/early Jacobean period a shift in the definitions of fascination began to take place. While Shakespeare was alive, the understanding of the term generally remained in the realm of magic and mysterious occult phenomena, but it gradually came to be known as a completely mental action of the senses and the imagination. Contemporary scepticism began to doubt any material causation within the phenomenon, yet it acknowleged some physical effects. Once the material cause began to be discounted, a newer focus on the *belief* in the malignant power of evil forces gave fascination its only influence, as it seemed to have little intrinsic force outside of belief. Yet tangible effects resulted from mere belief, and from enthralled perception. Descartes's famous "cogito ergo sum" might be extended to include the idea that if thinking is a signifier of existence, then it is possible to consider that thoughts connote the separate "realities" of human experience.

Perception, while it might not obtain primacy in Cartesian existentialism, is fundamental to the concept of personal identity and the individual's relationship to his world.

Any phenomenon or event, until it is seen in its true light—seen for what it actually is, rather than what it is believed to be—can appear distorted in the experience of the perceiver and thereby distort the sense of identity, or "self." A fixation upon an illusory context, a suggested reality artificially imposed upon the perceptive faculties, subsequently changes the individual's relationship to his world. The less harmful effects of some of these distortions can provide plots for the laughing comedies of the public theatres. The larger, more devastating consequences of misperception provide the foundations of tragedy.

Fascination as a specific term appears in various court documents, religious treatises and notably in Sir Francis Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*. It is also found in Veron's *Dictionary of Latin and English*, Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, Ben Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour*, continuing a discussion of the phenomenon that has apparently been a part of the human belief system throughout the ages. St. Paul uses the Greek verb for bewitchment, *baskaino*, in his letter to the churches of Galatia. *Baskaino* also denotes the specific phenomenon recognized as "the evil eye." In the Geneva Bible, Paul asks the following question:

> O Foolish Galatia[n]s, who hathe bewitched you that ye shulde not obey the trueth, to whome Iesus Christ before was described in your sight, & among you crucified? (Gal. 3:1)

In the Vulgate Bible, the phrasing is as follows—translating the Greek verb into the Latin "fascinavit:" "O insensati Galatae, quis uos fascinauit, ante quorum oculos Iesus Christus praescriptus est, crucifixus?" (Gal. 3:1).

Frederick Elworthy, in *The Evil Eye*, regards the use of this word as pointed and intentional when he considers Paul's specific choice of terms:

> The imputation by St. Paul, that the foolish Galatians had been spellbound, meant that some evil eye had "overlooked" them and worked in them a blighting influence. It was an apt allusion to the then, and still, universally prevalent belief in that power of

> "dread fascination" which the writer of the Epistle so well knew they would comprehend, and he therefore used it as a striking metaphor. (5)

This view is supported with colloquial flair by *The Interpreter's Bible* as it explains:

> In the papyri the verb ἐβάσκαυευ, "slander," "envy," "bewitch," is employed in manipulating charms against "the evil eye." Paul uses it figuratively, meaning "pervert," "confuse," "lead astray," as if man's perennial quest for cheap and easy salvation were not sufficient to victimize the Galatians without the aid of a Pied Piper of Hamelin! (vol. 10, 496)

> To break the enchantment of the Galatians, Paul reminded them of God's way of bestowing his Spirit, and of their own deep joy when they first heard the gospel… Paul's gospel still makes sense. The central matter is not the attainment of a catalogue of virtues or skills. The question of destiny is: To whom am I attached? Beyond all else, a man's attitude toward the Cross answers that question. Men's eyes are bewitched when they are removed from that center. The Cross is therefore the point of spiritual and social hope. (vol. 10, 497)

Paul emphasizes this last point in chapter three, verse three when he asks, in this passage from the Bishop Bible (1595): "Are ye such fooles, that after yee haue begun in the spirit, yee would nowe ende in the flesh?" (Gal. 3:3).

Fascinating powers are seen by Paul to have the capacity to undermine the individual and the state by diverting thought from the operation of reason and judgment and by permitting thought and action to be driven by destructive passions and propensities. These seductive influences are at odds with, as Calvin says, the "work of God, and … the end which God had in view in creating it" (156). In a further observation on the Pauline epistle, J. Louis Martyn describes a motive behind Paul's choice of terms. In doing so, Martyn touches one of the main points of concern for Elizabeth's authority—the leading of a people astray from organized (and state controlled) religion, to unregulated superstition. In his commentary on the Galatian epistle in *The Anchor Bible*, Martyn asserts that Paul,

> …believes that in order fully to identify the [Galatian] Teachers' seductive wiles he must reach into the vocabulary of magic, for these people are not only frightening the Galatians; they are also leading them astray by casting a spell over them. Given the Gentile aversion to circumcision, the Teachers must indeed have been virtual

> magicians to have made the Galatians long to come under the Law. With his rhetorical question Paul thus suggests that by listening appreciatively to the Teachers' gospel, the Galatians are in fact leaving the realm of faith for that of superstition. (282-283)

In Elizabethan England, the church manifested a very strong desire to keep religion at the center of the affections—especially during the emergence of a new secular performance aesthetic which itself had enormous power to shape the perceptions of the culture. In Anthony Munday's *Retrait from Plaies* (1580), the fascinating power of the public theatre and its poets and players is decried, attesting to the profound potential of its influence:

> Manie haue ben intangled with the webs of these Spiders, who would gladlie haue bene at libertie when they could not. The webs are so subtillie spun, that there is no man that is once within them, that can auoide them without danger. None can come within those snares that maie escape vntaken, be she maide, matrone, or whatsoeuer; such force haue their inchantements of pleasure to drawe the affections of the mind. (96-97)

While Elizabeth and her government pursued censorial control over the theatres to hedge their influence, she simultaneously employed the nascent magic of theatre to enhance the authority and eminence of her administration. Stephen Greenblatt elaborates on Elizabeth's understanding of the usefulness of the fascinating elements of monarchial theatrics in *Shakespearean Negotiations* by noting that Elizabeth was,

> …a ruler without a standing army, without a highly developed bureaucracy, without an extensive police force, a ruler whose power is constituted in theatrical celebrations of royal glory and theatrical violence visited upon the enemies of that glory… Elizabethan power,…depends upon its privileged visibility. As in a theater, the audience must be powerfully engaged by this visible presence and at the same time held at a respectful distance from it. "We princes," Elizabeth told a deputation of Lords and Commons in 1586, "are set on stages in the sight and view of all the world." (64) (Greenblatt cites Elizabeth from J.E. Neale's *Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments, 1584-1601*. 2 vols. (London: Cape, 1965), 2: 119.)

Fascination is only a useful tool when it becomes a powerful state of thought. The enthralling qualities, the "inchantements of pleasure to drawe the affections of the mind" (*Retrait from Plaies* 97), that fix the individual's thought upon certain objects or endeavors

are not good or evil in themselves; they are merely the phenomena of a powerfully binding influence. For example, something like glue is, in itself, not an evil nor a good substance; it is a fixative that performs the function of adhesion. Positive or negative associations and perceptions stem more from the intent and results of the application of that adhesion. In serving causes like Elizabeth's majesty and political security, a benign intent behind the fascinating influence can be a decided asset, but the danger of fascinating bewitchment lies in its use as an aggressive, "devilish device" in an attempt to fix thought upon counterfeits of truth. St. Paul points out, in the 1560 version of the Geneva Bible, how constant the struggle with sinful suggestion and temptation can be in the Epistle to the Church at Rome:

> For I knowe, that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to wil is present with me: but I finde no meanes to performe that which is good.
>
> For I do not the good thing, which I wolde, (n) but the euil, which I wolde not, that do I.
> (Rom. 7:18,19)

The marginal note in the above passage, "n," adds: "The flesh stayeth euen ye moste perfect to runne forwarde as the spirit wisheth." Also in Romans is found Paul's warning against false teachers, like those in Galatia, who for various personal reasons are liable to lead the faithful away from righteousness:

> Now I beseech you brethren, marke them diligently which cause diuision and offences, contrarie to the doctrine which ye haue learned, and auoide them.
>
> For they that are suche, serue not the Lord Iesus Christ, but their owne (d) bellies, and with (e) faire speache & flattering deceiue the hearts of the simple.
>
> For your obedie[n]ce is come abrode amo[n]g all: I am glad therefore of you: but yet I wolde haue you wise, vnto that which is good, and simple concerning euil.
> (Rom. 16: 17-19)

The marginal notes again further the illumination of the text by observing:

> (d) These be markes to knowe the false Apostles by.
> (e) The worde signifieth him that promiseth muche & performeth nothing, who seemeth also to speake for thy profite, but doeth nothing lesse. (Ibid.)

Shakespeare provides Elizabethan and Jacobean drama with examples of just this kind of struggle. The daily effort to choose the good and avoid the evil is made that much harder when an individual's reasoning faculties and sense of piety or honor are conspired against by forces that would "bewitch…that ye shulde not obey the trueth" (Gal. 3:1).

In the time of Elizabeth it might be argued that the struggle for righteousness was no less difficult than it was in Paul's era. In an age where science and philosophy were steadily eradicating long-held misconceptions about man and the universe, the dramatic poets of the English stage were taking up contemporary issues in a decidedly captivating secular style in London's professional theatres. Here moral questions and aspects of order, chaos, evil and virtue could be viscerally represented and considered in a manner more compelling, perhaps, than pulpit or pamphlet. The physical representation and exploration of the consequences of defying order—of indulging "sinful" behaviors, treason, insurrection, seduction—were all graphically imprinted on the imaginations of the theatre goers, for good or ill. In Elizabeth's situation, it was prudent to assert control over the emerging English drama, because it had the potential to be a popular and motivating influence. From the point of view of any government, seductive forces, controlling forces that could possibly lead to sedition and insurrection, would demand close supervision to neutralize any potential threat.

A state-controlled theatre, essentially bound to an Anglican ethic, would necessarily, as Greenblatt says, enter into complex negotiations within its society in the course of doing business:

> Artists in a time of censorship and repression had ample reason to claim that they had taken nothing from the world they represented, that they had never dreamed of violating the distance demanded by their superiors, that their representations only reflected faithfully the world's own form…In some exchanges the object or practice mimed onstage seems relatively untouched by the representation; in others, the object or practice is intensified,…The mistake is to imagine that there is a single, fixed, mode of exchange; in reality, there are many modes, their character is determined historically, and they are continually renegotiated. (8)

One of the interesting negotiations observed in this study is Shakespeare's representation of corruption and self-justification expressed in the tragedies, and viewed through the influence of aggressive mental suggestion. Though he worked within a censorial policy that was strict in its exclusions, there seemed to be room to write on a variety of levels. Greenblatt remarks further on the privileges of the early modern playhouse, in which

> …virtually everything represented on the stage was at least potentially dangerous and hence could be scrutinized and censored. The Elizabethan theater could, within limits, represent the sacred as well as the profane, contemporary as well as ancient times, stories set in England as well as those set in distant lands. Allusions to the reigning monarch, and even to highly controversial issues in the reign, were not necessarily forbidden (though the company had to tread cautiously);…The theater is marked off from the "outside world" and licensed to operate as a distinct domain, but its boundaries are remarkably permeable. (19)

Shakespeare took advantage of this privileged "license," and avoiding the prison terms and punishments that some of his fellow poets suffered, managed to present consistently dramatic arguments that were both emotionally moving and acceptable to the established authority, yet in many ways were permeated with ambiguously intriguing elements. In the tragedies selected for this study, one particular type of subversive influence will be examined: mental malpractice through the fascination of aggressive and malicious suggestion. The overall intent of the investigation is to pursue the essence of the Pauline question: who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth?

Othello and *Macbeth* show us that truth is a difficult thing to perceive fully. These plays show the elusive nature of the pursuit—encumbered by the convictions and fixations of each tragic hero. Their understanding of reality depends heavily upon their perception of events and their subsequent interpretation, balanced against what they think they already know and what they are being led to believe. Hamlet's remark to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, "there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so," (7.1180-81)

highlights the difficulty of discerning the meaning of an event because a shift in perception can change the evaluation of the significance of that event. It also serves as a reminder that despite the best efforts of some writers to frame issues in black/white and good/evil dichotomies, much of what we know of the early modern period benefits from the evolution of thought on certain events and contemporary theories. In pursuing this topic, I do not propose to offer the definitive interpretation of the phenomenon of fascination, but rather to identify it as a belief of Shakespeare's era and to examine its presence as one of the many themes in both *Macbeth* and *Othello*.

In support of that intent, the structure of this study will begin by exploring what "fascination" might have meant to Shakespeare's contemporaries and some of the beliefs attendant upon it. Though the phenomenon was deemed an offence serious enough to bring an alleged practitioner of it to trial, early modern scepticism towards it cast some doubt as to how it was able to achieve its perceived effects. By illustrating some contemporary understandings of psychophysiology, I shall offer a theoretical mechanical model of how an aggressive mental suggestion might translate into a physical manifestation. The phenomenon also invites further exploration once it is realized that bewitchment/fascination is the progenitor of the later concepts of mesmerism and hypnotism. To that end, it seems reasonable to briefly explore correlative ideas from the phenomenology of perception theory and suggestion theory. While these may be more modern developments, they do in fact shed light on the body of related concepts of fascination entertained in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

The scientific schematic does not provide the complete picture, however, and the cultural elements and influences of early modern demonology must be considered as well. The devil and his agents were not only major players in the cultural pageant of early modern

England, they were popular characters upon the professional stages. The link between demonology and fascination was the basis of societal and legal measures taken to ward off perceived chaotic incursions into the established order, and it provides a convenient segue to the interpretive analyses of the selected Shakespearean tragedies discussed in section two. In this section the aesthetic manifestations of the phenomenon will be delineated and discussed from textual evidence in the plays, and in some cases it will examine possible effects that the staging of certain scenes might produce.

Fascination Defined

The term "fascination," in today's definition, is a much milder word than it was in Shakespeare's time. We use this term with frequency, usually employing it to describe a state of high interest or intrigue. Similarly, words like "bewitching," "captivating," and "enthralling," have taken on this connotation of "intense interest," and lost some of the weight of their old properties of "spellbinding," "taking captive," and "enslaving." These terms suggested much darker meanings for the Elizabethans. While fascination in itself was not a methodological genre of witchcraft, as demon summoning, divination and spell casting were believed to be, it was grouped within this domain because it was largely seen to be occult, inexplicable and fearsome. Until it was conceived to be a purely mental phenomenon in the realm of mesmerism and suggestive influences upon the imagination, it was closely associated with the superstition of the "evil eye," or the state of being "overlooked." In sixteenth-century England, "fascination" was not a term that was as widely employed as "bewitchment," but as an illustration of a focused kind of mental "magic" it was a more specific descriptive term. Bewitchment could include material elements in its processes—potions, poisons or sympathetic magical items. Fascination almost always implied a mentally or "spiritually" produced form of influence. The power of fascination was not the exclusive

art of witches, devils and demons; however, those who encountered it usually did so via an event or a person that evoked some sort of connection with otherworldly forces.

Recalling one of the supporting items in the *OED* definition focuses attention not so much on agency, but upon the effect of fascination:

> **2.a**. To cast a spell over (a person, animal, etc.) by a look; said esp. of serpents. **b.** In later use disconnected from the notion of witchcraft: To deprive of the power of escape or resistance, as serpents are said to do through the terror produced by their look or merely by their perceived presence. **3.a.** To enslave (the faculties), the judgment of (a person) (obs.). **b.** To attract and retain the attention of (a person) by an irresistible influence. (741)

This concept of enthrallment seems to be at the center of early attempts to define the source of its power. In the eighteenth century, Dr. Samuel Johnson described the attributes of the phenomenon in his 1755 *A Dictionary of the English Language* as follows:

> To FASCINATE. *v.a*. [*fascino*, Latin.] To bewitch; to enchant; to influence in some wicked and secret manner.
>
> There be none of the affections which have been noted to *fascinate* or bewitch, but love and envy. *Bacon, Essay 9.*
>
> Such a *fascinating* sin this is, as allows men no liberty of consideration. *Decay of Piety*.

> FASCINATION. *n.s*. [from *fascinate*.] The power or act of bewitching; enchantment; unseen inexplicable influence.
>
> He had such a crafty and bewitching fashion, both to move pity and to induce belief, as was like a kind of *fascination* and enchantment to those that saw him or heard him. *Bacon*.
>
> The Turks hang old rags, or such like ugly things, upon their fairest horses, and other goodly creatures, to secure them against *fascination*. *Waller*.
>
> There is a certain bewitchery or *fascination* in words, which makes them operate with a force beyond what we can naturally give an account of. *South's Sermons*.

Johnson's use of the citation from Bacon's "Essay 9" –"On Envy"—is interesting as a generalization for how fascination might operate as a phenomenon in drama: love within the

comedies and envy within the tragedies. As a passion, envy can be one of the most relentless and captivating of masters. It very often "allows men no liberty of consideration." In Sir Francis Bacon's treatise, a definite relationship is presented between the "affection" of envy and fascination's association with the evil eye. Bacon even includes a partial model of the way in which early modern thought conceived the operation of the phenomenon:

> There be none of the *Affections*, which have beene noted to fascinate, or bewitch, but *Love*, and *Envy*. They both have vehement wishes; They frame themselves readily into Imaginations, and Suggestions; And they come easily into the Eye; especially upon the presence of the Objects; which are the Points, that conduce to Fascination, if any such Thing there be. We see likewise, the Scripture calleth *Envy*, An *Evill Eye*: …So that still, there seemeth to be acknowledged, in the Act of *Envy*, an Ejaculation, or Irradiation of the Eye. Nay some have beene so curious, as to note, that the Times, when the Stroke, or Percussion of an *Envious Eye* doth most hurt, are, when the *Party envied* is beheld in Glory, or Triumph; For that sets an Edge upon *Envy*; And besides, at such times, the Spirits of the *person Envied*, doe come forth, most into the outward Parts, and so meet the Blow. (27)

The operative elements described above, in Bacon's opinion, work upon the more extreme edges of natural philosophy so that they might be considered occult phenomena: "…As we said in the beginning, that the Act of *Envy*, had somewhat in it, of *Witchcraft*; so there is no other Cure of *Envy*, but the cure of *Witchcraft*:…" (32).

Johnson's second quote from Bacon, "He had such crafty and bewitching fashion, both to move pity and to induce belief, as was like a kind of fascination and enchantment to those that saw him or heard him" could be an accurate summation of a character such as Iago. His success in using others stems somewhat from an ability "to attract and retain the attention of a person by an irresistible influence (*OED*, 741)." The sheer audacity of his scheme and its execution can, in Bacon's estimation, generate a fascinating power upon an unsuspecting mind. Bacon states, in another essay—"Of Boldnesse"—that:

> There is in Humane Nature, generally, more of the Foole, then of the Wise; And therfore those faculties, by which the Foolish part of Mens Mindes is taken, are most potent…*Boldnesse* is a Childe of Ignorance, and Basenesse, farre inferiour to other

> Parts. But neverthelesse, it doth fascinate, and binde hand and foot, those, that are either shallow in Judgment; or weake in Courage, which are the greatest Part; Yea and prevailith with wise men, at weake times. (37)

Using no potions or poisons (other than bewitching words and suggestions), Iago shows the audience, as Johnson cites from *South's Sermons*, that "There is a certain bewitchery or fascination in words, which makes them operate with a force beyond what we can naturally give an account of." Bacon goes into greater detail when he specifically analyses the phenomenon in his 1605 *The Advancement of Learning*:

> *Fascination* is the power and act of Imagination, intensiue vpon other bodies, than the bodie of the Imaginant; for of that we spake in the proper place: wherein the Schoole of Paracelsus, and the Disciples of pretended Naturall Magicke, haue beene so intemperate, as they haue exalted the power of the imagination, to be much one with the power of *Miracle-working* faith: others that drawe neerer to Probabilitie, calling to their view the secret passages of things, and specially of the Contagion that passeth from bodie to bodie, doe conceiue it should likewise be agreeable to Nature, that there should be some transmissions and operations from spirit to spirit, without the mediation of the sences, whence the conceits haue growne, (now almost made ciuile) of the Maistring Spirite, & the force of confidence, and the like. Incident vnto this, is the inquirie how to raise and fortifie the imagination, for if the Imagination fortified haue power, then it is materiall to know how to fortifie and exalt it. And herein comes in crookedly and dangerously, a palliation of a great part of *Ceremoniall Magicke*. For it may bee pretended, that *Ceremonies*, *Characters*, and *Charmes* doe worke, not by any *Tacite* or *Sacramentall contract* with euill spirits; but serue onely to strengthen the imagination of him that vseth it; as Images are said by the *Romane Church*, to fix the cogitations, and raise the deuotions of them that pray before them. But for mine owne iudgement, if it be admitted that Imagination hath power; and that *Ceremonies* fortifie Imagination, & that they be vsed sincerely & intentionally for that purpose: yet I should hold them vnlawfull, as opposing to that first edict, which God gaue vnto man. *In sudore vultus comedes Panem tuum*. For they propound those noble effects which God hath set foorth vnto man, to bee bought at the price of Laboure, to bee attained by a fewe easie and slothful obseruances. Deficiences in these knowledges, I wil report none, other than the generall deficience, that it is not knowne, how much of them is veritie, and how much vanitie. (105)

In this brief passage Bacon attributes fascination's power to its effect on the imaginative faculties. Though he is sceptical of magic, he cites the notion that this kind of phenomenon

might operate “from spirit to spirit, without the mediation of the sences;” however, he offers no further conjectures as to how that might be done through the imagination.

In a work preceding *The Advancement of Learning* by nearly thirty years, John Veron’s 1584 *A Dictionary in Latin and English,* defines the term “fascinatum” as a verb: “*to bewitch*.” A related word close by “fascinatum,” on the same page, is the verb “fasciatum”—“*to swaddle, to tye, or bind with bandes*.” This is the Latin root of the modern words “fascism” and “fascist.” Later dictionaries, such as the *Bullokar* (1616), *Cawdrey* (1617), and *Blount* (1656) all define the term “fascinate” as: "*to bewitch.*"

Andrew Hyperius offers another description of the contemporary understanding of the phenomenon in his 1581 *Two Commonplaces*. His discussion suggests that the devil and his associates were ultimately behind these kinds of influences:

> Furthermore, bewitchinges, and iuglinges with the Hebrues, called *Chaschias*, in latine called Fuscinatores, & Praestigatores (which words are Exod. 7. Miche. 5. And Galat. 3) are understanded, by the consente of all Interpreters, to be done when the sences of men are so hurte and illuded, that they all think, that certain unwonted thinges are broughte to passes, or els naturall thinges are chaunged. And therefore with the wordes of bewitchinge or iuglinge, properlie is noted the formall cause, and the meane, whereby the deuill will satisfie the desires of men: or els, when as otherwise he is a lyar, and a deceauer, hee fayneth at the least wise, that he doth satisfie. (f2) (83)

Ben Jonson shows the humorous side of using fascination’s perceived effects to shift the blame for insalubrious behavior in *Every Man in His Humour*. Captain Bobadill, the essence of the stock character of the Braggart Soldier, justifies his cowardice and incompetence with: “…I was fascinated, by Jupiter: fascinated: but I will be unwitched, and revenged, by law" (4.9.14-15). Here he hides behind a power believed to be able to make him act contrary to his will, and, if the interpretation is pushed, there is also the implication that the gods are sponsors of this power. Normally, the “by Jupiter” is performed as an expletive, but another humorous interpretation might actually have Bobadill claim that his potentially

vigorous self-defense from Squire Downright's attack was prevented either by the planet's influence or by the chief of the gods himself.

Later in the play, the merchant Kitely has been introduced to the evils of suspicion—not to the same degree that Othello has been, certainly, but the pathology of this "poison" affects him in much the same way. It is an interesting description of the manner in which thought can be captivated by no more than a mere suggested interpretation of facts. What it can illustrate for us is how difficult it can be to resist something that appears as one's own judgment, and even more difficult to see the lie as separate from reality. It is literally a "dis-ease" which destroys peace, health and harmony as Kitely describes below:

KITELY

A new disease? I know not, new, or old,
But it may well be called poor mortals' plague:
For, like a pestilence, it doth infect
The houses of the brain. First it begins
Solely to work upon the fantasy,
Filling her seat with such pestiferous air,
As soon corrupts the judgment; and from thence
Sends like contagion to the memory:
Still each to other giving the infection.
Which, as a subtle vapour, spreads itself
Confusedly through every sensive part,
Till not a thought, or motion, in the mind,
Be free from the black poison of suspect.
Ah, but what misery is it, to know this?
Or, knowing it, to want the mind's erection,
In such extremes? Well, I will once more strive,
(In spite of this black cloud) myself to be,
And shake the fever off, that thus shakes me. (2.3.55-72)

Michel de Montaigne, in his essay, "Of Constancie," comments upon the difficulty of a challenge such as the one facing Kitely—grappling with the obsessive workings of a fascinated thought. He cautions that the wise person should in "no whit consent to his fright and sufferance" (58-59), and that someone who is less wise is vulnerable to "perturbations" because:

> ...the impression of passions doth not remaine superficiall in him [one that is not wise]: but rather penetrates even into the secret of reason, infecting and corrupting the same. He judgeth according to them, and conformeth himselfe to them. Consider precisely the state of the wise Stoicke:
>
> *Mens immota manet, lachrymae volvuntur inanes.*
>
> Virg. AEn. iv. 449.
>
> His minde doth firme remaine,
> Teares are distill'd in vaine.
>
> The wise Peripatetike doth not exempt himselfe from perturbations of the mind, but doth moderate them. (vol. 1, 59)

Montaigne reflects here one of the central tenets of the neoclassical ethic: do not avoid the challenges to mental harmony, but rather embrace them, interrogate them perhaps, but certainly attempt to reconcile their provocations. Hamlet again echoes a similar thought with

> Whether 'tis nobler in the minde to suffer
> The slings and arrowes of outragious fortune,
> Or to take Armes against a sea of troubles,
> And by opposing, end them.
>
> (*Hamlet*, 8.1595-1598)

If fascination and fixation work upon the seat of reason and it is misled or corrupted, the door is opened to a potentially destructive passion unless corrective measures are immediately applied. It was deemed important to control, to "moderate" these passions as Montaigne suggests, in order that they not enslave the thought.

Shakespeare's Cressida and Marc Antony comment on changeable and misleading perceptions. Cressida realizes too late that one must exercise more than an ordinary effort to discern rightly and avoid "turpitude:"

> The error of our eye, directs our mind,
> What error leads must erre: O then conclude,
> Mindes swayd by eyes are full of turpitude. (*Troilus and Cressida*, 18.2938-2940)

As Antony describes it, the discerning effort is complicated by evidence offered to the material senses. Even physical elements can have a protean quality that must be constantly

evaluated, for they may shift and present a new perspective, or change their forms to the extent that it affects their perceived signification:

> Sometime we see a clowd that's Dragonish,
> A vapour sometime, like a Beare, or Lyon,
> A towerd Cittadell, a pendant Rocke,
> A forked Mountaine, or blew Promontorie
> With Trees vpon't, that nodde vnto the world,
> And mocke our eyes with Ayre…
> That which is now a Horse, euen with a thoght
> The Racke distaines, and makes it indistinct
> As water is in water. (*Antony and Cleopatra*, 40.2350-2359)

Such distortions can wreak havoc with an individual's sense of self. Sorting out identity is enough of a challenge with the ordinary ambiguities and contradictions of human society. To have that effort of self-realization subverted by an aggressively antagonistic or misleading influence is to make that process nearly impossible without some sort of counterbalancing insight. That insight might have had to contend with elements floating around in the atmosphere—both mental and physical—as well.

Until scientific scepticism disproved the so-called physics of the extromission theory of vision, and "radios perniciosos," there was thought to be a materially binding element from the "beames and streames" produced almost involuntarily by the body. Reginald Scot describes the belief in his 1586 *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*:

> This fascination (saith *John Baptista Porta Neapolitanus*) though it begin by touching or breathing, is alwaies accomplished and finished by the eie, as an extermination or expulsion of the spirits through the eies, approching to the hart of the bewitched, and infecting the same, &c. Whereby it commeth to passe, that a child, or a yoong man endued with a cleare, whole, subtill and sweet bloud, yeeldeth the like spirits, breath, and vapors springing from the purer bloud of the hart. And the lightest and finest spirits, ascending into the highest parts of the head, doo fall into the eies, and so are from thence sent foorth, as being of all other parts of the bodie the most cleare, and fullest of veines and pores, and with the verie spirit or vapor proceeding thence, is conveied out as it were by beames and streames a certeine fierie force; whereof he that beholdeth sore eies shall have good experience. For the poison and disease in the eie infecteth the aire next unto it, and the same proceedeth further, carrieng with it the vapor and infection of the corrupted bloud: with the contagion whereof, the eies of the beholders are most apt to be infected. By this same meanes it

> is thought that the cockatrice depriveth the life, and a woolfe taketh awaie the voice of such as they suddenlie meete withall and behold. (399)

Scot devotes pages to the debunking of witchcraft theory, but is still intrigued as to how the idea of fascination manifests its power. Bacon and others who were sceptical of the *ars occulta* believed in differing forms of "natural" phenomena, and it seems there was a resultant intellectual tendency to attribute those effects to naturally occurring explanations. So while witchcraft may have been ridiculed as causative in intellectual circles, there remained an open question as to how some phenomena continued to have efficacy and potency, as Keith Thomas discusses in *Religion and the Decline of Magic*:

> Many writers were sceptical about witchcraft, precisely because they were so credulous in other matters. They accepted the possibility of sympathetic healing and action at a distance; they believed that stones might have hidden properties, that a corpse might bleed at the approach of its murderer, and that some men could 'fascinate' others by the emanations from their eyes. Scot's scepticism was made possible by his commitment to this tradition, and it was no coincidence that John Webster was sceptical about witchcraft, but believed in the weapon-salve, astral spirits, satyrs, pigmies, mermaids and sea-monsters. It was because these men accepted so wide a range of supposed natural phenomena that they were able to dispense with witchcraft as an explanation of mysterious happenings. It was much easier for them to advance a 'natural' explanation for the witches' *maleficium* than it was for those who had been educated in the tradition of scholastic Aristotleanism. (691-692)

The sixteenth-century scepticism signified the initial turning point from acceptance of witchcraft superstitions, to an attempt to discover how something like fascination actually did its work—looking for the "natural explanation" for projected maleficium. Before suggestibility theory came into vogue, the early modern sceptics were already stripping away some of the ideas of what fascination could *not* be. Thomas notes that Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft* was not exceptional in its scepticism, though it was somewhat prescient in its denial of the powers of the devil:

> There was, therefore, a continuing stream of scepticism throughout the whole period of witchcraft prosecution in England. Scot's great work was probably no more than an elaborate application of a type of rationalist criticism already in vogue. As

> early as 1578 a Norwich physician, Dr Browne, was accused of 'spreading a misliking of the laws by saying there are no witches'. Scot himself was deeply read in the literature of witchcraft and drew in particular upon the medical findings of the Cleves physician Johan Weyer, whose *De Praestigiis Daemonum* (1563) had urged that many supposed witches were innocent melancholics and that even the guilty ones were mere tools of Satan, incapable of doing harm by their own activities. Scot took this position further by denying even Satan any physical power. (692-693)

The scientifically inclined scepticism, however, was somewhat lost on another group of commentators who opposed the fascinating effect that a force such as the theatre had on the populace. These zealous men of good works, in sermon and pamphlet, decried the "webs of these Spiders," i.e. players and playwrights, as Anthony Munday declaims from the pages of his explicitly titled 1580 monograph: *A second and third blast of retrait from plaies and Theaters: the one whereof was founded by a reuerend Byshop dead long since; the other by a Worshipful and zealous Gentleman now aliue: one showing the filthines of plaies in times past; the other the abhomination of Theaters in the time present: both expresly prouing that the common-weale is nigh vnto the cursse of God, wherein either plaiers be made or, Theaters maintained*. The binding, fascinating power of the public theatre's influence on the human imagination is caught up, metaphorically, in Munday's conceit that the playhouse and/or the plays therein are inescapable snares of the mind:

> Manie haue ben intangled with the webs of these Spiders, who would gladlie haue bene at libertie when they could not. The webs are so subtillie spun, that there is no man that is once within them, that can auoide them without danger. None can come within those snares that maie escape vntaken, be she maide, matrone, or whatsoeuer; such force haue their inchantements of pleasure to drawe the affections of the mind. (96-97)

Munday is supported by other "anti-theatricalists" such as Stephen Gosson, who wrote in, respectively, *Plays Confuted*, and *Schoole of Abuse* that:

> The poets that write plays and they that present them upon the stage ... study to make our affections overflow, whereby they draw the bridle from that part of the mind that should be curbed from running our head, which is manifest treason to our souls and delivereth them captive to the devil. (*Plays Confuted* F5v-7r)

> …if you doe but listen to the voyce of the fouler, or joyne lookes with an amorous gazer, you have already made yourselves assaultable, and yeelded your cities to be sacked. (*Schoole of Abuse* 49)

Once begun, this opposition to the bewitching effects of theatre remained a constant within the culture and the business of playing until the theatres were pulled down in 1649. The resistance was more than simply a matter of taste; as Peter Lake explains in *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat*:

> The very medium of theatrical performance was mendacious on still deeper levels, appealing, as it did, to the senses and the emotions in ways that undermined the sovereignty of reason, unmanned or effeminated even the most rationally masculine or masculinely rational of sensibilities and sent all sorts of subliminally corrupting messages directly through the senses to the soul. For theatrical performance constituted a carefully orchestrated assault on all the senses. (445)

Fascination is the counterfeit of inspiration. It is only natural that those who purport to follow a virtuous lifestyle would oppose it as false seeming, false teaching and false guidance. Yet it is one thing to oppose it in word, while it can be difficult to resist in practice. Munday acknowledges that even the good, yet malleable people in society are vulnerable to the theatre's "showes and spectacles:"

> Manie of nature honest, and tractable, haue bene altered by those showes and spectacles, and become monsterous. Mans minde, which of it selfe is proane vnto vice, is not to be pricked forward vnto wantonnes, but bridled: if it be left vnto it selfe, it hardlie standeth; if it be driuen forth, it runneth headlong. (93)

Though he was not as influential to the early modern period as Montaigne or Bacon, St. Augustine succinctly states the dilemma in recounting his own personal, internal struggles in the following passage from his *Confessions*:

> So many things then I did, when 'to will' was not in itself 'to be able'; and I did not what both I longed incomparably more to do, and which soon after, when I should will, I should be able to do; because soon after, when I should will, I should will thoroughly. For in these things the ability was one with the will, and to will was to do; and yet it was not done: and more easily did my body obey the weakest willing of my soul, in moving its limbs at its nod, than the soul obeyed itself to accomplish in the will alone this its momentous will. Whence is this monstrousness? And to what

> end?…The mind commands the body, and it obeys instantly; the mind commands itself, and is resisted. (160-61)

As with any perceptual phenomenon, the primary conduits to the imagination are the eyes and ears—and while an audience at the Globe or Blackfriars might have perceived the play experience in terms of all five of the physical senses, the playwright generally had command of only the primary two: sight and sound. Peter Lake notes the double threat theatre posed to the anti-theatricalists, because its iconography shared the same power to directly engage the imagination which, as will be detailed in a later chapter, is one of the first steps in circumventing the saving powers of reason and judgment. Again, in *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat* he argues that,

> Like popery, the theatre was particularly threatening as an enemy to true religion precisely because of its expertise in the manipulation of the senses, through sound, spectacle and gesture. By these subliminal means all sorts of corrupting messages could be sent and all sorts of spontaneous responses evoked from the audience. By appealing, through the senses, to the fleshly, fallen, sensuous and sexual aspects of human nature, the theatre, like the idolatrous shows put on by popish religion, could penetrate directly to the soul, bypassing the reason and plunging the audience into a cesspool of lustful and corrupting thoughts and sensations. (447)

From the denotative meanings of fascination to its situation within the material culture of early modern England, therefore, a picture emerges of a phenomenon that has a presence not just in the occult philosophy or societal superstitions of the population, but also as a tangible, yet elusively comprehended influence on an individual's imagination. It was one of many ways of reaching the inwardness of the beholder. The shared experience of the theatre brought a powerful and expanded dynamism to the understanding of the phenomenon. The culture of playgoing mirrored the phenomenon's effect in the aesthetic world of the play by simultaneously producing its innate effects directly upon the audience. Of all of the poets that Munday might call "web spinners," the art of theatrical fascination found a deep and

consistent expression in Shakespeare's plays. Dame Frances Yates states this rather poetically in *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age*:

> Though Shakespeare never wielded a wand, nor thought of himself as a magus, he is a magician, master of the spell-binding use of words, of poetry as magic. This was the art in which he was supreme… (162)

Many scholars acknowledge Shakespeare's command of the art, but some of his spell-binding theatrical effects resonate within another type of craft. His use of the terms of this craft suggest that he had at least a passing familiarity with those traditions and saw the dramatic potential resident within those beliefs associated with bewitchment.

CHAPTER TWO

FASCINATION AND WITCHCRAFT, THE EVIL EYE AND MESMERIC SUGGESTION

Fascination and Witchcraft

PORTIA

Beshrow your eyes,
They haue ore-lookt me and deuided me,
One halfe of me is yours, the other halfe yours,
Mine owne I would say: but if mine then yours,
And so all yours; (*The Merchant of Venice*, 14.1294-1298)

Bewitchment and witchcraft were major counterpoints to early modern Christianity, and were perceived as threats to the security of the person of the sovereign. This was stated not only in Elizabeth's *Injunctions Given by the Queen's Majesty*, but was also reflected in the opinion of James I, who, after his accession to the English throne further instituted the belief in witchcraft's power to undermine the state, by enacting laws which reconfirmed Elizabeth's earlier prohibition. Samuel Johnson, in his *Miscellaneous Observations of the Tragedy of Macbeth*, cites part of the edict, and comments on the fact that because the author of *Daemonologie* was now King of England,

> …the doctrine of witchcraft was very powerfully inculcated; and as the greatest part of mankind have no other reason for their opinions than that they are in fashion, it cannot be doubted but this persuasion made a rapid progress, since vanity and credulity co-operated in its favour. The infection soon reached the Parliament, who, in the first year of King James, made a law by which it was enacted, chap. xii. That "if any person shall use any invocation, or conjuration of any evil or wicked spirit; 2. or shall consult, covenant with, entertain, employ, feed or reward any evil or cursed spirit to or for any intent or purpose; 3. or take up any dead man, woman or child out of the grave, —or the skin, bone, or any part of the dead person, to be employed or used in any manner of witchcraft, sorcery, charm, or enchantment; 4. or shall use, practise or exercise any sort of witchcraft, sorcery, charm, or enchantment; 5. whereby any person shall be destroyed, killed, wasted, consumed, pined, or lamed in any part of the body; 6. That every such person being convicted shall suffer death…

> Thus, in the time of Shakespeare, was the doctrine of witchcraft at once established by law and by the fashion, and it became not only impolite, but criminal, to doubt it;…(257-258)

In England, there were three Acts of Parliament—1542 (repealed in 1547), 1563 (repealed in 1604), and 1604 (repealed in 1736)—which forbade invocations or occult practices. In fact, as Keith Thomas says in "The Relevance of Social Anthropology to the Historical Study of English Witchcraft:"

> The 1604 Act made it a capital offence to covenant with, or to entertain, evil spirits, but it still displayed the earlier preoccupation with maleficium by making it a felony to kill anyone by witchcraft, while imposing a lesser penalty for less serious types of injury. (50)

The specific inclusion of witchcraft here indicates the imagined potency and the elusive nature of the concept of murder by fascination or bewitchment. Thomas further elaborates on the problems inherent in the enforcement of these statutes:

> How was damage by witchcraft thought to have been inflicted? And does the English evidence justify the well-known anthropological distinction between 'witchcraft' (a psychic, imaginary, and often involuntary act) and 'sorcery' (the employment of destructive spells, charms, and medicines)? These are difficult questions to answer. Contemporary witch trials suggest that the witch was believed to exercise her power in a variety of ways. She could touch her victim, or give out a potent but invisible fascination from her eyes: in this case he was said to have been 'fascinated' or 'overlooked'. She could pronounce a curse or malediction: then he would be 'forespoken.'(50)
>
> My over all impression is that contemporaries were less interested in the mechanics of the operation than in the fact of the witch's malice. Once this was proved, it mattered less whether evidence of the means employed was forthcoming…(51)

It was the ability of the witch to present a remote, yet fatal threat that caused the greatest concern. In some respects, it resonated with concepts of the antichrist—purporting to have a destructive quality that opposed Christ's ability to heal at a distance. If Jesus could heal the centurion's servant (Matt. 8: 5-13) and the son of the nobleman of Cana in Galilee (John 4: 45-53), without being physically present or using any methods other than what appeared to be spiritual (and consequently physical) regeneration through prayer and grace,

then the belief that a witch could exercise a similarly remote, but inverted, destructive power might play havoc with the views of social order and control. How could a king be secure against such an attack, able to be effected by the lowest and most disgruntled members of the society?

Phenomena that did not yield their secrets easily to scientific investigation sometimes appeared within the category of witchcraft or the occult tradition which some skeptical early modern English authors both investigated and eventually tried to debunk. Powers that were imagined to have set themselves up in opposition to God's omnipotence were often believed to be real forces to be reckoned with here on earth; in some cases this was the sole axis upon which some medieval religious dramas turned—such as "The Temptation" from the *York Plays*. The fact that Shakespeare and the other Elizabethan playwrights made consistent mention and dramatic use of the archetypal conflict of order against diabolic chaos testifies to the enduring attraction that it must have had on the imaginations of the Renaissance audiences. Frances Yates confirms that

> The occult philosophy in the Elizabethan age was not a minor concern of a few adepts. It was the main philosophy of the age, stemming from John Dee and his movement. Dee's Christian Cabala lies behind the Cabalist Neoplatonism of Spenser's epic, whence the imagery flows through the age. The fierce reactions against Renaissance occult philosophy are also most strongly felt in England…
>
> Shakespeare's great creations—Hamlet, Lear, Prospero—are seen as belonging to the late stages of Renaissance occult philosophy, struggling in the throes of the reaction. (163)

Keith Thomas mentions that the "mechanics of the operation" of occult malpractice were of less concern to an early modern court than the witch's malice. In this study, the idea of the mechanics are of some interest and will be examined via a theoretical model in the succeeding chapters in light of the early modern concept of the interrelations of the senses, the mind and the body.

Credulity and uninterrogated belief in hexes, "evil eye" fascinations and possessions, sometimes create in a person a suggestible mental state independent of any efficacy of the supposed magic. This belief system, if it is powerful enough to hyperextend the imagination, can have the same coercive effect on the body as a magical spell might be supposed to have. In Shakespeare's dramatic creations, the Weird Sisters of *Macbeth*, Roger Bolingbroke and Margery Jordan from *The First Part of the Contention of the Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster (Henry VI, Part II)*, and Prospero in *The Tempest*, operate a visible, identifiable craft; whereas, for instance, Iago employs methods that seem to be more of the type of "natural fascination" to achieve his ends. Often, the most insidious ensnarement happens when the victim has no idea that he is in the process of being bewitched. Overt witchcraft was persecuted by church and state, but the subtler forms of enthrallment were harder to detect and harder to defend against.

Practitioners of charms and enchantments did not always succeed with their victims, either because of the inherent inefficacy of the manipulations, or because the victim's enthralled thought became awakened or alerted and thereby activated in its own defense. Absolute truth can be the destroyer of the fascinated state. But the problem has been and perhaps always will be the perception of "absolute" truth. Those familiar with perception theory might argue that the knowing of any "absolute" truth is impossible and we are forced, therefore, to rely on the assumptions generated by the available evidence from the limits of our perspectives. These assumptions are vulnerable to error through misperception and misinterpretation. Thomas Aquinas may have had little influence upon the thinking of the early modern Elizabethan citizen, but in one small area he describes the danger that an enlightened and active intellect presents to mesmeric suggestion—whether that "persuasion" actually emanated from the Devil or not—in his treatise, "On Evil:"

> …although the devil according to the order of his nature could persuade man of something by enlightening his intellect as does a good angel, nevertheless he does not do this because the more the intellect is enlightened, the more it can guard itself against deception which the devil intends. Hence it remains that the internal persuasion of the devil, and any revelation of his is not by illumination of the intellect but only by a kind of impression made on the internal or external sense powers. (119)

This description of persuasions and suggestions relying on "impressions" upon the sense powers points to the place where the phenomenon must operate: outside of the interrogation of reason. Reason and logic are often quick to correct false impressions or at least to interrogate the source and thereby present a truer picture of the situation. Here the Devil represents the idea of the act of deception requiring the avoidance of scrutiny and dependence upon the maintenance of a falsely perceived reality.

Witchcraft, like so many other human inventions, does not come with guarantees, nor does it even require adept practitioners. The Devil, who was often given credit as the ultimate author of the maleficium, theoretically could and would utilize any willing instrument according to witchcraft lore and tradition. A lay person, wittingly or unwittingly responding to the Devil's urgings, could cause an unwary individual's conscious mind to be caught up in a web of misperceptions that could lead to ruination. These "persuasions" from the Devil were equally effective on the victim as well as any third party willing to believe them. Fascination did not need to be brought on by a learned practitioner; evil manipulations could proceed from anyone who could conceive, harbor and intend malice towards another. The most powerful and pernicious of these manipulations wreaked havoc on the victim's imagination, fascinating thought by altering perceptions of reality. Evil "thought forms," "eyes," or "tongues," resisted most attempts at scientific explanation in a pre-psychologically conversant culture and therefore found many of their delineations in magic and demonology.

Fascination lies in a gray area between the occult and fraud. To be fascinated, in the sense of being mentally enthralled, is to be largely conscious of the real world, yet remain mentally fixated upon an alternate perception of reality in such a way as to mistake good for evil, innocence for guilt, or even to fail in the distinctions thereof. Hyperius notes a case of entrenched mesmeric suggestion which illustrates that superimposition of erroneous illusion over everyday reality in *Two Commonplaces*:

> And they properly vnto whome the deuill hath shewed by this meane, ye may to bringe to passe anye unwonted thinges, are sayde, to bewitche, and to iuggle to the deceauinge of the minds and sences of men. Therfore of this sorte is that which is read in the life of S. Macarius. Certaine Parentes supposed their daughter to be turned into a Cowe, because that their sences were so hurte by the bewitching of the deuill, or some ill persons, that they did see no other thing in their daughter, then ye shape and all the actions of a Cowe, and they thought plainly that she was a Cowe. But Macharius, when they came to him with the supposed Cowe, saw a very wenche, rightly arrayed with all such apparralle as became a woman: because forsooth he could not be hurte with bewitching, the deuill hauing nor power upon him. But when as hee had feruently called upon God, all the bewitching also was taken away from the Parents, and straightway they knew their daughter, such as before they did. Neither was her shape of a wenche taken away from her, but onely the sences of the beholders were deluded, that they thought it to be taken away. (f3) (85)

One reason to argue that fascination, in such an example as Hyperius relates, finds a place between the realms of simple deception and the occult is this element of the transformation of reality. A cozener, deceiver or trickster can falsify facts or appearances but cannot actually change physics outside of the confines of normal reality. The fascinated state allows for the exchange of the given norms of perceived reality for the superimposed supposititious imagery of the suggested reality. Hyperius does not detail the cause of the parents' delusion, but the story argues that the superimposed reality is more pervasive than what might be accomplished by ordinary deception. St. Macharius never saw the young woman as a cow, yet both of her parents were convinced by the testimony of their fascinated interpretation of what appeared before their imaginations that a cow stood before them, not their daughter.

Fascination is a form of deception or cozenage. But to make a more specific distinction for this study, it might be argued that fraud changes the interpretation of commonly held experiences, whereas fascination alters the actual perception of the shared experience. At once, and in the same shared experience, Macharius and the young woman perceived the normal reality of a young lady present at the interview; the girl's parents perceived a suggested or received alternate reality—within the same physical circumstances—and saw a cow present. According to Hyperius, this condition persisted until an enlightening of the parents's intellect occurred; in this case the intervention of prayer to God so that "all the bewitching…was taken away from the Parents."

The concept of a "lay" practitioner of bewitchment is something of a misnomer, because as the prohibitions against witchcraft implied, those who employed such arts were liable under the law. The 1604 Act was not directed against witches or sorcerers, but against "any person." Whether or not there was a formal pact with the Devil, those who practiced upon others with the intent to commit some sort of maleficium could be considered, by popular definition, a witch. The technical distinction between lay figures like Iago and the "professionals" like the Weird Sisters, Roger Bolingbroke and Margery Jordan was the latter group's presumed commitment to an infernal pact in order to receive the secrets of the diabolic arts. A true witch was believed to be a person who entered into a formal contract with the Devil in order to receive supernatural knowledge and powers. This "pact" was the specific sign, but as proof of such a contract was often difficult to determine, even the suspected practice of forbidden arts could suffice to label a person as a witch. Thus, when Othello comes to the fatal realization that Iago's "poisonous" mental malpractice has produced a powerful fascination of his thought, he looks directly at Iago's feet to see if they are the cloven hoofs of a devil:

LODOUICO
Where is that Viper, bring the villaine forth.
OTHELLO
I looke downe towards his feet, but that's a fable,
(*To Iago*) If that thou beest a deuill, I cannot kill thee.
He wounds Iago (15.3188-3190.1)

And a few lines later, Othello acknowledges the power that Iago's work has had upon him, still referring to the diabolical nature of the effects, "demand that demy deuill / Why he hath thus insnar'd my soule and body?" (15.3204-3205).

As far as the text relates, Iago is not a true witch nor an actual demon. But in Othello's mind, Iago's practice upon him brands Iago with more than just ordinary felonious conduct; Iago has practiced against Othello's soul. As Iago is taken away, he is not only going to be questioned, but tortured with "cunning cruelty, / That can torment him much, and hold him long" (15.3239-3240), which was a common treatment for one accused of witchcraft. Iago offers no convenient confession indicating the existence of any infernal pact. Rather, it is implied that he acted as his own agent, even though what he does could be interpreted as the Devil's work.

Wayne Shumaker outlines the prevalent understanding of the defining criteria of the practice of witchcraft in sixteenth-century England in *The Occult Sciences in the Renaissance*:

> These, then are the essentials of witchcraft: a meeting with the Devil (or a devil; the lack of an article in Latin, together with different conventions of capitalization, makes the distinction often impossible), a pact to deny God, the performing of evil deeds, and occasional or regular attendance at the Sabbat. From the reports of trials one gathers that most of the witches really acted in secret, muttering their charms, mutilating their clay images, and dispensing their powders or potions without the knowledge of anyone except, perhaps, their own children, who could be forced by orders or threats to help (Hence it was concluded by the inquisitors that every child of a witch was almost certainly also a witch.) (90)

He then goes on to illustrate the more "reality-based" view of the contemporary Elizabethan skeptics:

> Occasionally two or more witches might co-operate to bring harm upon a common enemy, and more rarely still a larger number might congregate to cackle together, but as social outcasts—"loners"—no doubt they usually hated and feared their rivals as well as their victims. In the main, they were probably poor old women with foggy minds who felt themselves abused and tried to strike back at oppressors by hexing them. (90)

The popular views of witchcraft were at odds with the ability of Renaissance science to prove their validity. Though a sceptic like Scot was convinced that witchcraft was composed of varying forms of fraud, he concedes that a person's belief in deceptions will nonetheless procure the tangible effects—as he explains in *Discoverie of Witchcraft*:

> The common people have beene so assotted and bewitched, with whatsoever poets have feigned of witchcraft, either in earnest in jest, or else in derision; and with whatsoever lowd liers and couseners for their pleasures heerein have invented, and with whatsoever tales they have heard from old doting women, or from their mothers maids, and with whatsoever the grandfoole their ghostlie father, or anie other morrow masse preest had informed them; and finallie with whatsoever they have swallowed up through tract of time, or through their owne timerous nature or ignorant conceipt, concerning these matters of hagges and witches: as they have so settled their opinion and credit thereupon, that they think it heresie to doubt in anie part of the matter; speciallie bicuase they find this word witchcraft expressed in the scriptures;… Witchcraft is in truth a cousening art, wherin the name of God is abused, prophaned and blasphemed, and his power attributed to a vile creature…The maner thereof is so secret, mysticall, and strange, that to this daie there hath never beene any credible witnes thereof. It is incomprehensible to the wise, learned or faithfull; a probable matter to children, fooles, melancholike persons and papists…(389)

> …who will mainteine, that common witchcrafts are not cousenages, when the great and famous witchcrafts, which had stolne credit not onlie from all the common people, but from men of great wisdome and authoritie, are discovered to be beggerlie slights of cousening varlots?…if such bables could have brought those matters of mischeefe to passe, by the hands of traitors, witches, or papists; we should long since have beene deprived of the most excellent jewell and comfort that we enjoy in this world. Howebeit, I confesse, that the feare, conceipt, and doubt of such mischeefous pretenses may breed inconvenience to them that stand in awe of the same. (391)

That idea of standing "in awe" to the "mischeefous pretenses" hints that the mental acceptance of suggestion "may breed inconvenience." Scot, of course, does not accept that witching has any real power, but he does allow that the victim's mind, falsely engaged, can at least simulate the supposed power of a spell and work some sort of mischief.

Practitioners like Iago employed a form of bewitchment that seemed to be more potent than the cackled hex of a foggy mind. Was there a distinction, within the terminology of witchcraft, between bewitchment and fascination? Fred Gettings lists fascination, as well as related items, in his *Encyclopedia of the Occult*. The relationships between the phenomenon's qualities of binding and controlling influences are made somewhat more distinct in the comparative definitions below:

> **Fascinate** A term from the Latin *fascinare* ('to enchant') and used as a general term for the act of casting spells or (in particular) of throwing the EVIL EYE upon another. In late-medieval literature a person 'fascinated' was usually under the spell of a magician or witch. See also *fascinum* under EVIL EYE. (89)

> **Evil eye** An important idea underlying the practice of witchcraft and black magic is that certain individuals have the power to cast evil spells or to project evil THOUGHT FORMS merely by looking at another person…The idea of this evil power in man is just about universal, and there exists in virtually every language an equivalent term—the *boser Blick* in German, *malocchio* in Italian, *mauvais oeil* in French; and from the Latin *fascinum*, which was originally connected with the idea of binding, we derive the English 'fascinate', which was originally connected with such ideas as binding by means of diabolical powers or PACT. The modern English 'to overlook' is also connected with the evil eye. Maclagan, who records numerous examples of the evil eye in Scotland, quotes a woman from Mull who says that the evil eye is 'just an eye / with great greed and envy', and the remark by an old man that 'it used to be said by old people that the greedy eye could split asunder the very rocks.' On a more exalted level the great medieval schoolman, Thomas Aquinas, lends his considerable authority to the belief that one mind may indeed influence another through forces which proceed from the eyes. (87-88)

> **Spell** A word from the Old English *spel* ('speech') and applied to the idea of a magical word or binding power which may be spoken or written down. Just as the word 'CHARM' was originally involved with the idea of song, so a spell was something which arose from the spoken word, as an incantation or a formula of power. The idea is that the spoken phrase puts into a single verbal charge of energy the wishes of the magician—whether evil or beneficent. (207)

> **Charm** A magical formula. The etymology of the term, which is from the Latin *carmen* (song) points to the origin of charms—they were originally magical formulas intended to be sung or recited to propitiate a spirit or to bring about some desired effect…a charm is the means by which influences (for good or bad) are induced into an object or person. (52)

The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology by Rossell Hope Robbins glosses fascination in a similar manner and adds the following observations:

> Of the various magical folk beliefs which were incorporated into the theological framework of witchcraft, fascination or the "evil eye" was one of the most primitive and extensive. Every civilization has believed that evil can be effected merely through hostile looks;… (193)
>
> The superstition was enshrined in the Bible: "From within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts…an evil eye"—Mark vii. Matthew made the link between the evil eye and the evil person or witch: "If thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness."…Del Rio in 1599 finally summarized the accepted views: "Fascination is a power derived from a pact with the Devil, who, when the so-called fascinator looks at another with an evil intent…he infects with evil the person at whom he looks." (194)

Those who did formally enter into the Devil's service by way of an alleged pact were theoretically entitled to an impressive array of powers, according to the early modern concept of witchcraft. The authors of the 1486 *Malleus Maleficarum* detail a long list of evils that witches could engage in once they had made an infernal pact with diabolical entities. This credulous and quite popular book—literally, the "hammer of the witches" by "Henricus Institorius" (i.e. the Dominican friars Heinrich Kramer and Jakob Sprenger)—catalogued an incredible number of occult theories and activities, and in turn had a significant influence upon the later European witch-hunts. The most powerful class of witches, apparently those who can both injure and cure (but choose mostly to injure), are able to "perform every sort of witchcraft and spell, comprehending all that all the others individually can do" (99 [II, i, 2]). Within the book's comprehensive list of abilities are the following:

> …they can bring about a great trembling in the hands and horror in the minds of those who would arrest them; they can show to others occult things and certain future events…; they can see absent things as if they were present; they can turn the minds of men to inordinate love or hatred; they can at times strike whom they will with lightning, and even kill some men and animals; they can make of no effect the generative desires, and even the power of copulation, cause abortion, kill infants in the mother's womb by a mere exterior touch; they can at times bewitch men and animals with a mere look, without touching them… (99)

Ironically, however, despite the fact that they have contracted with the supposedly formidable powers of the underworld and can "cause all the plagues which other witches can only cause in part, that is, when the Justice of God permits such things to be" (99)—the Devil may use them as he pleases. He may promise a witch unbridled power, but the truth (according to the Christian doctrinal theory found in the *Malleus*) was that all things were still under the control and will of God. A witch was not a completely free agent. The magus who signed a pact with a devil, or a god of the underworld, was bound to that power. Yet that demonic power only operated under license from the Almighty. Instead of generating his own puissance, the witch merely invoked powers granted to the devil/god, and tried to direct it or obey it to achieve his or her ends. The authors assert that by showing "the method used by this chief class in their profession of their sacrilege, anyone may easily understand the method of the other classes" (99).

Once the witches have done their work (with God's permission supposedly), the *maleficium* cannot, surprisingly, be undone—conforming to the belief that "no witchcraft can be removed by any natural power" (161). The only way to be free from witchcraft was from the direct intervention of God Himself—Hyperius's tale of St. Macharius conveniently emphasizing this particular point. As for the creation of witches, the *Malleus* claims that they can be drawn into the craft, or they can be born into it:

> … in times long past the Incubus devils used to infest women against their wills, as is often shown by Nider in his *Formicarius,* and by Thomas of Brabant in his book on the *Universal Good*…,
>
> But the theory that modern witches are tainted with this sort of diabolical filthiness is not substantiated only in our opinion, since the expert testimony of the witches themselves has made all these things credible; and that they do not now, as in times past, subject themselves unwillingly, but willingly embrace this most foul and miserable servitude. (111)

To reconcile the paradox that evil can be committed upon mankind with God's permission, the mitigation follows two steps: that good and ill descend upon man from the will of God for

man's benefit, and that devils and witches are sometimes agents in this cleansing process. This was a generally accepted Christian doctrine which the *Malleus* summarizes below:

> …everything which God permits to happen to us, whether it seem to be sorrow or gladness, is sent for our good as from a pitying Father and a merciful Physician. For the devils are, as it were, schoolmasters of humility, so that they who descend from this world may either be purged for the eternal life or be sentenced to the pain of their punishment… (175)

Martin Luther acknowledges this tradition when he analyzes St. Paul's disquisition on the bewitchment of the Galatians. In *A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, he reveals his first-hand experience with the Devil's ability to work on the imagination. Besides his worldly ability to work upon the senses, the Devil

> …doth not only bewitch men after this gross manner, but also after a more subtle sort, and much more dangerous; wherein he is a marvellous cunning workman. And hereof it cometh that Paul applieth the bewitching of the senses to the bewitching of the spirit. For by this spiritual witchcraft that old serpent bewitcheth not men's sense, but their minds with false and wicked opinions: which opinions, they that are so bewitched, do take to be true and godly. Briefly, so great is the malice of this sorcerer the devil, and his desire to hurt, that not only he deceiveth those secure and proud spirits with his enchantments, but even those also which are professors of true Christianity, and well affected in religion: yea, as touching myself, to say the truth, he sometimes assaileth me so mightily, and oppresseth me with such heavy cogitations, that he utterly shadoweth my Saviour Christ from me, and in a manner taketh him clean out of my sight. (qtd. in Kors & Peters, 197)

John Calvin takes Luther one step further and says in Book 2, Chapter 4 of the *Institutes*, that "man is so enslaved by the yoke of sin, that he cannot of his own nature aim at good either in wish or actual pursuit…" (vol. 1, 265). His example is to cite Augustine's analogy of man's will as a horse which goes towards or away from righteousness, depending on whether God or the Devil is the rider:

> "If God mounts, he, like a temperate and skilful rider, guides it calmly, urges it when too slow, reins it in when too fast, curbs its forwardness and over-action, checks its bad temper, and keeps it on the proper course; but if the devil has seized the saddle, like an ignorant and rash rider, he hurries it over broken ground, drives it into ditches, dashes it over precipices, spurs it into obstinacy or fury." With this simile, since a better does not occur, we shall for the present be contented. (vol. 1, 266)

Much of the debate over the powers of evil resides in sermons and writings from the church fathers from one perspective, and skeptics and philosophers from another. But the real crucible for the reality of the phenomenon was in the courtroom. By bringing individuals to trial for the crime of fascination, the various theories and beliefs about the phenomenon were reified into specifics that had to be proved before a magistrate. The confirmations were inconclusive for the most part; in the absence of a provable methodology, the trials mostly became accusations and rebuttals over alleged evil intents. Wallace Notestein remarks on the situation in *A History of Witchcraft in England*:

> The truth seems to be that the idea of witchcraft was not very clearly defined and differentiated in the minds of ordinary Englishmen until after the beginning of legislation upon the subject. It is not impossible that there were English theologians who could have set forth the complete philosophy of the belief, but to the average mind sorcery, conjuration, enchantment, and witchcraft were but evil ways of mastering nature. All that was changed when laws were passed. With legislation came a greatly increased number of accusations; with accusations and executions came treatises and theory. (5)

Whether its origins were magical or not, when *maleficium* appeared in the physical manifestations of human interaction, it invited prosecution when it appeared to transgress the laws of England. In the abstracts of Essex witchcraft cases, 1560-1680, presented in Alan MacFarlane's *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England*, there are numerous complaints lodged against individuals for "bewitching." Sometimes the complaint was lodged against the defendant for bewitching animals such as pigs or cows. But the records of the King's Bench contain specific accusations against some residents of the village of Birdbrook for employing actual and "suspected" fascination:

No.	Date/Source	Name/…	Offence/Process
1,186	1583 K.B.9 658 m.369	Joan Maidston	committed to gaol for 'fascination' and died there of plague on 20 Apr. 1583
1,191	1593 K.B.9 683 m.152	Joan Grine	imprisoned for suspected 'fascination' and died of plague on 5 Apr. 1592

1,192	1596 K.B.9 690 m.285	Joan Luckyn	imprisoned for 'fascination' and died on 4 Dec. 1595 of plague
1,193	1596 K.B.9 690 m.283	Joan Gardiner alias Webb	imprisoned for 'fascination'; died on 9 Dec. 1595 of plague (qtd. in MacFarlane, 302)

The witchcraft trials of the period were an attempt to control evil influences and practices, but the more covert operations of mental malpractice often escaped detection and censure by the lack of material evidence. Keith Thomas, in "The Relevance of Social Anthropology to the Historical Study of English Witchcraft," describes some of the difficulties in tracking down verifiable incidents of bewitchment:

> Only some of the once voluminous judicial records still survive, and the majority of these are only bald indictments made at Quarter Sessions or Assizes. A good deal can also be learnt from the defamation cases brought before both secular and ecclesiastical courts by persons who felt they had been wrongly accused of witchcraft; while incidental light is thrown on magical practices in general by the prosecutions of charmers and diviners before the Church courts. But it is only when detailed depositions by witnesses can be found, either in their original form or in the versions contained in the contemporary pamphlet accounts of celebrated trials, that the social context of the accusations can be discovered.
>
> Judicial cases of all kinds, however, represent only the tip of the iceberg, and it is at the lower reaches that the historian, by comparison with the anthropologist, is most hampered, since, unless an accusation reached the law-courts, it is unlikely to have left any mark on the surviving evidence. The only substantial exception to this rule is constituted by the case-books of the contemporary doctors and astrologers who were consulted by persons who believed themselves to have been bewitched. The evidence they contain is sufficient to confirm that formal accusations of witchcraft represented only a small proportion of the suspicions and allegation made in everyday life. (52-53)

Thomas's article implies that the fear and perception of bewitching phenomena or beliefs about it were rather widespread and more or less commonly held. This would make sense, given the number of people maintaining superstitious beliefs and practices in Shakespeare's day. The belief in the efficacy of witchcraft was the foundation of its seeming power and as long as "natural philosophy" was unable to provide more conclusive, scientific

explanations of certain mysterious circumstances and events, the courts and the pulpits would continue to host arguments in pursuit of the "true" facts or story.

However, the work of Reginald Scot, Johan Weyer, Sir Francis Bacon, and those who followed in their skepticism ultimately led to a more scientific attempt to deny witchcraft's practical efficacy; but the belief in it has never been truly rooted out of the popular thought. As the seventeenth century began, magic was beginning to be considered more of a phenomenon of folk belief, while sciences such as alchemy and astrology sought to provide more logical explanations for various natural philosophies. Regardless of the contemporary academic debates, demonology was still a powerfully operative belief overall. Nathan Johnstone's *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, details some of the reasons for this:

> In England the concept of the Devil underwent a very subtle process of cultural change in the hands of the Protestant reforming clergy. They were convinced that Satan offered an intimate threat to every Christian, especially when his agency was hidden from perception by the physical senses. This conviction was driven equally by a sense of personal danger in the face of demonic power, and by a belief that diabolism lay concealed behind the superficial piety of the Catholic church. The reformers did not wish to overturn traditional belief in the Devil as they did more high-profile aspects of Catholic religion such as eucharistic piety or the doctrine of good works, and hence there was no explicit reform of demonological theology. Instead a characteristically Protestant demonism emerged from a subtle realignment of emphasis rather than an open attack upon tradition. The central focus of this change was to emphasise the Devil's power of temptation, especially his ability to enter directly into the mind and plant thoughts within it that led people to sin. (1-2)

This subtle development of the Devil now being able to plant thoughts, though still not to know or move them, gave even more power to Satan and released a person even further from individual culpability. However, that person was not relieved of responsibility; these implanted temptations were to be resisted and destroyed.

Daemonologie (printed in Scotland in 1597, and again in London in 1603), reflected many commonly held beliefs of that period as well. While James I was loath to attribute

actual power to witches, he was initially satisfied that there was a power proceeding from the Devil. This power was, according to James, deceptively employed. It could catch an unwary soul, and make a fool of anyone who believed he could control infernal forces:

> …it is no power inherent in the circles, or in the holines of the names of God blasphemousslie vsed: nor in whatsoeuer rites or ceremonies at that time vsed, that either can raise any infernall spirit, or yet limitat him perforce within or without these circles. For it is he onelie, the father of all lyes, who hauing first of all prescribed that forme of doing, feining himselfe to be commanded & restreined thereby, wil be loath to passe the boundes of these injunctiones; aswell thereby to make them glory in the impiring ouer him (as I saide before:) As likewise to make himselfe so to be trusted in these little thinges, that he may haue the better commoditie thereafter, to decieue them in the end with a tricke once for all; I meane the euerlasting perdition of their soul & body. (16-17)

This idea that the Devil is "the father of all lyes," references John 8:44 (Geneva):

> Ye are of your father the deuill, and the lustes of your father yee will doe: he hath bene a murtherer from the beginning, and abode not in the trueth, because there is no trueth in him. When he speaketh a lie, then speaketh hee of his owne: for he is a liar, and the father thereof.

It is a potent phrase in that it reinforces the idea that the Devil is the ultimate deceiver, including his explanations of things like charms, conjurations or future events; and like nearly everything else the Devil said, his explanations were not to be trusted—especially in his supposed obedience to God. A favorite trick of the Devil, apparently, was "feining himselfe to be commanded & restreined" to create a false sense of confidence and control in a given victim. The trap would spring later at the most auspicious time to serve his larger purpose: to take the unwary or unrighteous by any attractive means possible in order to secure the "euerlasting perdition of their soul & body."

As a theoretical explanation of the workings of demonism, such a model makes a kind of intellectual sense. But the people who felt victimized by maleficium maintained a more visceral connection to the issue. As Johnstone argues it,

> …demonism maintained a hold in early modern culture because its identification of diabolic agency within religious, social and political commonplaces allowed people to engage with an experience of the Devil which was positively felt. (17)

This development toward the personal experience of the Devil naturally required an encounter with sense theory and specifically the primacy accorded to the perception of the demonic influence. Here, for Johnstone, is the crux of the issue:

> The sense of the weakness of the physical senses and the mental faculties to provide adequate insight into the spiritual within the world defined by extension the nature of the Devil's most formidable agency. Man's perceptual weakness was made the first principle of diabolic activity, the surest means by which the Devil exercised his power over humanity. Thus Satan's hidden influence on the conscience came to define his relationship with men over the external manifestations of his power which had traditionally comprised his remit of activity. (287)

In other words, any inability of the human senses or inspiration ("right" reasoning) to explain adequately the role of Christian spirituality in the world has the potential to leave human thought vulnerable to diabolic influence or activity. The limitations of perception engender a kind of mental void where misperception can exist and such a void in this instance could provide a space for Chaos to enter in.

Shumaker explains why the Devil was a convenient solution to the logical difficulties revealed in the construct of assigning supposed magical power to the manipulations or willful intents of mankind, while the church was insisting "that power belongeth unto God" (Psalms 62:11):

> First, it was essential that the charms themselves be thought ineffectual, that doubts arise about a universe so structured as to make enchantments operative. This step was taken with the emergence of a conviction that devils were the real agents of all the mischief. The demon was not constrained by the witch's rigamaroles but seized upon her ill will as an excuse to do injuries by which, because she had assented to them, his claim to her soul would be established. At the same time, of course, he would gain satisfaction from the exercise of his malevolence upon the immediate victims… (91)

The implication here is that infernal powers took advantage of a person's malicious intent as an opportunity to create more havoc—usually laying claim to everyone involved who did not

defend against the maleficium. That this exercise of malevolence was an easy thing for the Devil to accomplish is noted by Andrew Hyperius:

> And it is no hard matter for the deuill, or his disciples beinge studious of magike, to do these thinges. For the senses of men are by diuers meanes deceyued. First, when that some fraude or chaunge is committed in that thinge which is laide before the senses. By which reasone the deuill taketh to him, and againe putteth from him, suche bodies or shapes as pleseth him: by the same reason he can shewe foorth all kinde of bodies and shapes, and put forth the same to the senses, to be sene and touched and by some meanes or other to be perceyued. (f4) (87)

The Devil, in this conception, possessed the power not only to persuade and tempt, but also to affect the perception of normal reality by showing "foorth all kinde of bodies and shapes" that can be "sene and touched and by some meanes or other to be perceyued." This is more suggestive of a misperception rather than a misinterpretation of evidence. Misperception alters the actual process of gathering the data into the evaluative faculties, rather than mistaking their meaning once they have been properly acquired.

Until modern psychology began to attempt to explain the effects of fascination as the effects of a form of hypnosis, the understanding of this type of bewitchment remained mysterious. Sir Reginald Scot cites Virgil and Theocritus (among others) as proponents of the belief that fascination proceeds from physical causes, the most potent of which is the "inchanting or bewitching eie." In the passage below, he describes the more positive facet of the phenomenon as he attempts to show its workings:

> But as there is fascination and witchcraft by malicious and angrie eies unto displeasure: so are there witching aspects, tending contrariwise to love, or at the least, to be procuring of good will and liking. For if the fascination or witchcraft be brought to passe or provoked by the desire, by the wishing and coveting of anie beautifull shape or favor, the venome, is strained through the eies, though it be from a far, and the imagination of a beautiful forme resteth in the hart of the lover, and kindleth the fier wherewith it is afflicted. And bicause the most delicate, sweete, and tender bloud of the belooved doth there wander, his countenance is there represented shining in his owne bloud, and cannot there be quiet; and is so haled from thence, that the bloud of him that is wounded, reboundeth and slippeth into the wounder, according to the saieng of *Lucretius* the poet to the like purpose and meaning in these verses.

> *Idque petit corpus, mens unde est saucia amore,*
> *Námque omnes plerúnque cadunt in vulnus, & illam*
> *Emicat in partem sanguis, unde icimur ictu;*
> *Et si cominùs est, os tum ruber occupat humor:*
>
> *And to that bodie tis rebounded,*
> *From whence the mind by love is wounded,*
> *For in a maner all and some,*
> *Into that wound of love doo come,*
> *And to that part the bloud doth flee*
> *From whence with stroke we striken bee,*
> *If hard at hand, and neere in place,*
> *Then ruddie colour filles the face.* (400)

The understanding of the workings of fascination took a good deal of time to evolve towards the purely psychological model. Yet as early as 1605, Francis Bacon, after describing the workings of fascination in *The Advancement of Learning*, went on to observe that it is not infectious spirits, but the imagination's "transmissions…without the mediation of the sences" (105), i.e., a purely mental communication producing a "conceit," that is the key to fascination's mesmeric effects. Bacon was perhaps the earliest and most authoritative author to separate fascination from magic, even if he neglected to pursue its workings.

As late as the early eighteenth century, fascinating bewitchment was still tied to the concept of magic and the influence of spirits. It was not until Franz Anton Mesmer's work and notoriety in the 1770s that fascination and mental malpractice began to be more clearly seen as a psychological effect. Stuart Clark, in *Thinking With Demons*, cites William Whiston (*Account of the daemoniacks*, 1737), and Joseph Glanvill (*Saducismus triumphatus*, 1689) in his illustration of the ongoing attempts to discern fascination's source of power:

> As late as 1737, William Whiston, Newton's disciple and his successor in the Lucasian chair of mathematics, wrote that the assaults of invisible demons, as long as they were well attested, were 'no more to be denied, because we cannot, at present, give a direct solution of them, than are Mr. Boyle's experiments about the elasticity of the air; or Sir Isaac Newton's demonstrations about the power of gravity, are to be denied, because neither of them are to be solved by mechanical causes.' Of the causes of 'fascination', Glanvill said: 'this kind of agency is as conceivable as any one of

> those qualities ignorance hath cal'd Sympathy and Antipathy, the reality of which we doubt not, though the manner of action be unknown.' (306)

As investigations into the causes progressed, the Devil and his demons gradually receded from the scientific understanding of fascination. With early modern science enthusiastically pursuing a more thorough investigation into observable phenomena, some beliefs were disproved and dismissed while others began to be understood in their true essence. However, the plays of the Renaissance dramatists were not yet ready to approach susceptibility and suggestibility from a purely scientific model, and certainly the box office demanded dramatically engaging "hooks" for the popular audience. Gods, demons, spirits and sprites therefore, were alive, well, and popular figures upon the Elizabethan and Jacobean stages. To gain a clearer understanding of the pre-Enlightenment folk beliefs regarding fascination, it is expedient to consider a brief overview of the "evil eye" –how it was thought to work, and how it probably did its work. The central and demonstrable element on both the world's stage and the playhouse's stage was human belief and its attendant behavior.

The Evil Eye and Mesmeric Suggestion

Is it possible to see the attributes of the modern day concepts of mesmerism and hypnotism in what the Elizabethans defined as fascination? This charismatic power over another person's will was traditionally thought to be aided by a pact with a supernatural force, which is still a belief in many cultures even in the twenty-first century. A more natural explanation of the phenomenon's efficacy, according to someone like Reginald Scot, involves a type of chemical transference or reaction. The binding power of fascination in this model seems much like a poison or virus that works on long after its introduction.

Poisonous concepts, suggestions and suppositions certainly had a similar power to the material toxins—as Thomas Wright says in *Passions of the Minde in Generall*:

> …a false imagination corrupteth the vnderstanding, making it beleeue that things are better than they are in very deed. And by this meanes, the wit two wayes is troubled; first, in that the vehemency of the imagination causeth a vehement apprehension and iudgement of the wit; secondarily, the false representation breedeth a false conceit in the minde: and by these we proue the imagination and passions to preuaile so mightily, that men, in great paine, or exceeding pleasure, can scarce speake, see, heare, or thinke of any thing, which concerneth not their passion. (52)

Planted in a susceptible thought, might they work their effects like Iago's "poisonous minerall?" Something like this is the intent of his plot against Othello when he reveals:

> …that I doe suspect the lustie Moore,
> Hath leap'd into my seate, the thought whereof
> Doth like a poisonous minerall gnaw my inwards,
> And nothing can, or shall content my soule,
> Till I am euen'd with him, wife, for wife:
> Or failing so, yet that I put the Moore,
> At least, into a Iealousie so strong,
> That Iudgement cannot cure;… (4.976-983)

The poison is Iago's mental conviction that he has been cuckholded by Othello. By implication in the text, if Iago cannot be "euen'd with him, wife, for wife," then he will accept the consolation of projecting his own jealousy upon Othello—presumably to suffer the same gnawing of "inwards" that plagues Iago.

With such overt maleficium directly stated to the audience, there is no question of Iago's intent. The question for the audience to consider revolves around whether Iago has succeeded in leading Othello to mis*perceive* as well as to mis*interpret* the reality around him. If Iago can alter Othello's sense of reality regarding his identity and relationships he will then have achieved, in Othello's thought, a fascination of "Iealousie so strong, / That Iudgement cannot cure."

In *Pale Hecate's Team*, K. M. Briggs lists "Some Terms Used in the Writings on Witchcraft and Magic." There, fascination is described as "Bewitching by the power of the evil eye" (223). Fascination was, in fact, a rather well-recognized phenomenon in its manifestation as the "evil eye;" the number of authorities who were cognizant of the presence

and power of the evil eye was impressive, as Fredrick Elworthy notes in *The Evil Eye and Practices of Superstition*:

> There were two kinds of fascination among the ancients, the moral and the natural, and this belief is still held. The moral power was that exercised by the will. It was against the users of this, that the special laws of the Romans were directed. These included all those who practised incantation and malignant arts. More terrible were, and still are, those in whom the faculty of the evil eye was natural, whose baneful look was unconscious, whose eye threw out *radios perniciosos*, which by a sort of mesmeric power acted upon the nervous system of the victim. It has always been recognised as a rule of good manners never to praise immoderately lest the speaker should *fascinate* against his will. (32-33)

As for the variety of thinkers that more or less accepted this idea, Shumaker cites Johannes Leonardo Vairo's 1583 work *De Fascino* when he explains that:

> Leonardo Vairo, in an interesting and ultimately rather skeptical document about enchantments (including the evil eye) called *De fascino libri tres* (1583), supports his assertions that "nearly all authors, not merely Latins and Arabs but also Greeks," accepted the reality of *facsinum* by citing Aristotle, Alexander Aphrodisiensis, Plutarch, Heliodorus, Isigonus, Pliny, Nymphodorus, Apollonides, Philarchus, Algazel, Avicenna, Pomponatius Solinus, Philostratus, Virgil, Ioannes Franciscus Ponzinibius, and Petrus de Tarantasia at one burst before slowing down in order to bring in others more at leisure. The list is in no way unusual. (74) [Shumaker quotes Vairo in Vairo, Ioannes. *De fascino libri tres*. (Parisiis: Apud Nicolaum Chesneau, 1583), pp. 2-3 (I, i)]

Elworthy devotes considerable attention to the way in which the concept of the evil eye and its description as fascination is:

> ...one of the hereditary and instinctive convictions of mankind…The belief that there is a power of evil working, which is ejaculated (as Bacon says) upon any object it beholds, has existed in all times and in all countries. It was adopted and sanctioned alike by the Fathers of the Church, by mediaeval physicians, and all writers on occult science; while in our own day it still exists among all savage nations, and even here in England in our very midst. (3)

Elworthy's claim that "all writers on occult science" sanctioned the validity of fascination is a bit too absolute in its certainty, but he nevertheless highlights that this binding power—however it was delivered—was more or less generally accepted as an actual force. In Joshua Gregory's article "Magic, Fascination, and Suggestion," there is a citation from an

Arabian proverb: "The Evil Eye owns two-thirds of the grave-yard" (146). As part of his short survey from evil eye superstitions to psycho-kinesis via Bacon and others, he goes on to observe:

> The deadly Evil Eye … is the source of "Fascination," as when strong imagination acts through the eyes of malicious old women who injure children. *Fascination* became a common name for what was also called "forcible imagination," or, more simply, "Imagination"—conceived to have power. (146)

He mentions the connection between belief and physical causation (which will be developed in more detail in this study as part of the next chapter, "The Primacy of Perception"), and he argues that

> …it is more effective to work by the Imagination of another who believes in your power to do strange things. Such Imagination has most force upon things with the lightest and easiest motions. Thus it works most easily upon the "spirits of men." These are the traditional "animal spirits" racing through conduit nerves to serve sensation or excite movement. (148-149)

In a more recent article, Amica Lykiardopoulos identifies the main elements and issues of fascination as the evil eye—what was attributed to the phenomenon and what it left unexplained. She makes note of Elworthy's work, but brings a more fully delineated approach to the central issues of the concept. The following are her observations and relevant ideas from "The Evil Eye: Towards an Exhaustive Study:"

> The belief that a glance can damage life and property, commonly known as evil eye, overlooking, fascination, *mal'd'occhio* or *malocchio*, *gettatura*, has been widespread in both westernized and non-westernized societies, in the past, as it is now. It has been found in ancient Babylonia, Egypt, the Graeco-Roman world, and Talmudic Judaism, and also in India, China, Africa, as well as among the Eskimos and American Indians. Several writers hold that the belief is universal…Pliny, for example, states that special laws were enacted against injury to crops by incantation, excantation, or fascination. Elworthy goes so far as to imply that the evil eye is the basis and origin of the Magical Arts. It may be assumed that the belief in the evil eye is the fear of potentially harmful powers outside the sphere of human control, projected to certain members of the community. (222-223)
>
> *a. Possessors*
>
> Possessors of the evil eye, or people capable of causing harm through their glance, can be practically anybody. (223)

> *b. Susceptibility*
>
> There is almost no exception as to whom or what can be susceptible to the influence of the evil eye…
>
> Prominent people are believed to be particularly susceptible to the evil eye, and this is no wonder, since to be prominent would mean to be powerful, in one way or another, and this, in turn, may often cause other people's envy. (224)
>
> *c. Explanations*
>
> The actual process of how the evil eye is cast is not usually mentioned although it is supposed to involve a conscious wish on the part of the possessors to harm the object of their malevolence. This wish may or may not be actually pronounced. Traditionally, no attempts to explain the power have been made, and it was usually attributed to the influence of evil entities…When Mesmerism or hypnotism came into vogue, fascination was explained as the hypnotic power of a person over others…The direct consequences are always harmful to the receiver of the action, ranging from mild symptoms like fever or headache, to actual destruction or death. (224-225)

Lykiardopoulos's analysis identifies three key issues which find residence in the plots of *Macbeth* and *Othello*: projection, susceptibility and the ill will of maleficium. Even if the characters in the stories remain unaware of the operation of the influences of fascination, the audience at these plays has the potential to watch its operation—if they are aware of the causal elements.

Modern science has yet to find that there is validity in the theory that spirits or vapors actually flow physically from one person to another via the eyes, inducing a hypnotic state. The "beames," "streames," and "vapors" of fascination are most likely more incorporeal in their essence. Perhaps the beames might indicate the force of personal magnetism or charisma, the streames signify the fixation and binding of the victim's thought and the vapors indicate the physical reactions to the undue mental stimulus? The actual physics involved in fascination or mesmeric suggestion are not so far removed from the early modern concept. Even by taking the terms literally, we can entertain the theory that sound waves which emanate from the vibrations of one person's vocal cords, disturbing the surrounding air, are

received as rhythmic impressions on another person's eardrum. These impressions are then decoded into a recognizable communication. Truth has nothing to do with this process; it is simply a conveyance of information. The information is carried to the conscious thought, i.e. the imaginative faculties of the sixteenth-century model, and processed there for further evaluation. The "beame" could be sound. Light waves permit the comprehension of information as they reflect off of various surfaces and land upon the retina. Visual stimuli are then decoded in much the same manner by the cognitive faculties and the imagination. The "streame" could be light or visual stimulus.

These physical conduits do nothing more than relay information eventually to the imaginative faculties. What the information translates into—for better or worse—is carried by "animal spirits" (the "vapors," perhaps) within the body, which may in turn cause physical reactions. These animal spirits of the body are not to be confused with demonic spirits—familiars and the like. In a bio-mechanical model, they are more suggestive of neural pathways rather than whispering demons. In all, it serves to support the perspicacity of the mechanics of the Renaissance model and points to ways in which our current understanding is still resonant with the early modern model.

The malice thought to be introduced via the evil eye, in the absence of any material transference was arguably the powerful result of the human propensity of suggestibility—as the perceived connection with the imagination indicates. This mental activity could induce an individual to behave in exactly the same manner that the plaintiffs against witchcraft claimed for it as its external manifestations in the court cases. It may have been viewed as witchcraft, but fascination's operation in the realm of suggestibility is the essence of its efficacy, and perhaps this is how it has endured as a concept in the English language, thought and culture.

John F. Schumaker notes the universality of suggestibility in "The Adaptive Value of Suggestibility and Dissociation":

> Nothing is, in fact, more uniquely human than the intriguing class of behavior that is broadly defined as "suggestibility." A global perspective will reveal that suggestibility is one of the very few categories of behavior that is universal by strict definition…We find suggestibility, just as we do religiosity, in virtually all cultures of the world. (108)

He even humorously proposes that humanity should perhaps modify its generic name to "homo suggesto-religiousus" (108). But it is his observations regarding "dissociation" and "reality-transcendence" (119) that are of greater interest:

> As an example, let us use my former belief in "holy water." I needed to achieve a certain degree of dissociation before I could genuinely believe that a bowl of water was "holy water." Certainly, a "holy water" belief qualifies as a suggestive behavior since it requires that I accept a communicated proposition, with conviction, without adequate grounds for acceptance (McDougall, 1908). Beyond that, I had adequate grounds for *nonacceptance*, since our priest could be seen drawing the water from an ordinary tap! Regardless, the "holy water" belief was the result of a suggestion that I absorbed while in a dissociated state. The emotional chanting of the choir, the priest's monotonous voice, the gold incense burner swinging on its chain, the endlessly repeated rituals—I went "under" in no time at all. But, even though in a receptive dissociated state, a suggestion was still necessary if I was to come away with that "holy water" belief. (118)

Though Shumaker displayed susceptibility on that particular point, it does not imply that he is susceptible on all points. Individuals only have the common *potential* to accept suggestions, but not everyone is *susceptible*. Susceptibility is tied to acceptance. Without this portal of acceptance, no force of persuasion can manipulate the subject. Shumaker elaborates on this idea in the following explanation:

> Simple logic tells us that a person must be suggestible in order to accept such suggestions. However, we must not fall into the same trap as is possible with regard to "hypnosis." Religion is only one of many *procedures* for utilizing our dissociative and suggestive capacities in the service of reality-transcendence. And while it is an inevitable procedure of all workable cultures, not all people respond to such suggestions. Most religious ceremonies are intended to assist people in the task of achieving a dissociated state in which suggestions can be implanted. Still, just as some people do not respond to "hypnotic" procedures, some people do not respond to

> religious procedures. This does not change the fact that virtually all people have the *potential* to accept religious beliefs, or suggestions. (119-120)

It may be that early modern society experienced what we now define as various degrees of "dissociated states," or some form of "reality transcendence," and called them "enchantment," "charm"—being "overlooked" or "bewitched." It is difficult to say where bewitchment, reality transcendence or mesmerism reside. The major difference between hypnosis and bewitchment is the degree of control exercised by the hypnotist. Clinical hypnosis strives to control the course of the subject's experience in the interests of data collection and clarification of the phenomenon. Fascination seems to be more chaotic; once the malice is released or transmitted, there is no sure way to predict the subsequent course of events. There is no experimentation or examination of the phenomenon within its own right; mental subornation is an imposition on perception with malice as its main demonstration.

The study of hypnosis reveals a few concepts that are seen in the behaviors of Shakespeare's tragic heroes. This is not to suggest that these characters are, in fact, hypnotized, but rather that their onstage actions conform to behavioral displays shared by victims of early modern bewitchment and subjects under hypnosis. Susceptibility combines with suggestibility to produce varying degrees of dissociative mental states. For example, it could be argued that fascination takes hold in the victim's thought—perhaps within the context of the classic conceptions or forms of the "evil eye." If the evil eye has true efficacy then it is the operative function and follows its own acknowledged methods and procedures. If the evil eye does not have any true power, it nevertheless might still appear to be the operative power through associations with existing forces that do have power. Fixation of the imagination must, by necessity, follow an individual's mental detachment from his discernible reality into the acceptance of a proposed, alternative reality. This "dissociated" state then feeds to the imagination information that may conflict with discernible reality, but does so in

a manner that the individual's conceptual faculties will accept as plausible suggestions of a new reality—in Schumaker's words, "reality-transcendence." In a non-dissociated state, such conflicting information would either be reconciled or rejected. Establishing the alternate "reality" is fundamental to the operation of fascination.

Ernest R. Hilgard's landmark study of hypnotic phenomena at Stanford University makes an attempt to outline some of the workings and salient features of dissociative states in *Hypnotic Susceptibility*. Though he acknowledges that "our language is not good for specifying states of awareness, because these are not stable enough to permit exact labeling" (5), he does define seven qualities of the hypnotic state. He also examines some of the ways in which a hypnotist communicates with his subject, and identifies the difference between illusion and hallucination. To summarize these points briefly, the seven identifiers of a hypnotic state are: subsidence of the planning function, redistribution/diffusion of attention, heightened ability for fantasy production and memory recall, tolerance for persistent reality distortion, increased suggestibility, role behavior, and varying degrees of amnesia for what transpired within the hypnotic state (c.f. Hilgard, 6-10).

While it is not necessary for a subject to conform to every one of these criteria in order to be classified as hypnotized or dissociative, many times they are all concurrent in varying degrees of ascendancy. The concept of role behavior is quite interesting as Hilgard describes it:

> The suggestions that a subject in hypnosis will accept are not limited to specific acts or perceptions; he will, indeed, adopt a suggested role and carry on complex activities corresponding to that role. Perhaps there is something of the actor in each of us; in any case, the hypnotized subject will throw himself into a role, particularly if it is a congenial one, and act as if he were deeply involved in it. (10)

For those who are susceptible to heightened reality-transcendence (and not everyone is), there can be a pronounced lack of awareness that they are in a dissociative state. Hilgard mentions a control factor in one of his experiments that establishes this fact:

> In order not to associate hypnosis entirely with responsiveness to suggestions, but to consider it in its aspects as an altered state of awareness, subjects in our studies were asked to tell us what it was like to be hypnotized…Even among the subjects who responded well, only some two-thirds felt confident that they could tell when they were in the hypnotic state. (10-11)

To complicate the study of the awareness of the altered state, those who responded positively were not always correct in their estimates; only the deeper states of hypnosis are most readily recognized, according to Hilgard.

Once a hypnotic condition is introduced, the individual is generally influenced through *ordinary instructions*, *direct suggestions*, and *inhibitory suggestions*. An instruction guarantees action only if the subject is deeply dissociative, or if it is something that the subject might comply with even outside of the hypnotic state. Suggestions, conversely, while they might be dismissed as absurd in a non-dissociative state, gain a more plausible reality under hypnosis, and compliance with the perceived reality can be accomplished without ever receiving a specific instruction. As Hilgard describes below, much depends upon how a suggestion is presented:

> An *ordinary instruction* is given under hypnosis just as it is in the waking state, and it leads to a deliberate (voluntary) movement if the subject is cooperating. The hypnotist requests: "Please interlock your fingers." The subject does this within hypnosis as he does in the waking state, and there is no implication that he has relinquished any control to the hypnotist. The totally nonsusceptible subject usually responds to ordinary instructions just the same as the susceptible one. This, then, is merely cooperative social behavior, of the kind we expect from people acting courteously toward each other. When the ordinary instruction is enhanced by special pleading, and the subject is urged to do his utmost, it takes on some additional qualities, and may then produce differential effects between the susceptible and the nonsusceptible; in its ordinary form, however, it elicits the ordinary social responses expected in the waking state.
>
> A *direct suggestion* is different. The hypnotist says: "Your hand and arm are light, and they are beginning to rise from your lap." This is not an invitation to raise

> the arm and hand, as it would be were this an ordinary instruction. If the subject raises his arm deliberately, as he would if told to raise his arm, he violates an understanding that the rise must be "involuntary." The *arm* must do the rising; *you* must not lift it. Most adults understand this readily, so that, for the susceptible subject, the arm slowly rises, and for the insusceptible subject the arm stays resting in his lap.
>
> The third type of communication, the *inhibitory suggestion*, is usually made in a more complex three-step fashion, the hypnotist first suggesting an involuntary effect ("Your arm is getting stiff") and then proposing an inhibition of control ("You cannot bend it"), followed by a test of the inhibition ("Go ahead and try to bend it!"). Such a series of suggestions, involving in the end loss of voluntary control, is sometimes called a *challenge* test, because it ends with a challenge to try to do what the hypnotist has said you cannot do. (98-99)

Before Hilgard's study, Charles Baudouin performed extensive experiments at the New Nancy School and published his findings in *Suggestion and Autosuggestion*. For a twentieth-century readership he wishes to move beyond the controlling and domineering aspects of previously held views of suggestion and to "make a good use of suggestion, considering it as one of the natural forces, and looking upon it, not as a power for dominating others, but as an instrument of self-mastery" (27). Before arriving at the lofty goal of his argument, however, he offers pertinent insights into fascination's relationship with suggestion theory. He considers that the etymology of "suggestion" signifies "to bring in surreptitiously, to bring in from underneath" (28). He likens the process to fresh air entering a room through the gap between the door and the floor; the suggestion "enters our consciousness without conscious effort on our part and sometimes in defiance of our will" (29). He then focuses directly on the phenomenon of fascination, noting how it comes about largely from a process of accepted suggestion:

> …let us consider the well-known phenomenon of fascination, where the attention is so completely captured by an object that the person concerned continually returns to it in spite of himself…The first thing is the working of spontaneous attention. The isolated noise, breaking the silence of the night, naturally attracts the ear. Then, our attention recurring again and again to this noise, we imagine that it is impossible for us to refrain from attending. Next, the idea materialises (here we have suggestion at work), and in fact we are no longer able to withdraw the attention. We have spontaneously suggested our own impotence.

> We now make repeated efforts to release the attention from the object which fascinates it, but at each successive effort we feel that our powerlessness becomes more evident. Here is the remarkable point: the effort counteracts itself, turning to the right when it wishes to turn to the left; our effort spontaneously reverses itself in accordance with the idea which actually dominates the mind and which has become a suggestion—the idea of impotence. In a word, the more we wish, the less are we able. (36-37)

Baudouin then connects fascination with "*obsession*, which is nothing more than a mental fascination" (37). But it is an extremely powerful captivation of the thought. It is

> …a fascination by images, memories, ideas, from which we cannot free the mind, simply because we think we cannot free it and because this thought becomes a suggestion. The *fixed idea* is only the ultimate degree of obsession. Moreover, obsession and fascination, which become more overwhelming at every effort made to dispel them, can be dispelled by a reflective autosuggestion or by an induced suggestion. (37)

Though Baudoin delineates a more modern understanding of fascination, it is nevertheless helpful in its theory to illuminate some of the mechanics of the phenomenon. Especially since, as Lykiardopoulos revealed previously, a thorough and generally accepted understanding of the workings of fascination did not exist in the sixteenth century.

In its operation as an illusion of the senses—brought on by, as Baudouin avers, "images, memories, ideas, from which we cannot free the mind" (37)—suggestion is probably what underprops Hyperius's statement about bewitching in the *Two Commonplaces*:

> Therefore of these things is manifest, that bewitchinge doth stretch very farre and that under it are comprehended all thinges, which are don with the elusion of the senses: that thinges are beleued to be sene, harde, and perceyued, which notwithstandinge are no such maner of things. (f4) (86-87)

Yet Baudouin observes that the mesmerism or fascination can be dispelled by a "reflective autosuggestion or by an induced suggestion" (37). According to Hyperius, prayer (an intercession of divine enlightenment or counter-suggestion perhaps) is also an effective restorative, as he relates from the story of St. Macharius and the cow/girl delusion. However it is restored, reality *perception*, rather than *transcendence* can undo the effects of fascination,

breaking the "irrevocable" spell of the Devil. This clear perception is the only way to relieve the situation, because more transcendence, or the substitution of further misperceptions only mire the victim more deeply into the miasma of erroneous fantasy.

Deadly beasts of mythology, and their fabulous powers, take on an anthropomorphized quality in one who embodies maleficium—and that person, regardless of stature, can be seen to be a deadly threat to health, property and sanity—a human basilisk, or cockatrice. This lends a naturally compelling weight to the imagery within the artifice of the theatre. In Thomas Middleton's *Women Beware Women,* Isabella becomes aware of a plot against her virtue, and tells Hippolito:

> ISABELLA [*aside*.]
> O shame and horror!
> In that small distance from yon man to me
> Lies sin enough to make a whole world perish.—
> 'Tis time we parted, sir, and left the sight
> Of one another; nothing can be worse
> To hurt repentance; for our very eyes
> Are far more poisonous to religion
> Than basilisks to them. (4.2.125-140)

Henry VI lashes out at Suffolk in Shakespeare's *The First Part of the Contention* with the vehement:

> Lay not thy hands on me: forbeare I say,
> Their touch affrights me as a Serpents sting.
> Thou baleful Messenger, out of my sight:
> Vpon thy eye-balls, murderous Tyrannie
> Sits in grim Maiestie, to fright the World.
> Looke not vpon me, for thine eyes are wounding;
> Yet doe not goe away: come Basiliske,
> And kill the innocent gazer with thy sight:
> For in the shade of death, I shall finde ioy;
> In life, but double death, now *Gloster's* dead. (10.1610-1619)

But the most vicious dramatic use of the eye-killing serpent image comes from *Richard III*. In the "wooing scene" with Lady Anne, Richard suggests that she forget the fact that he killed her husband and her father in the wars of contention, and agree to marry him. Her response

and the subsequent exchange capture a passionate verbal duel. Lady Anne is so outraged that at one point she spits at Richard, who responds:

RICHARD GLOCESTER
Why doest thou spitte at me.
LADY ANNE
Would it were mortall poison for thy sake.
RICHARD GLOCESTER
Neuer came poison from so sweete a place.
LADY ANNE
Neuer hung poison on a fouler toade,
Out of my sight thou doest infect mine eies.
RICHARD GLOCESTER
Thine eies sweete Lady haue infected mine.
LADY ANNE
Would they were basiliskes to strike thee dead.
RICHARD GLOCESTER
I would they were that I might die at once,
For now they kill me with a liuing death:
Those eies of thine from mine haue drawen salt teares,
Shamd their aspect with store of childish drops:…(2.306-316)

In the theatre, the discovery of the warning signs—suggestion, deception, obsession—can be an important part of the argument of the play and a thrilling raising-of-the-stakes of the action for the edification of the audience. The signatory devices which illuminate the action and provide a basis for reflection as well as entertainment in the best plays examine the complexity of the choices and decisions that lead to salvation or ruin. They show the characters' acceptance and rejection of alternatives that determine the human negotiations and navigations through the central dilemma. Shakespeare excelled in presenting some of the most engaging questions for consideration, while showing how complex these navigations through some ethical arguments can be.

CHAPTER THREE

THE "PRIMACY OF PERCEPTION" AND EARLY MODERN SENSE BELIEFS: MIND/BODY MECHANICS

> …there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so:
> (*Hamlet*. 7.1180-1181).

"That the Taste of Goods or Evils Doth Greatly Depend on the Opinion we Have of Them"

> Fortune doth us neither good nor ill: She only offereth us the seed and matter of it, which our minde, more powerfull than she, turneth and applieth as best it pleaseth: as the efficient cause and mistris of condition, whether happy or unhappy.
> (Montaigne, "Chapter XL," *Essayes*, 290)

The phenomenon of fascination generates no power and manifests no presence, unless it is engendered within the faculty of perception. It is powerful in its illusions but largely helpless against clear reasoning and a true picture of present realities. It underscores a major theme running through much of Shakespearean drama: the problem of discerning reality over appearance. Appearance vs. Reality is a rich topic in any study of the public theatre where the manipulations of perception present in the drama are echoed and reflected in the enthralling effect that theatre can have upon its audience. The central concerns of the tragic heroes who find themselves at the turning point of their lives and are forced to make difficult decisions which determine their ultimate fate are made even more compelling in Shakespeare's plays not only because the heroes weigh moral, strategic, and tactical arguments for and against their plans, but also because these decisions are prompted by circumstances that cannot be absolutely perceived and evaluated. The judgments of Othello and Macbeth are complicated by the fact that Shakespeare has hinged these dilemmas upon elements that challenge the heroes (and, by association, the paying audience) to separate appearances from reality in order to make a correct situational evaluation and, subsequently, adopt a proper course of action. It

is important, therefore, to take a brief look at how the process of discerning the situational reality relates to the operation of fascination.

Before an object, utterance, tone or even an odor can be understood, it must first be perceived by the sense faculties. In early modern terms this involves understanding the relationship of the body, the humors and spirits, as well as the non-corporeal elements of the passions, will and the decision-making processes of the mind. Perception is a crucial element in understanding the actions of Shakespeare's heroes, because all action or response proceeds from it. The operative will of the characters is influenced primarily by their perception of what constitutes their current reality and the decisions that follow are the result of their reasoning faculty's reaction to the perceived object or event. If the perception is accurate and "reality" is correctly understood according to the shared experience of the participants, the response is generally appropriate to the character's inherent nature and ability to reason and act. However, if the perception is somehow flawed, then the decision-making process can be corrupted by the imposition of a false sense of reality and this can provide an opportunity for inappropriate reactions—or characteristic reactions taken to a needlessly dangerous extreme.

If Shakespeare's dramatic dilemmas were based solely on determinism or simple deception, they would not have the scope and dimension that separates them from, say, a classic Morality play. But Shakespeare makes his dramatic arguments captivating and compelling by showing us men caught up in the *fixation of misperception*. What prevents the characters from discerning the true reality is the fixation of their thought upon some fascinating element of their dilemma—which, as Montaigne muses, can lead to needless vexation if "having the choice of it, if none compell us, we are very fooles, to bandy for that partie, which is irksome unto us" (269). Though the process may indeed be difficult,

Montaigne argues that the end is certainly within our means in his essay "That the Taste of Goods or Evils Doth Greatly Depend on the Opinion we Have of Them ('Chapter XL')":

> *Men* (saith an ancient Greeke sentence) *are tormented by the opinions they have of things, and not by things themselves*. It were a great conquest for the ease of our miserable humane condition, if any man could establish every where this true proposition. For if evils have no entrance into us, but by our judgment, it seemeth that it lieth in our power, either to contemne or turne them to our good. If things yeeld themselves unto our mercie, why should we not have the fruition of them, or apply them to our advantage? If that which we call evill and torment, be neither torment, nor evill, but that our fancie only gives it that qualitie, it is in us to change it:…(269)

To illustrate the fixation of misperception, Andre du Laurens mentions a graphically humorous example of just how bizarre the extremes can become. In *A Discourse of the Preservation of the Sight* (1599), du Laurens lists over a dozen cases where "the most fantasticall and foolish imaginations" (101) have taken hold in thought. Case number "The fifteenth" is especially curious:

> The pleasantest dotage that euer I read, was of one *Sienois* a Gentleman, who had resolued with himselfe not to pisse, but to dye rather, and that because he imagined, that when he first pissed, all his towne would be drowned. The Phisitions shewing him, that all his bodie, and ten thousand moe such as his, were not able to containe so much as might drowne the least house in the towne, could not change his minde from this foolish imagination. In the end they seeing his obstinancie, and in what danger he put his life, found out a pleasant inuention. The[y] caused the next house to be set on fire, & all the bells in the town to ring, they perswaded diuerse servants to crie, to the fire, to the fire, & therewithall send of those of the best account in the town, to craue helpe, and shew the Gentleman that there is but one way to saue the towne, and that it was, that he should pise quickelie and quench the fire. Then this sillie melancholike man which abstained from pissing for feare of loosing his towne, taking it for graunted, that it was now in great hazard, pissed and emptied his bladder of all that was in it, and was himselfe by that meanes preserued. (103)

The lengths to which the town worthies had to resort to dispel Sienois's misperception shows that fascination can be cured, but usually with great difficulty. A perceptive fault which is believed to be accurate by the fascinated person is not easily rectified because there is such a close relationship between an individual's perception and his sense of reality.

In *The Primacy of Perception*, Maurice Merleau-Ponty attempts to explain the phenomenology of perception in some of its more basic forms. Perception is our window to our context—the "perceived world." It dictates our comprehension of events and objects and is the starting point for discernment. His position on the mind and body as a unified system of cognizance agrees well with the early modern concept of the sense faculties:

> …the body is no longer merely *an object in the world*, under the purview of a separated spirit. It is on the side of the subject; it is our *point of view on the world*, the place where the spirit takes on a certain physical and historical situation. As Descartes once said profoundly, the soul is not merely in the body like a pilot in his ship; it is wholly intermingled with the body. The body, in turn, is wholly animated, and all its functions contribute to the perception of objects—an activity long considered by philosophy to be pure knowledge. (5)

Reality cognizance is a complex function in view of its vulnerability to a myriad of forces or conditions. The individual's "point of view on the world" can be redirected into alternative impressions by mentally entertained suppositions, or it can be distorted by illusions caused by physical forces—refracting light, insufficient light, "subtile thinne humours," or "bodies" laid against the senses. Hyperius, again in *Two Commonplaces*, offers a list of a few of these conditions:

> And how saye you by this that the Media or meanes which are put in betwene the instrument of the sighte and the bodies laid against it, do often bring to passe, that things are iudged to be other then they be. Through glasse the sense and color is chaunged: the same may likewise happen of subtile or thinne humors and exhalations dispersed by the ayre nigh vnto vs. And wood that is parte put into the water, appeareth croked, the which notwithstanding is right. For that, that thinges put betweene the instruments of the sences, and the bodies layde againste them, doe cause such deceauing shapes. And these impedimentes can the deuill easilye bring forth, as well in the instrument of the sight, as in the instruments of the other sences: and he doth so beguile men, that they beleue and percieue other things then in deed they see and perceaue. (n.p.) (90-91)

The physical aspects of misperception are important to the power of fascination, because they lend "reality" to the suppositional arguments of the fascinating fixation. The victim is much

more likely to be held in fascination's thrall if he is presented with seeming physical evidence and "proof" of the supposition's validity.

In *The Elizabethan Malady*, Lawrence Babb provides a good outline of some of the prevailing medical theories of Shakespeare's day. His overview is useful in targeting those theories related to the phenomenon of perception and of the understanding of the mind/body relations. In the following excerpts he situates the key elements of the early modern perceptive faculties within their accepted functional model:

> The faculties of sense and motion with which the sensitive soul is endowed are subdivided into various senses and motions. The senses are of two kinds, external and internal. There are five external senses—sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch—and three internal senses—the common sense, the imagination (often called the *phantasy*, or *fancy*), and the memory. The internal senses are located in the brain. The common sense receives impressions of the world outside from the external senses and assembles them into composite images. Its primary function, however, is apprehension. The eye does not know what it sees; the ear does not know what it hears. (3)

> In man, the rational soul is the ruling power, and the sensitive faculties are its servants. It has two divisions—intellectual and volitional, that is, *reason* and *will*. The former, which looks at the world through the medium of the imagination, is capable of perceiving the essence, not merely the appearance. It seeks truth through a logical train of thought. It draws conclusions regarding truth and falsehood, good and evil; in other words, it is capable of judgment. The reason determines what is good and what is evil and informs the will of its conclusions. The will, because of an instinct implanted in it by God, desires the good and abhors the evil which the reason represents to it. The will is sometimes called the rational appetite because it desires the good just as the sensitive affections desire the pleasing, and it abhors the evil just as they abhor the displeasing. When the will conceives a desire or an aversion, a corresponding passion normally arises in the sensitive soul. Thus the will causes physical action indirectly through the sensitive passions. Often the sensitive and rational desires conflict; the pleasant is not always the good. In such a case, the sensitive nature should yield, and passions corresponding to the promptings of the will should arise. For the reasonable will is the absolute mistress of the human soul. (3-4)

Perception does not always imply an accurate apprehension of the total reality; it is a process of discernment that occurs as unfoldment rather than instantaneous total comprehension. Operating mostly within the internal "sensitive" faculty of Common Sense, it often prompts and leads the Imagination or "fancy." An object can be perceived, but initially

only in part. The complete reality can remain elusive until such time as the whole is assimilated. When perceiving ideas, rather than objects, the task is even more complicated. Again, from Merleau-Ponty comes the idea where:

> We find that perceived things, unlike geometrical objects, are not bounded entities whose laws of construction we possess *a priori*, but that they are open, inexhaustible systems which we recognize through a certain style of development, although we are never able, in principle, to explore them entirely, and even though they never give us more than profiles and perspectival views of themselves. Finally, we find that the perceived world, in its turn, is not a pure object of thought without fissures or lacunae; it is, rather, like a universal style shared in by all perceptual beings. While the world no doubt co-ordinates these perceptual beings, we can never presume that its work is finished. Our world, as Malebranche said, is an 'unfinished task.' (5-6)

If the modern world appears to phenomenologists to be an "unfinished task," the world of Shakespeare's audience, experiencing the confluence of ideas within witchcraft, alchemy, astrology, humanism, and the ideological conflicts of the emerging religious debates, must have seemed equally open-ended. Correctly perceiving the world is an unfinished task that has concerned mankind for centuries. In the first place, perception depends upon the existence of an object or concept—"being." Once being is discerned, there is a natural impulse then to attempt to determine "meaning." Jose Ferrater-Mora addresses this component in the following passage from his essay "Reality as Meaning:"

> …realities appear then as seen, understood, meant, conceived, etc. In some way, therefore, meanings are produced. But they are not to be separated from the realities—not only because they ultimately refer to realities but also, and mainly, because the very same meanings in turn can be constituted as realities. Meanings can be "objectified" and thus can be turned into intentional, or "intentionable," objects. Thus, for instance, thoughts about realities may in turn be objects of further thoughts and, in general, of further "intentions." (133)

As Ferrater-Mora implies, once a certain reality has been perceived as having being and meaning, whether it is a physical or a mental entity, the interpretation of that reality then becomes a foundation for subsequent perceptions (or misperceptions) as the meaning itself becomes objectified and examined for possible further meaning or intentions. Regardless of

whether the perceived reality is factual or fantastical, thought can continue to scrutinize it *ad infinitum*, as the process of perception is driven by an unlimited number of things to perceive. Ferrater-Mora foreshadows how such scrutiny can occupy conscious thought as the individual discovers that

> Meaning produces meaning…Meanings are given neither in nor outside of reality once and for all. They result from a relation to the reality which makes it increasingly better known and, in consequence, increasingly "significant." (134)

As an individual's thought pursues meaning based on the perception of a concept or a series of events, there exists the possibility that the pursuit could be endless. With thoughts producing more thoughts in search of deeper meaning, the individual's consciousness can potentially be overwhelmed and obsessed with the chase, yet it still can fail to discover the essence of a central meaning. However, a picture of the reality emerges from all of this activity and becomes, as Ferrater-Mora says "significant." In the case of Othello and Macbeth, they illustrate their perception of events in their own unique significations, but how closely these perceptions are tied to the stage reality as the audience sees it is largely due to how these two characters process the suppositions they encounter.

Even the descriptive devices used to convey meaning, in the case of the poetic language of dramatic texts, have the potential to illuminate as well as to obscure the true meaning or reality. On the one hand, language can be the essential tool of expression towards understanding, yet, on the other hand, it can create more platforms for additional explanations which complicate that understanding. Ferrater-Mora argues that

> …language does not limit itself to reflecting reality; it turns it into a cluster of meanings. When linguistically expressed, these meanings become objectified, and are thus the object of further intentions and possibly of further descriptions. (136)

Meaning can continue to elude pursuit once the faculty of imagination enters the process. By entertaining the possibilities of alternate meanings connected to thoughts and language, it can

literally change the picture of the attendant imagery associated with those thoughts and words. A simple example is Iago's pun on "honest." Here the meaning and potential imagery alter drastically depending upon whether thought focuses on honesty as truth-telling or honesty as sexual integrity.

Mikel Dufrenne addresses the captivating power of some of the functions of the faculty of imagination—especially when the object or supposition in question is fictitious. He observes in the following passage from *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience* that:

> Imagination makes an object appear which, in spite of its unreality, is so convincing that it seizes and engulfs consciousness. Since imagination is said to manifest the capacity of consciousness to nihilate the world, the imagining consciousness is totally involved in this activity and cannot negate its own negation. Only by a sudden turn of events, such as an awakening from deep sleep, can it break the enchantment and return to the real. Similarly, thought which relies on images always risks becoming lost in them. Sartre shows clearly that only a considerable reflective power enables one: (*a*) to avoid being the dupe of symbolic schemes which purport to give the solution to a problem; and (*b*) to refuse to lose oneself in images…Imagination is opposed to perception as magic is to technique.
>
> Perception in contrast, aims at the real…we cannot deny the marked difference between the dreaming and the perceiving man, that is, between a consciousness which turns away from the real and one which aims squarely at the real. (354)

This passage succinctly identifies the key relationship between perception and imagination as it relates to the function of fascination. Perception operates from an intention to construe, accurately and alertly, the facets of the object or event. Imagination operates from an intention to assimilate the facets and instead of construing being and meaning from a standpoint of objectivity, it works via synthesis (with memory, association, etc.) to form a composite and perhaps a more subjective interpretation of the object or event. Nevertheless, this subjective approach is still in the service of discerning reality.

In Dufrenne's "dreaming/perceiving man" model, the imagination turns away from contemplation of the real in order to work through the information it receives, while the perception focuses on more or less pure discernment. Yet part of the activity of the

imagination is to attempt to contextualize the being and meaning of the perceived object. This is complicated by the process of discerning what is false from what might be real as an immediately immanent event. Dufrenne here elaborates on what he calls the "prereal:"

> There is an unreal which is a prereal—the constant anticipation of the real without which the real would be, for us, a mere spectacle lacking the depth of space and duration…Thus the essential function of imagination is to preform the real in an act of expectation which allows us not only to anticipate and recognize the real…but also to adhere to it. In comparison with this function, the fascination with the unreal on which Sartre insists appears as a sort of aberration in which the unreal, no longer a legitimate means of attaining the real, is posited as an end in itself. In fact, it is most often the real which is aimed at and elaborated upon by the imagination. (355)

Some confusion may arise as the discussion of real, unreal and "prereal" goes through the deep analysis of philosophical inquiry. But for the purposes of the present argument, the salient points are that perception seeks the existence and meaning of the things which it attempts to evaluate in a rather straightforward act of conscious, observational inquiry, while imagination tends to evaluate by means of an associative, non-linear, and conjectural process that more readily connects its inquiry with the subconscious. Dufrenne's comment that "imagination is opposed to perception" illustrates that the two are pursuing different objectives, with perception working in support of Reason in the search for true meaning. Both imagination and perception are operating towards the discovery of meaning, but they use different styles of inquiry and can produce divergent results.

Merleau-Ponty here discusses the difficulty of grasping an essential "real:"

> The idea of going straight to the essence of things is an inconsistent idea if one thinks about it. What is given is a route, an experience which gradually clarifies itself, which gradually rectifies itself and proceeds by dialogue with itself and with others. Thus what we tear away from the dispersion of instants is not an already-made reason; it is, as has always been said, a natural light, our openness to *something*. What saves us is the possibility of a new development, and our power of making even what is false, true—by thinking through our errors and replacing them within the domain of truth. (21)

Perception cannot exist alone in discerning truth. It is the initial part of a mechanism of assimilation that leads to understanding and it is also the crucial first link in any behavior chain. Its impressions are lodged in the imagination until another force, such as inspiration, revelation or, tragically, malicious supposition can alter them.

A similar understanding resonates from the pen of Thomas Wright. In *Passions of the Minde in General* he presents a series of questions that anticipate the modern inquisitions of phenomenology and also serve to sidelight the central perceptual queries of the tragic figures from Shakespearean drama:

> I could propound aboue a hundreth questions about the soule and the body, which partly are disputed of by Diuines, partly by naturall and morall Philosophers, partly by Physitians, all which, I am of opinion, are so abstruse and hidden, that they might be defended as Problemes and either part of Contradiction alike impugned. Some I will set downe, that by them coniecture may be made of the rest.
>
> *Problemes concerning the substance of our Soules.*
>
> …17 What dependance hath our vnderstanding vpon the imagination
> 18 How a corporall imagination concurres to spirituall conceit.
> 19 What is apprehension and conceiuing?
> 20 What, iudgement and affirming?
> 21 What, discourse and inferring?…
> 23 How apprehend we so many things together without confusion?…
> 37 What is the vniversall obiect of our Vnderstanding? euery thing, or onely the truth of things.
> 38 Whereupon commeth the difficulty we find in Vnderstanding, proceedeth it from the obiect, or the weaknesse of the faculty, or both?…
> 41 What is Art? what the Idaea in the Artificers minde, by whose direction hee frameth his workes? what is Prudence, Wisedome, the internall speech and words of the minde…
> 44 What is Conscience?…
> 89 What is our fantasie or imagination…
> 91 How our Vnderstanding maketh it represent vnto it what it pleaseth.
> 92 How our wit can cause it conceiue such obiects as sense neuer could present vnto it…
>
> …few or none of these difficulties, which concerne vs so neere as our soules and bodies, are throughly as yet, in my iudgement, declared, euen of the profoundest wits; for I know not how their best resolutions leaue still our Vnderstandings dry, thirsting for a clearer and fresher Fountaine. (300-309)

Imposed values, or intentionally distorted re-evaluations of perceived things can change our relations to established norms. The major difficulty of perception, as Merleau-Ponty points out, is bound up in the fact that rarely, if ever, is it possible to perceive an object or circumstance in its entirety. Yet the effort to do so is essential. Two of Shakespeare's tragedies detail the horrific consequences of the failure of that effort. Should Othello, after being seemingly careful to test Iago's assertion that Desdemona has been unfaithful to him with Cassio, commit an honor killing based upon the insinuations of only one individual? Should Macbeth, who has previously fantasized about eliminating King Duncan, take the Weird Sisters' prognostications as fact and pre-empt the natural order of things when that natural order does not at first *appear* to work out according to his perception? In both instances, they were right to hold to their first instinctive positions. It was when they were persuaded to embrace a suppositional reality that they inaugurated their ruin.

The Greek concept of *hamartia*, the "error of judgment" that undergirds the idea of a hero's "tragic flaw," is placed within a different frame of view when considered from the perspective of perception, imagination and fascination. Aristotle, in his *De Poetica*, delineates a structure for successful tragic drama that influenced nearly all of the Elizabethan English dramatists. Whether they were attempting to work strictly within its form, or whether they were rethinking it to create brilliant new concepts of tragedy, they found Aristotle's basic observations useful, and modern critics have traced his influence in their work. Taken directly from the *Poetics*, the decision-making faculties of the tragic hero of the stage operate within both his nature and his circumstances. But the element of hamartia does not suggest that the hero should be somehow entirely virtuous, except for a significant defect, which causes his ruin. In fact, Aristotle writes that the protagonist should *not* be "pre-eminently virtuous and just" (1453a, 8-9). He should be

> the intermediate kind of personage,…whose misfortune, however, is brought upon him not by vice and depravity but by some error of judgment, of the number of those in the enjoyment of great reputation and prosperity; e.g. Oedipus, Thyestes, and the men of note of similar families. (1453a, 8-11)

The complexity of the central character matches Aristotle's desire for a layered (but unified) plot:

> It follows, therefore, that there are three forms of Plot to be avoided. (1) A good man must not be seen passing from happiness to misery, or (2) a bad man from misery to happiness. The first situation is not fear-inspiring or piteous, but simply odious to us. The second is the most untragic that can be; it has no one of the requisites of Tragedy; it does not appeal either to the human feeling in us, or to our pity, or to our fears. Nor, on the other hand, should (3) an extremely bad man be seen falling from happiness into misery. Such a story may arouse the human feeling in us, but it will not move us to either pity or fear; pity is occasioned by undeserved misfortune, and fear by that of one like ourselves; so that there will be nothing either piteous of fear-inspiring in the situation. (1452b, 33 – 1453a, 7)

> The perfect Plot, accordingly must have a single, and not (as some tell us) a double issue; the change in the hero's fortunes must be not from misery to happiness, but on the contrary from happiness to misery; and the cause of it must lie not in any depravity, but in some great error on his part; the man himself being either such as we have described, or better, not worse, than that. Fact also confirms our theory. (1453a, 12-18)

The key issue regarding perception, then, is a "great error" rather than an inherent defect that makes the hero irrecoverably vulnerable. Michael Hattaway, in "Tragedy and Political Authority," references Wimsatt and Brooks's *Literary Criticism* when he observes that:

> The word from Aristotle that generated the notion of 'tragic flaw' is *hamartia*. Etymologically the word means 'missing the mark with a bow and arrow', an error but not necessarily a culpable one. It designates an action—an error or mistake—rather than a flaw in character. However, by the time of the translation of the New Testament from Greek, five hundred years after Aristotle, the word had changed its meaning to 'sin.' (118)

Hattaway identifies what might appear to a theatre audience: the tragic hero engaged in "sinful" actions. While hamartia's meaning may have evolved to include the judgment-laden connotations of sin, Aristotle's original concept of "missing the mark" might be more

effective in invoking that audience's pity. It certainly coincides with the mechanics of perception better than whatever might be understood as sin—if indeed "the taste of goods or evils doth greatly depend on the opinion we have of them" (Montaigne, 290).

Before the perceived thing even reaches the seat of reason and judgment, its nature and meaning must have already been processed and formalized within a certain bias or perspective. In that space between the true nature of the perceived thing and its form when presented to the reasoning faculties, lies the potential for the distortion and manipulation of the comprehension of its essence. The error of judgment becomes a *weak portal* of the mechanism of perception. Through the manipulation of the victim's imagination and ultimately his reasoning faculties, a mental fixation can be difficult to expunge—especially if those mental changes bring with them physical effects.

The ongoing tension between the true nature of the events presented in Shakespearean tragedy and their perceived values and meanings—both by the stage characters and by the audience—creates an immediacy for Shakespeare's arguments that galvanizes focus upon them in a way that few other playwrights have achieved. Yet any literary work that calls into question what the individual can and should know, could or should do, invites its audience or readership not only to place these questions within a personal context for evaluation, but to experience them viscerally, understand the nuances and magnitude of their implications from within the aesthetic construct, and ultimately to compare them to the highest conceivable sense of the manifestation of reason, or "logos," as Merleau-Ponty phrases it:

> By these words, the "primacy of perception," we mean that the experience of perception is our presence at the moment when things, truths, values are constituted for us; that perception is a nascent *logos*;…that it summons us to the tasks of knowledge and action. It is not a question of reducing human knowledge to sensation, but of assisting at the birth of this knowledge, to make it as sensible as the sensible, to recover the consciousness of rationality. (25)

The Power of the Imagination and the Seat of Reason

> Some ascribe all vices to a false and corrupt Imagination, Anger, Revenge, Lust, Ambition, Covetousnesse, which preferres false before that which is right and good, deluding the soule with false shews and suppositions.
>
> –Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (123-124)

Any study that examines a relationship between thinking and acting must identify the specific links between mind and body that make that action possible. Over the centuries, the theories regarding this interconnectivity have changed, though even today there is still an on-going debate as to exactly how the mind and the body interact. One of the central theories for early modern medicine involved the classical theory of humors and spirits—one of the most influential doctrines as far as "psychological" issues were concerned. Actually, "pre-psychological" might be a more accurate term, as the Elizabethans did not conceptually divide psychology from physiology. As Gail Kern Paster explains in *Humoring the Body*,

> …there was no way conceptually or discursively to separate the psychological from the physiological. The physical model for what Renaissance philosophers called the organic soul—that part of the tripartite soul governing the emotions—was, Katharine Park has argued, "a simple hydraulic one, based on a clear localisation of psychological function by organ or system of organs." (12) [Paster quotes Park from the *Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, 469]

"Psychology" was originally the study of the psyche, or soul; according to the *OED*, the word first appeared in 1693 in a translation of *Blancard's Physical Dictionary*:

> *Anthropologia*, the Description of a Man, or the Doctrin concerning him. Bartholine divides it into Two Parts; viz. *Anatomy* which treats of the Body, and *Psycology*, which treats of the Soul. (*OED*, 2347)

Any "anatomie" of fascination, therefore, must include a delineation of how it works upon the mind (the imagination, thereafter the reason and memory), concurrent with its effect upon the body ("humours," "spirits," internal organs and external features). The salient aspects of the phenomenon pertinent to the study of its presence in *Macbeth* and *Othello*

revolve around the way in which it works and proceeds from a mental conception to a physical demonstration, not physical cause to mental effect. There are various early modern medical theories and writings that explain pathologies and mental perturbations resulting from improper diet, lack of exercise, exposure to the elements and many other material causes. Likewise, there were ailments that seemed to proceed from purely mental causes—such as believing that a family member was actually a cow or other beast—which mystified Renaissance doctors and invited speculation that the Devil was somehow involved. The language of *Macbeth* and *Othello* indicates that any fascinating effects proceed more from spectacle and argument rather than the ill-health or the physical intoxication of the hero.

Generally, the documents of the time do not treat fascination as one of the symptoms of a medical condition. When it is mentioned, it occurs in relation to magic or a state of awe from some extraordinary source. If one views the words "fascination" and "bewitchment" as essentially synonymous (as Veron's *Dictionary* asserts) in early modern writings, then the phenomenon is presented as having a certain power to influence behavior, yet at the same time is relatively indefinable in its source. And if the power of fascination does not, in fact, come from witchcraft, medicine or the supernatural, but rather from suggestion and the fixation of an individual's imagination, the operation of the phenomenon loses much of its mystery and begins to reveal the true source of its power.

To view the phenomenon as more of a psychological pathology misrepresented as an occult force is to focus directly upon the crux of the issue. Because Renaissance physiology and pre-psychology were bound in the same hide, the mind/body relationship should be studied holistically—as Paster envisions it—as a "psychophysiology" (12). In order to demonstrate how fascinated thought translated into physical action, I shall argue that the mechanics of that process are as follows:

Fascination engages, "bewitches," the victim's thought—specifically encouraging the Imagination to obsess upon a certain Suggestion

which, in turn,

creates a supposititious Fixation in the Imagination powerful enough to override the normal influence and functions of Judgment/Reason, and possibly to compromise Memory,

which, in turn,

allows the Imagination to dominate the mental processes, including the management of the "Motions", i.e., the Emotions, or Passions,

which, in turn,

allows Passion-based decision-making to rule the Fascinated thought,

which, in turn,

allows the Passions, via the Will, to physically stimulate the Spirits, Humors and Body toward a particular and insufficiently interrogated bias or imbalance,

which, in turn,

further corrupts the mental processes by the added influence of the Humors, and ultimately impels physical actions governed by the new mind/body alignment.

The key element in this construction is the Imagination. To reiterate the relationship between perception and the imagination, Mikel Dufrenne once again illuminates the concept:

> Whatever form imagination may take, it is always linked to perception, and its snares are dangerous only in this connection. From the very fact that perception represents an unceasing effort to overcome the seduction of images, we see that images are primary and that we reach the real through the unreal. It is because imagination continually enlarges the field of the real which is offered to it and furnishes its spatial and temporal depth that appearances gain a certain stability and that the real becomes a world—an inexhaustible totality in which appearances arise

> through the disposition of my body and the direction of my attention…To imagine is first of all to open up the possible, which is not necessarily realized in images. Imagination is to be distinguished from perception as the possible is distinguished from the given, not as the unreal is from the real. Imagining is reproductive, not productive. If imagining produces anything, it is the possibility of a given. Imagining does not furnish the content as perceived but sees to it that something *appears*. Its correlate is the possible, and this is why it can get carried away at times. (357)

The Renaissance concept of the workings of the imagination provides not only the vital link between sense testimony and reasoned reaction, but also the chaos that results when the imagination creates a false reality out of the "possibilities of the givens"—the sensory data—and also the stored memory. Imagination is also the key factor in the creation of a mental state that is not brought about by bodily dysfunction. It can create a situation independent of the influence of the humors and, subsequently, motivate those humors via the passions.

Robert Burton addresses the concept in detail within Part I of *Anatomy of Melancholy*. In a subsection titled "Of the force of Imagination," he lists many "phantasticall visions" and "absurd suppositions" that afflict some unfortunate individuals. In a lengthy discourse which is worth citing, he argues that in many instances these suppositions

> …can be imputed to naught else but to a corrupt and false Imagination. It works not in sicke and melancholy men only, but even most forcibly sometimes in such as are sound, it makes them suddainely sicke, and alters their temperature in an instant. And sometimes a strong apprehension, as *Valesius* proues, will take away Diseases: in both kindes it will produce reall effects. Men if they see but another man tremble, giddy, or sicke of some fearefull disease, their apprehension and feare is so strong in this kinde, that they will haue the same disease. Or if by some Southsayer, wise-man, fortune-teller, or Physition, they be told they hall haue such a disease they will so seriously apprehend it, that they will instantly labour of it. A thing familiar in *China*, faith *Riccius* the Iesuite, *If it be told them they shall be sicke on such a day, when that day comes they will surely be sicke, and will be so terribly afflicted, that sometimes they dye vpon it*. D. Cotta in his discouery of ignorant practitioners of Physicke cap. 8. hath two strange stories to this purpose, what fancy is able to doe: The one of a Parsons wife in *Northamptonshiere*, Ao 1607. that coming to a Physition, and told by him that she was troubled with the *Sciatica*, as he coniectured (a disease shee was free from) the same night after her returne, vpon his words fell into a grieuous fit of the *Sciatica*. And such another example he hath of another goodwife, that was so troubled with the cramp, after the same maner she came by it, because her Physition did but name it.

> Sometimes death it selfe is caused by force of phantasie. I haue heard of one that coming by chance in company of him, that was thought to be sicke of the Plague (which was not so) fell downe suddainely dead. Another was sick of the Plague with conceit. (125-126)

Later, he makes a specific link between the power of the imagination and the phenomenon of fascination as a force. "Forcible imagination," produces the external effects from one person to another:

> So diversly doth this phantasie of ours affect, turne & winde, so imperiously command our bodies, which as another can take *Proteus or a Camelion allshapes; and is of such force, as Ficinus* addes, *that it can worke vpon others as well as our selues*. How can otherwise bleare eyes in one man cause the like affection in another? Why doth one mans yawning make another yawne? One mans pissing provokes a second many times to doe the like?…Why doe Witches and old women fascinate and bewitch children, but as *Wierus, Paracelsus, Cardan, Mizaldus, Valleriola,* and many Philosophers thinke, the forcible Imagination of the one party, moues and alters the spirits of the other. (127)

Brutus, in *Julius Caesar*, outlines a poetic model of the struggle that imagination provokes in the mental realm as it contends with reason. He likens it to an internal "insurrection" when the dread of the impending action comes imaginatively into focus as he contemplates the assassination of Caesar:

> Betweene the acting of a dreadfull thing,
> And the first motion, all the *Interim* is
> Like a *Phantasma*, or a hideous Dreame:
> The *Genius*, and the mortall Instruments
> Are then in councell; and the state of man,
> Like to a little Kingdome, suffers then
> The nature of an Insurrection. (4.625-631)

Lawrence Babb, in *The Elizabethan Malady*, Lily Bess Campbell, in *Shakespeare's Tragic Heroes*, and Gail Kern Paster's *Humoring the Body* provide modern studies of the ways in which the humors and the passions interact with human behavior and, in the case of Campbell, their influence on Shakespeare's characters. The following brief analysis of the overview of the relations of imagination and physical behavior is indebted to their work and

to the work of the authors of the fundamental primary sources—Burton, Galen, Aristotle, Wright, du Laurens and Bright.

The Renaissance concept of the conscious thought was predicated on classical beliefs espoused by thinkers such as Aristotle (*De Anima*) and Galen (*Art of Physic*), which specified physical locations for different faculties. Babb asserts that,

> The Renaissance derived its information concerning temporal man chiefly from writers of ancient times and from medieval writers indebted to classical thought. The principal authorities were Plato, Aristotle, Galen, Augustine, Avicenna, and Aquinas. (1)

With respect to the operation of fascination, the salient points within the early modern theory of mind/body interaction, center on the internal senses. These are the prime movers of human action. In addition to the five external senses, sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste—which interacted with the "sensitive soul"—there were three internal senses which interacted with the "rational soul": the "common sense," the imagination (both located in the outer or foremost of the three "cells" of the brain), and the memory (located in the rear of the brain). Babb supplies the following outline for the hierarchy of the Renaissance concept of the body:

> The soul is the force which animates the inert matter of the body and directs its activities. It is one and indivisible. It is nevertheless, for purposes of analysis and description, divided into three sub-souls known as the vegetative (or vegetable) soul, the sensitive (or sensible) soul, and the rational (reasonable) soul.
>
> The vegetative soul is seated in the liver. Its principal faculties are those of nourishment, growth, and reproduction; in general, it directs the humbler physiological processes below the level of consciousness. Plants and animals as well as men have vegetative souls. The sensitive soul has the faculties of feeling and motion. It has the power of perceiving objects other than itself, it evaluates them as pleasing or repellent, and it directs motions of the body calculated either to obtain or to avoid them. It is seated in the brain and heart. 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 of knowing God. The rational soul is the "self." (2-3)

Man's exclusive rational soul, in the middle (highest) "cell" or "womb" of the brain, was seen as connected somehow to the immortal essence, and reason was the most likely vehicle to transmit the inspirations of the divine. It was the special element of the link between soul and body and was to be the irreproachable agent that governed the body according to righteousness. It was also seen as a faculty endowed exclusively upon mankind as a gift from God. When it was receiving direct inspiration from the divine, it was theoretically infallible in its function. But reason was also responsible for interpreting and judging stimuli from the material world. The perceptive faculties gathered raw data via the five senses: light and sound waves, temperature fluctuations, spatial differentials, odors and tastes—and this data was processed by the imagination, which could interpret sensory impressions and evaluate them beyond the immediate information. The imagination had an analytical function that could determine whether the existing situation was pleasant or painful and could assemble composite images from stored memory to contextualize the current experience.

The reasoning "soul" made value judgments on the images and scenarios sent to it from the imagination and, when all was in balance, made good decisions with respect to possible actions taken by the body. It took useful operations and stored them in memory, which also, interestingly enough, kept a database of information that came directly from the imagination. Incoming data, therefore, was presented to the reasoning faculties after having been assembled and contextualized by the imagination. The reasoning faculties evaluated this information by comparing it to data stored in the memory and interrogating it through inspiration and its own moral biases. Once reason made a determination, it would incite the passions to impel action if that was what the perceived situation warranted. These passions were powerful forces and reason would choose only the appropriate passion to drive the

action. In a situation of impending physical harm, for example, fear might be invoked to cause the body to move away from the threat. When desire of a person or thing became predominant, then love would be aroused to bring the person into closer contact and familiarity with the object of desire.

Where the system becomes vulnerable to dysfunction is when the operative mental elements extend beyond or outside of their prescribed parameters. In much the same way that society in the macrocosm experiences disorder when individuals attempt to abrogate the social hierarchy, the body experiences chaos in the microcosm when the established order of the mental and physical hierarchy is misgoverned. In the model of fascination, a potentially devastating disorder can occur when the imagination is co-opted to work outside of its specific assimilative mandate and assume the responsibilities of reason's judiciary function and the regulation of the passions. Imagination has formidable creative powers, and reason has a certain dependency upon imagination that can render it vulnerable. As Babb illustrates below, the imagination

> …is a faculty which never rests; even when the other sensory and intellectual powers are in repose, a stream of images flows aimlessly through the imagination, and when one is asleep, this stream continues in his dreams. It is called the eye of the mind because the rational powers see the external world through it and through it alone; a new impression must pass successively through the external senses, the common sense, and the imagination before the reason may apprehend it. (3)

The rational ("thinking") soul and the sensitive ("acting") soul rely on the internal powers of what sixteenth-century thought called "motions," "affections," "passions," and "perturbations." These terms are virtually synonymous with what modern thought would term emotions, and the term that seemed to have the most usage in Shakespeare's time was "passion." These passions, as with all agents of action, were seated in the sensitive soul, specifically in, as Lily B. Campbell states:

> …the appetitive part of the soul, the part of the sensitive soul which desires or avoids,…considered as the great opponent of reason for supremacy in man. And it is in this appetitive part of the sensible soul, or at any rate according to any possible division of the soul, it is in this appetitive part of the soul that the passions reside. Hence the fundamental moral concern of the period is with the passions and the reason. (68)

The general categories of the varied and numerous passions were identified as *Concupiscible* (Love, Hatred, Desire, Aversion, Joy/Pleasure, Sadness/Grief) and *Irascible* (Boldness, Fear, Hope, Despair, Anger). Babb clarifies and summarizes their functions as follows:

> Concupiscible passions arise when the imagination or the reasonable will perceives or conceives an object which appeals to it as pleasing or repellent. If the object is pleasing, the motion *love* is aroused; if painful, the motion *hatred*. From love arises *desire*, the inclination to possess whatever one loves; from hatred arises *aversion*, the inclination to shun whatever is abhorrent. *Joy* follows the fulfillment of desire; *sorrow* arises when inclination is thwarted. The irascible passions motivate effort toward the satisfaction of the concupiscible passions. *Boldness* inspires one to meet difficulties and dangers with confidence; *fear* prompts him to flee from dangers with which he apparently cannot cope; *hope* encourages him to persevere in his pursuits; *despair* persuades him to abandon fruitless endeavors; *anger* is the impulse to fight for the fulfillment of desire or aversion. These eleven principal passions are considerably subdivided. *Ambition, avarice,* and sexual *love*, for example, are subdivisions of desire; *pity*, *shame*, and *remorse* are subdivisions of sorrow. There are also compound passions; *envy*, for instance, is compounded of the desire for something and the hatred of its possessor. (4)

The Christian attitude towards the passions followed more of the Peripatetic doctrine that passions were only evil when they were not governed by the reasoning faculties, rather than the Stoic doctrine which held that all passions were all evil and were to be completely rejected and transcended. Christianity had a slight doctrinal problem with the idea that *all* passions were evil, as Christ was described as having expressed various passions. Therefore, the concept of distinguishing passions from virtues enjoyed a greater popularity. The passions, either of excess or defect, cause the will to summon up chemical reactions within the four "humours" and both the animal and vital "spirits." According to the dominant (and sometimes unregulated) passion, this creates a disruption in the orderly flow and balance of the fluids that both initiate physical action and influence the mind. So, in the case of an

extreme fixation of fascination driving imagination and passions, the humors and the spirits can create a kind of "feedback loop" that provides a secondary chemical reinforcement of the aberrant mental condition.

To trace the chemical reactions that ultimately impel the limbs to take the actions dictated by fascinated thought, it is necessary to understand the basic characteristics of these chemicals. The Renaissance model, to state it very briefly and generally, believed that humors and spirits were products of the digestion of food. When the food entered into the stomach, it was turned into a viscous liquid called "chyle." This initial form of chyle was then sent to the liver where it underwent a second "concoction" and was broken down into humors: Blood, Choler, Melancholy, and Phlegm.

Blood, which was the most desirable humor, warmed and moistened the whole body, nourished the organs, muscles and flesh, and by a process known as the "third digestion," actually became flesh. It was the life-giving humor and its qualities were Hot, Moist, Red and Sweet. It was so vital to the body that it is analogous to Air in the macrocosm (the outside world). Its "seat" or primary residence was in the liver.

Choler was a lighter fluid that had a tendency to rise to the higher point of the body. It nourished those parts of the body that were considered "hot and dry." It provoked the expulsion of excrements and its qualities were Hot, Dry, Yellow and Bitter. It was analogous to Fire in the macrocosm and was thin and volatile. Its seat was in the gall bladder.

Phlegm was essentially just partially digested chyle. If it were fully digested, it would become blood. It nourished those parts that were cold and moist, such as the brain and the kidneys, and its qualities were Cold, Moist, Colorless and Tasteless. It was analogous to Water in the macrocosm and its seat was in the lungs—sometimes the kidneys.

Melancholy was the heaviest and the thickest product of the "second concoction," and it tended to sink. It was the least pure and least nutrimental part of the chyle and was considered a type of excrement. It was analogous to Earth and nourished elements such as bones, gristles and sinews. It also promoted appetite in the stomach and its qualities were Cold, Dry, Black and Sour. Its seat was the spleen.

Though the bodily condition of "Hot and Moist" was considered the healthiest and "Cold and Dry" was tantamount to the condition of death, the ideal proportions of the humors were for blood to be the most abundant, then phlegm, melancholy, and finally choler. Melancholy was thought to be somehow more useful, though full of dangers, than the explosive choler. It was chiefly the melancholy and choleric humors that provided opportunities for corruption. Too much blood gave ascendancy to such "airy" qualities of cheer, bounty, pity, mercy and courtesy; it was innately healthy and an abundance of it was not overly problematic. Phlegmatics were unlikely to contribute to tragic circumstances because they manifested conditions of antipathy—a decidedly undramatic quality. However, the humours of Melancholy and Choler were excellent tools of the disease of fascination, because their nascent qualities (or as Culpepper says, "conditions") lend themselves well to the phenomenon that works as a bewitchment. Nicholas Culpepper's 1652 translation of Galen's *Art of Physic* describes the age-old picture of melancholics as

> …naturally covetous, self-lovers, cowards, afraid of their own shadows, fearful, careful, solitary, lumpish, unsociable, delight in being alone, stubborn, ambitious, envious, of a deep cogitation, obstinate in opinion, mistrustful, suspicious, spiteful, squeamish, and yet slovenly, they retain anger long and aim at no small things. (qtd. in Aughterson 366)

The description of cholerics is somewhat more complimentary, but is still rife with dangerous tendencies:

> As for conditions, they are naturally quick witted, bold, no way shame-faced, furious, hasty, quarrelsome, fraudulent, eloquent, courageous, stout-hearted creatures, not

> given to sleep much, but much given to jesting, mocking and lying. (qtd. in Aughterson 365)

In Shakespearean drama, the melancholic and choleric profiles call to mind the more unsavory traits of Macbeth and Othello. They outline qualities of character that tend toward the reactionary and aggressive which is generally considered unwholesome compared to the sanguine, and diametrically opposite the tendencies of the phlegmatic.

After the humors are created from the digested chyle, there is a further refining process which takes place in the heart and in the brain. The "spirits"— natural, vital and animal—are created out of blood to carry heat, moisture and signals to every necessary organ of the body. The natural spirits are, according to Burton:

> …begotten in the *Liuer*, and thence dispersed through the Veines, to performe those naturall actions. The *Vitall Spirits* are made in the Heart of the *Naturall*, which by the Arteries, are transported to all the other parts: if these *Spirits* cease, the Life ceaseth, as in a *Syncope* or Swouning. The *Animall Spirits* are formed of the *Vitall*, brought vp to the Braine, and diffused by the Nerues, to the other Members, giue sence and motion to them all. (22)

In many ways, the Elizabethan sense of how the mind and body works is not too far distant from our modern concept. Exchange "humours" for "endocrine secretions" and "spirits" for "neurological impulses," and the model is virtually identical. The excretory and reproductive elements have been ignored here as irrelevant to the discussion, but even they have a similar degree of sophistication and currency in their conception. The system takes a command from the rational soul (regardless of whether the Reason or Imagination is in charge) and translates it into action by stirring up a Passion which acts upon the biochemical system chiefly through the heart.

A function of the sensitive soul, passions have a direct effect on the heart by the animal spirits contained in the brain. When reason determines that there is a need for a passion, it sends animal spirits to the heart, which dilates or contracts depending on the

specific emotion. At the same time, a signal is sent to the corresponding seat of one of the humors and that humor affects the operation of the heart as well. Pleasant or attractive passions expand the heart, sending blood and vital spirits with their attendant heat and moisture throughout the system. Repellent-type passions cause the heart to contract and the system loses heat and moisture. Combative passions send heat, but no moisture, and are quick to burn up the system. Cold and moist "passions" are almost a misnomer, as the qualities of cold and moist have little to no effect upon the heart. Those of a phlegmatic disposition tend to be unemotional.

Of the three more or less active passions, the attractive ones, such as joy and love, tend to promote vitality and growth while the repellent ones, like sadness and despair, are death-inducing because they drain away vital heat and moisture from the body. The combative passions can be healthy in the sense that they can preserve life through "fight-or-flight," but if left unchecked, the moisture-consuming heat will dry out the body and ultimately exhaust it. Because of their intense effects upon the heart, "any passion, if it is very sudden and violent, may kill outright" (Babb, 15).

Outside of a predisposing physical cause or digestive irregularities that might produce a mental condition from a physical disarrangement of the biomechanical system, the passions should be viewed less as a material entity, but more as a mental product that initiates a physical response through the perturbation of the brain's animal spirits. As the activators of the Will, they are the impetus that drives the system. To equate the process with a crude automotive analogy, the forcible imaginations of fascinated thought, like an unregulated spark, activate the petrol of the passions. The passions expand or contract—the resulting motion being an explosion or retreat—creating the movement of Will. Will's direct connection to the physical body puts the mental and emotional impetus into material action.

As in a car, the key to motion is in the regulation of the electric current. If Reason is the governor, the motions are predictable and harmonious. Unregulated sparks and power surges threaten the function of the whole system.

In theory, the push of the imagination-prompted passions against the undiscerning will is the mental/physical connection. When Imagination guides the Passions instead of Reason, the controlling influence of Judgment is laid aside. Passions can arise from unproven assertions or affecting images and fancies, even propositions from a suggested reality that are inherently unreasonable. This proceeding is what makes them dangerous and unpredictable. Without the passions, imagination would have no power over the physical. It would simply be a large database for images and speculation—in the more primitive sense of the word. As it is, however, the imagination's influence over the passions, in the absence of reason, creates an opportunity for fascination to undermine the formidable power of judgment and the rational soul. In fact, this is the only way, in this model, that fascination can have any effect whatsoever. It must work the imagination up into such an enthralled "phrensie," that judgment and reason are suppressed by the runaway imagination and physical action is precipitated almost automatically. There is little delay, in the most acute cases of fascinated thought, between conception and implementation. Unless reason is able to intervene, whatever the imaginant perceives as necessary is put into action.

Whether a given complaint was seen as proceeding from the operation of manipulative internal daemons, an imbalance of the elements in the microcosm, an imbalance of elements in the macrocosm, or the enthralled psychophysiology of the victim himself, many writers agreed with Robert Burton's assertion that restoring order and balance to the patient's thought was of paramount importance in effecting any lasting cure:

Perturbations of the minde rectified. From himselfe, by resisting to the vtmost, confessing his grief to a friend, &c.

> Whosoeuer he is that shall hope to cure this malady in himselfe or any other, must first rectifie these passions and perturbations of the mind, the chiefest cure consists in them…
> *The Bodies mischiefs as Plato* proues, *proceed from the Soule: and if the minde be not first satisfied, the Body can neuer be cured.* (359-360)

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DEVIL AND HIS "RANGING"

The Devil—"Ranging for his Prey"

> Now on a day when the k children of God came and stoode l before the Lord, Satan m came also among them.
> Then the Lord sayde vnto Satan, Whence n commeth thou: And Satan answered the Lord, saying, o From compassing the earth to and fro, and from walking in it.
>
> —Job 1:6,7

> The Devil is a legacy of the widespread human tendency to attribute the origin of evil to non-human influences.
>
> —Richard Cavendish, *The Black Arts* (281)

The belief in supernatural influence upon mankind's affairs has been subjected to conjecture and theory since the beginning of time and a prolific source of speculation has centered upon the presence of evil in human experience. It is a logical impossibility for perfection to engender imperfection, so one of the theological solutions to a creation theory that places an all-good Creator in opposition to a chaotic, imperfect (untruthful, unloving) influence is to posit that imperfection or evil is not created but somehow *allowed* to exist. But this only provokes another problem: how does evil have existence if it was not created by God, and God created all? Rather than adopt the more Platonic theory that all evil is seeming imperfection, the result of a mistaken human sense of things, many Christian religious doctrines have accepted evil as reality and made attempts to reconcile imperfection to the theoretical perfection of God's Creation. Some of these attempts have generated the idea of an "adversary" which vies for preeminence with a perfect God. If God did not create evil, it either does not exist, or there must theoretically be a second creative source that sponsors evil

with God's permission. Such theories provoke energetic contemplation on the practical nature of the problem. History is full of attempts to answer the related questions.

Despite the witchcraft trials, accusations and volumes of literature devoted to the practice of Satanism, and though many groups have historically been accused of devil-worship, genuine Satanists have probably made up a very small segment of the religious community—at least in early modern England. Though hard evidence for this assertion may be difficult to produce, it seems plausible when one considers the various and sometimes conflicting justifications for the accusations of witchcraft and devil-worship. And while Shakespeare never directly illustrates the cultish formalism of demonism, he does present some of its elements, for example, by his display of "The Coniuration" scene in *The First Part of the Contention* (4.593-662), the "Apparitions" scene in *Macbeth* (18.1352-1463), and in several speeches invoking spiritual entities to fortify the will, to bring some expected material gain, or to solemnize a commitment to a potentially violent action. Queen Margaret's curse in *Richard III*, "Why then giue way dull cloudes to my quicke curses:" (3.597-623), Lady Macbeth's speech "Come you Spirits, / That tend on mortall thoughts,…"(5.332-346), and Othello's "…Like to the Pontic Sea / …I here ingage my words" (9.1903-1912) are three of the more famous passages of such invocation. Othello vows by "yond Marble Heauen" (9.1910), but he might not qualify as God's earthly instrument of Justice if his cause is erroneous. In an unrighteous persecution, God, in a doctrinal Christian context, would not support the effort. But in the same theoretical construct, the Devil just might.

In a physical form, the Devil was difficult to see, but reports of his works and the work of his minions were commonplace in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Hyperius cites the following example which also indicates the purpose of the Devil's agenda (to call the

faithful away from true faith) and the main defense against him: calling upon the Savior for intervention:

> S. Hierome in the lyfe of Hilarion doth shewe, that the deuill did somtime set forth before the saide holy man to be hard of him the cryinge of yong children, the wailing and lamentation of women, the noyse of armies, the blating of cattell, and straunge sounds of diuers voyces, that he ranne away rather for the sounde than for the sight. And a while after he sheweth: as vnawares, when the Mone shined, he sawe a chariot with fiery horses to runne vpon him: and when he had caled upon Jesus, before his eyes all the pompe was swalowed vp with a sodden openinge of the earth. He addeth: how ofte naked women appered vnto him while he laye, how ofte verie great plentie of delicates appered to him beinge an hungred. And he reckeneth vp certaine other thinges. And all things were on this wise prepared of deuiles, which to call hym away from faith, from feruent inuocation, and contemplation of deuine things, did set forth things not true, but shapes and images of thinges, or els bodies for the time formed. (f4) (87-89)

In the following citations from *Confessions*, St. Augustine considered the source of evil influence, and wondered how it could come from a perfect creation:

> But again I said, Who made me? Did not my God, who is not only good, but goodness itself? Whence then came I to will evil and nill good, so that I am thus justly punished? Who set this in me, and ingrafted into me this plant of bitterness, seeing I was wholly formed by my most sweet God? If the devil were the author, whence is that same devil? And if he also by his own perverse will, of a good angel became a devil, whence, again, came in him that evil will whereby he became a devil, seeing the whole nature of angels was made by that most good Creator? (122)

> Where is evil then, and whence, and how crept it in hither? What is its root, and what its seed? Or hath it no being? Why then fear we and avoid what is not? Or if we fear it idly, then is that very fear evil, whereby the soul is thus idly goaded and racked. Yea, and so much a greater evil, as we have nothing to fear, and yet do fear. Therefore either is that evil which we fear, or else evil is, that we fear. (124)

John Calvin comes quickly to the crux of the presence and agency of evil in creation and the world, and compared to the rest of his prodigious writings spends relatively little time discussing the origins. For Calvin, it is sufficient that Satan evolved; the real work is concerned with how to deal with the manifold sin of the first disobedience caused by Satan's temptation of Eve, and unite with Christ. In the *Institutes*, he summarizes his position:

> But as the devil was created by God, we must remember that this malice which we attribute to his nature is not from creation, but from depravation. Everything

> damnable in him he brought upon himself, by his revolt and fall. Of this Scripture reminds us, lest, by believing that he was so created at first, we should ascribe to God what is most foreign to his nature. For this reason, Christ declares, (John viii. 44), that Satan, when he lies, "speaketh of his own," and states the reason, "because he abode not in the truth." By saying that he abode not in the truth, he certainly intimates that he once was in the truth, and my calling him the father of lies, he puts it out of his power to charge God with the depravity of which he was himself the cause. But although the expressions are brief and not very explicit, they are amply sufficient to vindicate the majesty of God from every calumny. And what more does it concern us to know of devils? (152)

This secondary, adversarial entity had to be part of the original Creation, yet somehow came to oppose the will of God. The Devil's kingdom was believed to have had its own infernal hierarchy as a counterfeit to God's and some elements resembled the pagan Greek and Roman models. By the time of Shakespeare, the Catholic and Calvinistic Protestant traditions had acknowledged a theological structure that placed the Devil directly opposed to God, his demons opposed to God's angels, and his human agents opposed to the church's saints. The best extrabiblical literary illustration of this concept is John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Though it was written long after Shakespeare's death, it paints a compelling picture of the early modern religious concept of God and the Devil. The Christian story of the creation of the adversary is bound up in the scenario of "The Fall of Lucifer," inspired by the Bible and portrayed by Milton below in a distillation of the angel Raphael's tale to Adam from Books 5 and 6:

> As yet this world was not, and *Chaos* wilde (Book 5, 577-8)
> Reignd where these Heav'ns now rowl,…
>
> …th' Empyreal Host
> Of Angels by Imperial summons call'd
> Innumerable before th' Almighties Throne
> Forthwith from all the ends of Heav'n appeerd
> Under thir Hierarchs in order bright… (583-587)
>
> Hear all ye Angels, Progenie of Light,
> Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Vertues, Powers,
> Hear my Decree, which unrevok't shall stand.
> This day I have begot whom I declare

My onely Son, and on this holy Hill
Him have anointed, whom ye now behold
At my right hand; your Head I him appoint;
And by my Self have sworn to him shall bow
All knees in Heav'n, and shall confess him Lord: (600-608)

Satan, so call him now, his former name
Is heard no more in Heav'n; he of the first,
If not the first Arch-Angel, great in Power,
In favour and in praeminence, yet fraught
With envie against the Son of God, that day
Honourd by his great Father, and proclaimd
Messiah King anointed, could not beare
Through pride that sight, & thought himself impaird.
Deep malice thence conceiving and disdain,
Soon as midnight brought on the duskie houre
Friendliest to sleep and silence, he resolv'd
With all his Legions to dislodge, and leave
Unworshipt, unobey'd the Throne supream… (658-670)

With an army of angels loyal to his rebellious cause, Satan does battle with God's legions:

…with ruinous assault (Book 6, 216-219)
And inextinguishable rage; all Heav'n
Resounded, and had Earth bin then, all Earth
Had to her Center shook.

As celestial beings made of eternal substance, no wounds are fatal (though they are very painful for the rebels). It is not until the Son joins the battle that the Satanic Host is defeated and ejected from Heaven:

…they astonisht all resistance lost, (6, 838-843)
All courage; down thir idle weapons drop'd;
O're Shields and Helmes, and helmed heads he rode
Of Thrones and mighty Seraphim prostrate,
That wisht the Mountains now might be again
Thrown on them as a shelter from his ire.

Yet half his strength he put not forth, but check'd (6, 853-879)
His Thunder in mid Volie, for he meant
Not to destroy, but root them out of Heav'n:
The overthrown he rais'd, and as a Heard
Of Goats or timerous flock together throngd
Drove them before him Thunder-struck, pursu'd
With terrors and with furies to the bounds
And Chrystal wall of Heav'n, which op'ning wide,

Rowld inward, and a spacious Gap disclos'd
Into the wastful Deep; the monstrous sight
Strook them with horror backward, but far worse
Urg'd them behind; headlong themselves they threw
Down from the verge of Heav'n, Eternal wrauth
Burnt after them to the bottomless pit.
Hell heard th' unsufferable noise, Hell saw
Heav'n ruining from Heav'n and would have fled
Affrighted; but strict Fate had cast too deep
Her dark foundations, and too fast had bound.
Nine dayes they fell; confounded *Chaos* roard,
And felt tenfold confusion in thir fall
Through his wilde Anarchie, so huge a rout
Incumberd him with ruin: Hell at last
Yawning receavd them whole, and on them clos'd,
Hell thir fit habitation fraught with fire
Unquenchable, the house of woe and paine.
Disburd'nd Heav'n rejoic'd, and soon repaird
Her mural breach, returning whence it rowld. (6, 879)

This mythology presents a very interesting concept in placing Satan and his legions in competition with mankind to enter (or re-enter) heaven. For as Satan says in Book I:

For who can yet beleeve, though after loss, (1, 631-634)
That all these puissant Legions, whose exile
Hath emptied Heav'n, shall fail to re-ascend
Self-rais'd, and repossess thir native seat?

…our better part remains (1, 645-662)
To work in close design, by fraud or guile
What force effected not: that he no less
At length from us may find, who overcomes
By force, hath overcome but half his foe.
Space may produce new Worlds; whereof so rife
There went a fame in Heav'n that he ere long
Intended to create, and therein plant
A generation, whom his choice regard
Should favour equal to the Sons of Heaven:
Thither, if but to pry, shall be perhaps
Our first eruption, thither or elsewhere:
For this Infernal Pit shall never hold
Caelestial Spirits in Bondage, nor th' Abyss
Long under darkness cover. But these thoughts
Full Counsel must mature: Peace is despaird,
For who can think Submission? Warr then, Warr
Open or understood must be resolv'd.

Man is seen as a competitor for the fallen angels' lost places in Heaven. As Satan's jealousy of God's power and Christ's honored position caused him to rebel, so man's rival status as entities groomed to replace the rebels in Heaven causes Satan to envy that state of grace. He resolves to keep mankind from Heaven by making Man unworthy of it. Thus, he "enters" into the serpent in the Garden of Eden, to beguile man into failing a test of obedience—the same fault for which he himself was cast out of Heaven.

The Devil, in the form of the serpent, makes good use of Eve's imagination. By suggesting to her that the prohibition against eating the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was not to protect her from instant death, but to prevent her from becoming "as a god" (Gen. 3:5), the serpent awakened in her the ambition to be more than she already was. This mythological being, a talking serpent, represented a prompting to the willful propensities of man to look beyond the status quo. As the scene is portrayed in the Geneva Bible, the serpent worked through what Hilgard calls a "direct suggestion:"

> And the woman sayd vnto the serpent,
> We eat of the fruite of ye trees of the garden.
>
> But of the fruite of the tree which is in the mids of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, c least ye die.
>
> Then * the serpent said to the woman, Ye shall not d + die at all,
>
> But God doth know that when ye shall eate thereof, your eyes shall be opened, And ye shall be as gods, e knowing good and euill.
>
> So the woman (seeing that the tree was good for meat, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, & a tree to be desired, to get knowledge) tooke of the fruit thereof, & did * eat, and gaue also to her husband with her, and he f did eat.
>
> Then the eyes of them both were opened, and they g knew that they were naked, and they sewed figge tree leaues together, and made themselues breeches. (Gen 3: 2-7)

The glosses on the side of the biblical page containing the above text clarify that Satan made use of the lowly serpent by speaking through him to Eve (*a, b*). The primal acts of

disobedience to the established order brought in a little chaos to human paradise. Eve bears the initial blame, but Adam is culpable as well; the true mistake is apparently not immediately repenting and seeking God's forgiveness:

> c. In doubting of Gods threatnings shee yeelded to Satan.
> d. This is Satans chiefest subtilitie, to cause vs not to feare Gods threatnings.
> e. As though he should say, God doeth not forbid you to eat of the fruit, saue that he knoweth that if ye should eate thereof, yee should be like to him.
> f. Not so much to please his wife, as moued by ambition at her perswasion.
> g. They began to feele their misery, but they sought not to God for remedy. (A2)

Many of the temptations, quandaries, internal questionings and negotiations confronting Othello and Macbeth find their roots resonating in Lucifer's Fall and Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden. Both plays feature the issues of doubt or misapprehension of an established order, lack of respect for an established order, self-righteous vauntings above place, self-justification in transgressions of the law, presumption of "getting away with it," and the absence of a compelling impulse to correct, repent of or repair individual transgressions. Many of these elements bind together in the Renaissance concept of the "deadly sin" of *Superbia*, or Pride—generally considered to be the worst, or deadliest of the Seven Sins. Perhaps this is because it was so indelibly associated with Lucifer's Fall? Richard Cavendish observes that it seems not only to be a central part of his being, but also a motivating force within him—which some people might find irresistibly compelling:

> Evil has its own perverse allure and the greater the powers with which the Devil is credited the more his attraction is increased. The Devil, like God, has been constantly pictured in the image of man, and Christians have believed in the great archangel's revolt against God, in part at least, because it strikes a responsive chord in the human heart. Lucifer is man in rebellion and his pride seems a more worthy explanation of the origin of evil... The result has been the tendency to see the Devil as a titanic romantic figure, as he is in *Paradise Lost*—the arch-rebel against authority, fearless, determined, defiant in the face of superior force, unhumbled in defeat—and to accord him a willing or unwilling admiration. With all the magnificence of the Devil's pride and power, it is not surprising that some have attempted to enter his service. (289)

The Devil as the chief of all evil and bewitchment in the cultural conceptions of early modern Protestantism is a useful context in which to place an argument for fascination as a chaotic element in society. In their essential states, phenomena such as fascination, bewitchment, the deadly sins and other undesirable influences can be seen as disordering or dissociative states of thought, contrasting with the theology of living "in grace" or a life “hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3: 3). Evil is a relative perspective and sometimes not altogether supportable as a conditional reality if a close analysis is made of its perceived essence. The causal force of evil is even circumspect. For evil to operate as a force, theoretically, it must do so under license from God. From the marginalia in the Geneva Bible's first chapter of Job come explanations to remind us that:

> l: Because our infirmitie cannot comprehend God in his maiestie, hee is set foorth unto us as a King, that our capacitie may be able to understand that which is spoken of him.
>
> m: This declareth that although Satan be adversarie to God, yet hee is compelled to obey him, and doe him all homage, without whose permission and appoyntment hee can doe nothing.
>
> o: Herein is described the nature of Satan, which is ever ranging for his prey.
> (Job 1:6,7)

Individual experience and perspective tends to create value judgments of good and evil. Evil does not fit logically within the perfection of Creation—Calvin calls it a "depracation"—implying that it is a departure from the truth. "Evil" is a term for the development of disorder, and disorder is not *inherently* evil. Perhaps that is a circular way of saying that with no Creator, the thing—evil—is nothing. Disorder is what the Creator allegedly made Creation from and the Creator (the Christian Creator in any event) did not add evil—He simply organized the Void which existed before the world and time. It might be said that evil is a subjective evaluation of disorder appearing within an ordered Creation. However, if God is not the author of disorder, Christian theory assigns it to God's

"adversary"—the definition of the word "Satan" in the original Hebrew. It is the Devil who is, as the Gospel of John declares, "…a liar, and the p father thereof" (John 8:44). The marginal note "p" here adds "The authour thereof."

The whole rationale for the Devil concept, intellectually, was to find a place to lay off some of the uncomfortable burdens of personal responsibility for creating disorder, or failures. Culturally, it was convenient to have an established mythos that aided in the creation of common signifiers in order to foster group identities. But most importantly for the theatre arts, the adversarial relationship of God and the Devil provided a generally accepted universal conflict that could be dramatized in an almost limitless number of possible scenarios.

The mention of the public theatre here might provoke, in the mind of a sixteenth-century English "anti-theatricalist," thoughts about the purpose of the work of the Devil. As the *Malleus Maleficarum* contends, the Devil was employed in the earth, not only to draw people to his legions after death, but also as a means of testing and chastisement—one of the purgative processes that mankind must supposedly endure to establish his worthiness of salvation or grace. Cavendish provides an interesting study of the way in which human concepts of good and evil have been formed and how the concept of the Devil was important to Renaissance Christian doctrine:

> It was the Christians who gave the Devil almost the position of a god. Convinced of the stainless goodness of God, they sensed and feared the presence of a great supernatural Enemy, the quintessence of all evil. That the Devil sinned through pride became and remains the orthodox Catholic belief.
>
> In the Middle Ages and the early modern world the Devil was a familiar reality. He figured in popular tales, stage plays, mumming dances; he was preached from pulpits; he leered or frowned from the walls and windows of churches. He and his legions were everywhere, subtle, knowing, malicious and formidable. (289)

The Devil was indeed a dramatic presence in early modern England—both inside and outside of the theatrical context—yet he was still an incorporeal presence, except when he was "conjured" to appear onstage. This was a much easier place for him to exist, because there

was no ontological need to explain his presence there. His metaphysical existence became a theatrical reality in the play texts and playing spaces over the centuries. His popularity there bred associations that drew opposition from late sixteenth-century moralists almost as soon as the advent of the professional playhouses occurred in London. In "The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm, Anti-Theatricalism, and the Image of the Elizabethan Theater," Michael O'Connell quotes Philip Stubbes (*Anatomie of Abuses*) in his initial observation that

> In 1583, seven years after the first public theater was built in London, Philip Stubbes declared that all stage plays are "sucked out of the Devills teates, to nourish us in ydolatry heathenrie and sinne." (279)

Perhaps the intent of such a statement was negative publicity, but, ironically, it may have only served to associate the traditions and concepts of the Devil more firmly in the minds of Shakespeare's audience. O'Connell shows that "Identity, whether in individuals or in institutions, comes not only of what fosters but what opposes"(281-282). And far from damaging the popularity of theater, it eventually carried on with such momentum that there was only one thing to be done in the minds of the anti-theatricalists—what actually was done in 1649: the demolition of the public playhouses. O'Connell makes the observation

> That such writers saw theater, even what we consider secular theater, in religious terms may explain the extraordinary vehemence of their opposition and why they could not be satisfied with reform. For although such anti-theatrical writers as John Northbrooke, Anthony Munday, Stubbes, and Gosson inveigh against what they see as the dangerous moral corruption of the London theaters, there is for them no question of regulating behavior in the playhouses or censoring what was played on their stages. Only a complete extirpation of all theaters and playing would satisfy them. (279)

The extirpation took approximately seventy years of sustained effort because the theatres were so popular and successful. Controversies surrounding performances, for example, *Eastward Ho!* (which landed two of its three authors in jail—George Chapman and Ben Jonson—and compelled the other one, John Marston, to go underground into a forced retreat), sometimes served to stir up even more interest in what was happening onstage.

Perhaps, in addition to bull and bear baiting pits, the theatres were seen by some as "audience baiting" pits. Though there is little probability that such a phrase was used in that time, authors like Stephen Gosson, in his 1579 *The Schoole of Abuse* note the dangers of exposing oneself as an audience member to the snares of the "foulers" in the theaters:

> Thus have I set downe of the abuses of poets, pipers and players, which bring us to pleasure, slouth, sleepe, sinne, and without repentaunce to death and the devill: (32)
>
> If you doe but listen to the voyce of the fouler, or joyne lookes with an amourous gazer, you have already made your selves assaultable, and yeelded your cities to be sacked. A wanton eye is the darte of Cephalus: where it leveleth, there it lighteth, and where it hitts it woundeth deepe. (32-49)

William Rankins directly equates the actors with devils (the baiters, the harriers?) when he claims in *A Mirrour of Monsters* (1587):

> First, they are sent from their great captaine Sathan (under whose banner they beare armes) to deceiue the world, to lead the people with intising shewes to the diuell, to seduce them to sinne, and well tuned strings, to sound pleasing melodie, when people in heapes daunce to the diuell. But rather seeme they the limbs, proportion, and members of Sathan. (n.p.)

It was only natural, one can suppose, that the confusion of players with soldiers of the "great captaine Sathan" would come about not only because of the dramatic arguments presented in the play texts—requiring the actors to take on various aspects of villainy—but more by what was actually occurring in and around the theatres. It is a matter of historical record that theatre performances were opportunities for sexual assignations and thievery amongst the audience members. Some of the London theatres were located in or near what might be called adult entertainment districts today. In "The Renaissance in Britain," Greg Walker makes the point that with the revolution of the professional playhouses,

> …drama, which had been a vehicle for a moral and religious critique of worldly life and what we would identify as a consumer society, became unmistakably an integral and compromised part of that same commercial culture. Playgoing had always been only problematically related to sober living and moral improvement, but with the development of the playhouses, it could no longer seriously be maintained that it was primarily a pious activity, akin to attending a sermon or reading a work of improving

> literature. The very geography of the theatres proclaimed their proximity to those other centres of licentious indulgence and 'waste', the cockpits, bear-baiting rings, bowling alleys, and brothels. And in the plays of Kyd and Marlowe the links became all too obvious. (156-157)

Cavendish's view that the Devil takes the blame for what many people bring on to themselves finds an antecedent in anecdotal form in Martin Luther's *Commentary on Galatians*. The theatre is a handy place to harangue for the ills of society that are therein reflected and it does produce its own brand of temporary fascination. But the phenomenon, if it appears to take hold upon an individual's thought with no apparent external stimulus, provokes theories as to how such a malady can suddenly appear without visible cause. A natural impulse is to attribute such bewitching effects to the magical powers of the Devil, as Luther alludes to in the following story from the *Commentary*:

> Such a thing of late happened to that miserable man Dr. Kraws of Halle, which said, "I have denied Christ, and therefore he standeth now before his Father and accuseth me." He being blinded with the illusion of the devil, hath so strongly conceived in his mind this imagination, that by no exhortation, no consolation, no promises of God he could be brought from it; whereupon he despaired, and so miserably destroyed himself. This was a mere lie, a bewitching of the devil, and a fantastical definition of a strange Christ, whom the Scripture knoweth not. For the Scripture setteth forth Christ, not as a judge, a tempter, an accuser; but a reconciler, a mediator, a comforter, and a throne of grace. (qtd. in Kors 199)

The Devil was not only a powerful imaginative presence in an individual's daily life, he also had a rich tradition of appearing incarnate on the stages of the medieval dramas that were performed well before Christopher Marlowe's Faustus conjured Mephistopheles in *The Tragicall Historie of Dr. Faustus,* or Ben Jonson abused him in *The Devil is an Ass*. He was such a perennially irresistible dramatic force that he has continued to appear, in various forms, in plays all the way up to the present day—from the medieval Mystery Cycles to Archibald MacLeish's *J.B.*

The very fact that so many people subscribed to the physical, or more accurately the ontological reality of the Devil in sixteenth-century England, created a seemingly logical

structure from which to account for events that were detrimental to their everyday lives. For those who were not ready to pursue abstract philosophical concepts, Satan, his minions, and his influences sufficed to explain maleficium in a more practical and personal paradigm. It not only helped to conceptualize and explain the phenomenon, it also graphically illustrated the attraction that some people could feel towards abandoning the established order conceived by church and state. The Devil, after all, was seductive; he offered personal power, worldly riches—things which the poor and disenfranchised might seek after—even at the price of one's eternal soul. If he could even attempt to seduce Christ Jesus, who among men could feel safe from the Devil's attentions? His power was seen as considerable and subtle; one needed an almost Herculean or Christ-like effort to avoid his snares. If one should, on the other hand, try to use the infernal powers for his own ends, one quickly found that these powers were equivocal and treacherous. Yet making the Devil go away was fairly straightforward, according to the gospels—one need only tell him to "get thee behind me"—and, surprisingly, the Devil would leave. At least that is what was supposed to happen. Or perhaps, metaphorically, the mesmeric suggestion that imposed appearances over realities would be discovered as a false sense of things and be destroyed.

Luther imagined Dr. Kraws of Halle as bewitched by the Devil, but in either sense it is the recognition of the error that is fundamental to the destruction of its power. Robert Burton advises that one not consent to suggestion or be vexed by the fact that suggestions occur. Rather, the solution is to remain unperplexed and unsusceptible—as he advises us in the 1625 edition of *The Anatomy of Melancholy*:

> …although he hath sometimes so slily set upon thee, and so far prevailed, as to make thee in some sort to assent to, to delight in such wicked thoughts, yet they have not proceeded from a confirmed will in thee, but are of that nature which thou dost afterwards reject and abhor. Therefore be not overmuch troubled and dismayed with such kind of suggestions, at least if they please thee not, because they are not thy personal sins, for which thou shalt incur the wrath of God or his displeasure: contemn,

> neglect them, let them go as they come, strive not too violently, or trouble thyself too much, but as our Saviour said to Satan in like case, say thou: *Avoid, Satan*, I detest thee and them. Saith Austin, as Satan labours to suggest, so must we strive not to give consent, and it will be sufficient: the more anxious and solicitous thou art, the more perplexed, the more thou shalt otherwise be troubled, and intangled. (1927, 958)

Suggestion and persuasion can only evolve into action if they are accepted. Prior to that, they may torment the holy man, the prince or a tragic hero within a play, but they will never cause chaos unless they are endowed with a seeming reality and become manifested in "personal sins."

PART TWO

CHAPTER FIVE

"INTISING SHEWES:" *MACBETH* AND *OTHELLO* AS TRAGEDIES OF BEWITCHMENT

> They that haue powre to hurt, and will doe none,
> That doe not do the thing, they most do showe,
> Who mouing others, are themselues as stone,
> Vnmooued, could [cold], and to temptation slow:
> They rightly do inherrit heauens graces,
> And husband natures ritches from expence,
> The are the Lords and owners of their faces,
> Others, but stewards of their excellence:
> The sommers flowre is to the sommer sweet,
> Though to it selfe, it onely liue and die,
> But if that flowre with base infection meete,
> The basest weed out-braues his dignity:
> For sweetest things turne sowrest by their deedes,
> Lillies that fester, smell far worse then weeds.
>
> —Sonnet 94

To illuminate the operation of mental malpractice via the effects of fascination in Shakespearean tragedy—bewitchment through mesmeric suggestion—two plays offer themselves as fundamental examples for study: *Macbeth* and *Othello*. Moving beyond William Rankins's opinion that stage actors work for the Devil to lead the audience to him with "intising shewes," "to seduce them to sinne" (*A Mirrour of Monsters*, n.p.), the intent here is to focus the discussion upon the specific elements that affect perception within the plays themselves: the conflicts between the appearance versus the reality of ideas and suggestions which are presented to the physical senses and to the imagination. This section of the inquiry is chiefly concerned with identifying the presence of fascinating "bewitchment" in these two plays, and analyzing its influence upon character actions and interactions. Rather than to dwell unprofitably upon, for example, what Shakespeare might have intended as a

moralizing lesson, it is more interested in highlighting how the provocation to action from a fascinated thought process might produce a vivid and seemingly uncontrollable transforming power. In varying degrees of form and context, *Macbeth* and *Othello* illustrate certain elements of the encounter with evolving perceptions of self and the navigation through the act of murder.

Macbeth experiences the influences of prophecy, equivocation, the suggestion that he can purge blame and guilt if he attains "sovereign sway," and is surrounded by the spectacle of imagery—viewed both by his inner and outer eyes—which definitely distorts his understanding of reality. Othello finds himself the object of projected malice, that malice resembling in many ways an "evil eye" curse from Iago. Within this relentless campaign against his newfound fortune as a husband and respected military leader, we observe a disastrous alteration in his understanding of his own reputation, confidence and self-control through the plague of doubt and changed perceptions of self-identity.

Other examples can be found in various Shakespeare plays that present different views of the personal struggle with fascination or its influence upon characters in service to a given plot structure, but *Macbeth* and *Othello* highlight the phenomenon in a manner that is at once familiar, yet rich and undeniably compelling. These two characters are not unique in their encounters with bewitchment, but the dramatic contexts in which they operate seem to be the most relentlessly graphic and place suggestion and misperception as issues at the heart of the central plot dilemmas.

The power of the look, "overlooking," can be benign, unless that captivation somehow becomes a tragic enthrallment. False conclusions are encouraged and formed from the partial perception of reality and the outward cloaks of integrity, piety or virtue can do much to hoodwink the victim, as Bassanio observes in *The Merchant of Venice*:

> So may the outward showes be least themselues,
> The world is still deceau'd with ornament.
> In Law, what plea so tainted and corrupt,
> But, being season'd with a gracious voyce,
> Obscures the show of euill. In religion
> What damned error but some sober brow
> Will blesse it, and approue it with a text,
> Hiding the grosnes with faire ornament:
> There is no voyce [vice] so simple, but assumes
> Some marke of vertue on his outward parts; (14.1353-1362)

Portia is captivated by Bassanio at first report, and though he later fails her test involving his wedding ring, presumably they live happily, or mostly happily, after the end of the play. In a more tragic setting, Romeo is instantly charmed by the sight of Juliet: "Now Romeo is belou'd, and loues againe, / Alike bewitched by the charme of lookes:" (6. 722-723). Their sad tale features two lovers completely besotted with each other—a benign form of fascination—but their tragic end is due more to the impossible straits their circumstances have created and the failure of Friar Lawrence's attempts to help them flee Verona.

In *The Rape of Lucrece*, on the other hand, Tarquin is represented as being enthralled by Lucrece, and despite the protest of his reasonable will, his fascination with enjoying her body stirs his passion of lust to overrule all reasonable and powerful arguments to respect her honor and to preserve his own. "Madly tost (tossed)" and "bewitcht," are terms that describe his condition, and almost immediately after ravishing Lucrece, Tarquin realizes the scope of his error and the magnitude of his ensuing ruin:

> Eu'n in this thought through the dark-night he stealeth,
> A captiue victor that hath lost in gaine,
> Bearing away the wound that nothing healeth,
> The scarre that will dispight of Cure remaine,
> Leauing his spoile perplext in greater paine.
> Shee beares the lode of lust he left behinde,
> And he the burthen of a guiltie minde.
>
> Hee like a theeuish dog creeps sadly thence,
> Shee like a wearied Lambe lies panting there,
> He scowles and hates himselfe for his offence,

Shee desperat with her nailes her flesh doth teare.
He faintly flies sweating with guiltie feare;
Shee staies exclayming on the direfull night,
He runnes and chides his vanisht loath'd delight. (729-742)

As detailed in previous chapters, a fascinated state is really a mentally fixated state—an obsessive operation of the conscious and sometimes unconscious thought. It may be argued in the example of Tarquin that it is simple lust that undoes him. Yet lust which *impels* an individual to action that he *knows* is against his better judgment, suggests the presence of a binding power he is almost helpless against, even as Reason and Judgment try to re-establish sway. It is no longer a *simple* lust; it is "lust in action" (Sonnet 129), driven by the forcible imagination that does not easily permit resistance to the satisfaction of its objective. The victim is tied up in an active fascination of thought and deed, which is often described in terms of madness and ecstasy. In Tarquin's case he knows what he risks, yet does not seem to be able to help himself:

Such hazard now must doting Tarqvin make,
Pawning his honor to obtaine his lust,
And for himselfe, himselfe he must forsake.
Then where is truth if there be no selfe-trust?
When shall he thinke to find a stranger iust,
When he himselfe, himselfe confounds, betraies,
To sclandrous tongues & wretched hateful daies? (155-161)

This is due, Shakespeare says, to the fact that he

Is madly tost betweene desire and dred;
Th'one sweetely flatters, th'other feareth harme,
But honest feare, bewicht with lustes foule charme,
Doth too too oft betake him to retire,
Beaten away by brainesicke rude desire. (169-175)

Reasonable "dred" falls to desire because desire has "bewicht with lustes foule charme" the saving element of "honest feare." This "rude" desire is "brainesicke," arguably a poetic description of a dissociative state where suggestion has produced an impulsive decision to act that, unresisted, demands compliance. The reference to bewitchment and charms

invites the comparison to a fascination that, when dispelled, plunges the victim into an almost instantaneous remorse for the action. One of Shakespeare's sonnets describes this condition as a kind of "expense of Spirit," and details almost exactly Tarquin's experience as he is tossed between lust and the fear of dishonor and disgrace:

> Th'expence of Spirit in a waste of shame
> Is lust in action, and till action, lust
> Is periured, murdrous, blouddy full of blame,
> Sauage, extreame, rude, cruell, not to trust,
> Inioyed no sooner but dispised straight,
> Past reason hunted, and no sooner had
> Past reason hated as a swollowed bayt
> On purpose layd to make the taker mad.
> Made [mad] in pursut and in possession so,
> Had, hauing, and in quest to haue, extreame,
> A blisse in proofe and proud [proved] a very wo,
> Before a ioy proposd behind a dreame,
> All this the world well knowes yet none knowes well,
> To shun the heauen that leads men to this hell. (Sonnet 129)

Misperception turned to "mad pursut" creates a momentum in whichever direction fantasy leads; error often needs only to masquerade as truth to divert thought into a path of thinking "that seemeth right vnto man, but the issue thereof *are* the wayes of death" (Prov.16:25). Montaigne shows one aspect of the difficulty of discerning truth in his essay "Of Lyers:"

> If a lie had no more faces but one, as truth hath, we should be in farre better termes than we are: For, whatsoever a lier should say, we would take it in a contrarie sense. But the opposite of truth hath many-many shapes, and an undefinite field. The Pythagoreans make good to be certaine and finite, and evill to bee infinite and uncertaine. A thousand bywayes misse the marke, one only hits the same. (47)

In the manifold challenges of keeping to a single "bywaye," few people will willingly countenance what seems to be a wrong path. But many can be led along a road to destruction if the path is presented as the right or only way. Rather than take the full responsibility for these errors of perception, or even willful disobedience, an individual may find that it is an almost unavoidable temptation to ascribe such human weakness, in the face of mesmeric

enthrallment as Cavendish argues (*Black Arts* 281), to the powerfully seductive efforts of an adversary like Satan. In each of the plays, *Macbeth* and *Othello,* the Devil is mentioned or alluded to as a tangible presence in each hero's dilemma. The goddess of witchcraft even makes an appearance in *Macbeth,* courtesy of the additional material contributed to the play by Thomas Middleton. Yet in order for the Devil to have true agency, it must be proved that he has a true existence. This is a much more difficult task to perform in the real world than it is in the playhouse.

Hecate exists in *Macbeth,* so by right of dramatic conceit she can claim some influence upon the action in that play. Iago is framed with language posing him as a devil; but is he really a demonic or deific figure like Hecate? No, he is not—according to the textual reality; he is a soldier who behaves devilishly perhaps. Yet each of them can be seen as representatives of the causative forces of bewitchment. The symbolic associations with the underworld are a palpable presence in the two plays, but the weight the underworld bears upon the causality within the plots carries a lesser weight than what might be seen if they were part of a Morality play or a Greek Tragedy. What may have been of greater interest to Shakespeare's audience were the reasoning and negotiations of the two tragic heroes in their struggles to exercise free will, or maintain a "Bosome franchis'd, and Allegeance cleare" (*Macbeth* 8.505), in the face of aggressive mental suggestion. Both Macbeth and Othello seem to have the power to say "Avoid, Satan!" and sidestep destruction, but it still remains a tantalizing and tragically unexplored option.

Whatever the suborning causes and beliefs might be, true compulsion rises with the individual's choice to act upon what had been suggested to his thought. Montaigne relates the story of the 1563 murder of the Duc de Guise by Poltrot de Mèrè in his essay "Of Vertue" and notes "how flexible our reason is to all sorts of objects" (vol. 2, 437). Fixation can work upon

a victim in such a way as to supply both the true motive to act and the justification of the deed itself: "The motions of so forcible a perswasion may be divers; for our fantasie disposeth of her self and of us as she pleaseth" (vol. 2, 438). He cites the following case study of a French assassination as an example of how plans which had been laid beforehand were demolished by the assassin's fascinated, "amazed" thought. The plan was to ride within range of the duke—both assassin and victim were mounted—and shoot him. The probability of success was small because of the incoherence of the strategy—yet it achieved its effect:

> …the blow was not mortall, had not fortune made it so: and the enterprise to shoote on horse-backe and far-off, and to one who mooved still according to the motion of his horse; was the attempt of a man that rather loved to misse of his effect, then faile to save himselfe. What followed did manifestly shew it. For, he was so amazed and drunken with the thought of so haughty an execution, as he lost all his senses, both to worke his escape, and direct his tongue in his answers. What needed he have done more, then recover his friends by crossing of a river?
>
> …when the horrible sentence was pronounced against him, [Poltrot] answered stoutly, *I was prepared for it, and I shall amaze you with my patience.* (vol. 2, 438)

There is a subtle thematic parallel here with the events of *Macbeth* and *Othello*. Events are set in motion within a plan or plot that subsequently develop beyond the perpetrator's ability to control them. Those events create so many possible variables that the participants cannot possibly predict or manage the resultant behaviors and circumstances. Or, like Poltrot, they find themselves caught up in the mental and emotional convulsions of their own misperceptions, realizing in the end how they have been betrayed by what they have done under the influence of aggressive mental suggestion—"amazed and drunken with the thought," as Montaigne tells it.

Wayne Shumaker quotes the sixteenth-century thinker John Godelmann in a description of how the phenomenon operates as a kind of a mesmeric delusion:

> Tricksters (praestigiatores), said Godelmann, "charm and deceive the eyes of men, by Satan's help, with incantations and illusions, so that they do not see things as they really are but think they see what is not there. These are properly called enchanters

> (Zauberer)." Once achieved, this insight too spread through the whole area of inquiry and threatened to convert all the occult phenomena into sleight-of-hand or a kind of hypnosis. (92-93)
> [Shumaker quotes him in Godelmann, Iohannes. *Tractatus de magis, veneficis et lamiis, deque his recte cognoscendis et puniendis*. 1591. III, 104 (III, x).]

Again, we see an implied connection between enchanting and "a kind of hypnosis." This mesmerism is not confined to the perception of physical objects, but can include the misperception of forms and actions. The idea of fascination, while classically associated with the phenomenon of the evil eye, was in Shakespeare's time a vaguely understood kind of magic, and its presence was not always identifiable *a priori* to any perceived, projected maleficium. In each case, it is the coincidence of an accepted suggestion or supposition with the opportunity to perform it that engenders the tragic acts which ruin the hero. Each of them operates under a pronounced delusion of serving a higher purpose: Othello "sacrifices" Desdemona to his wounded honor and image, voicing the specious justification that he is saving others from her perfidy; Macbeth rationalizes that his usurpation of the throne supposedly supported by the Weird Sisters's prophecy will enable him to endure the consequences of regicide. The perceived evil in these plays is the result of what the heroes do when their reasoning succumbs to the confusion of false perception—not necessarily from a predisposing psychological weakness. The evil is the result of allowing the thinking—as it is voiced upon the theatre's stage—to become fascinated by a lie disguised as truth. The issue becomes not so much identifying a particular flaw that undoes the tragic hero, as it is to discover the compound nature of the effects of the accepted suggestions.

The Aristotelian concept of *hamartia*—the error of judgment—is reflected in the concept of the weak portal. The two ideas, however, are not completely synonymous. The weak portal is not necessarily a fixed idea representing something as characteristic as a "tragic flaw." Fascination can use several means of entry into the imagination given a

suitable opportunity. Vulnerabilities to suggestion such as vanity, greed, lust, gullibility, amongst others, are traits that any person can exhibit, and are not necessarily inherent faults. Thus, an error of judgment can occur from the influence of any one, or a combination, of such states of mind. A lapse can occur at any point in a person's life, even in an area that had previously been considered a virtue. Othello is one example. He is known as a man who counts amongst his virtues the fact that he is not easily jealous. Yet as a result of Iago's projected jealousy and malice, he succumbs to the deadly passion so thoroughly that it distorts his perception of reality and convinces him that murder is a justifiable solution.

In Shakespeare's earlier plays there are some instances where the characters conform more closely with the stock stage image of a braggart soldier, the old pantaloon, the waspish wife; but even when he used these stock profiles as the foundation for their stage personas, Shakespeare often reinvented the roles to the point where they began to transcend the stereotypical—almost into the actual.

Northrop Frye, in *Northrop Frye on Shakespeare* notes that, "His characters are so vivid that we often think of them as detachable from the play, like real people" (4). In that sense, many critics and audiences have come to see these characters as more than dramatic devices espousing a position within a dramatic argument. In the tragedies they are sometimes viewed as people in crisis making complex maneuvers and negotiations that deliver on the one hand a generally satisfying moral resolution to their stories, yet, on the other hand, they provoke a number of open-ended questions about how the viewer or reader would respond in a similar situation. However, Frye offers a caveat that should be considered lest too much focus lands on Bradlean psychological character centrism, and not enough on the theatrical arguments and devices:

> …it seems clear that Shakespeare didn't start with a character and put him into a situation: if he'd worked that way his great characters would have been far less

> complex than they are. Obviously he starts with the total situation and lets the characters unfold from it, like leaves on a branch, part of the branch but responsive to every tremor of wind that blows over them. [A.C.] Bradley's is still a great book, whatever one may say of it, but it's conditioned by the assumptions of its age, as we are by ours. (4)

The "weak portal" should not be interpreted as a character flaw—a "tragic flaw." It is a temporary window of opportunity for Chaos to enter in. In concert with *hamartia*, it is also the error not only of judgment, but of redress as well. For an early modern audience familiar with Christian themes of repentance and redemption, might a heightened sense of tragedy be produced onstage if the principal characters of *Macbeth* and *Othello* refused, or were made blind to, the opportunities to exercise forbearance and compassion as a means to possible reclamation? The tension created by the enormous possible consequences of a planned regicide committed by a noble Thane, and a fatal suffocation of an innocent white Venetian—a Senator's daughter—by her new husband, a noble Moorish army general, argue for the affirmative. Can early modern tragic figures suffer their "slings and arrowes of outragious fortune" (*Hamlet* 8.1596), with dignity like their Stoic counterparts? Yes. But does this classic approach completely serve the tastes of early modern writers and audiences? Theologically speaking, should characters conceived in a largely Christian context humbly wait for God to redress their wrongs, and serve justice—rewards to the faithful, punishment to the evil-doers? Ideally, perhaps, with a lean towards "yes," but then the context of the argument has shifted noticeably away from tragedy.

The fact that Macbeth and Othello do not turn aside from their fatal courses magnify the feeling of tragedy, from this interpretive position, because the means to salvage their lives, and the lives of those they affect, is available *if* they can shake off their obsessive thinking and behavior. The initial error of judgment may be dreadful, but it is not theoretically unrecoverable. The *absence* of such a recovery gives Shakespearean high tragedy its power

even today and those elements that contribute to the prevention of any recovery should find resonance in any audience once they are recognized.

As a shifting window of opportunity, the weak portal is exploited at a tragically powerful moment. Instead of Shakespeare's heroes finding themselves in a situation that they are "characteristically" unfit to handle, they could be seen to be victims of an overriding influence which suppresses their native capacity to meet and conquer their individual reasonings and reservations. Susceptibility, however momentary, provides the opportunity for suggestion to enter in, perhaps like Baudouin's metaphor of the air flowing underneath a door (*Suggestion* 29), and corrupt the imagination. Ruination would then be due to the catastrophic choices made from compromised perception rather than an intrinsic defect of character.

Accepted suggestions, more than psychological predispositions, lend an interesting dramatic weight to some of the key scenes in Shakespeare's scenarios. It is burdensome to interpretation to posit that Othello is singularly and chronically jealous, or that Macbeth is solely and chronically ambitious; and modern criticism has moved beyond the more reductive critical approaches. Macbeth and Othello become *acutely* ambitious or avaricious, and *acutely* suspicious, respectively, through the promptings that attack their susceptibility to pursue impulsive behaviors and their belief in false suppositions. Arguably, this idea offers a more dynamic and directly engaging opportunity for the audience to experience a different perspective on the dilemmas as they seem to unfold onstage. If characters and plots appear to be too studiously preset or preprogrammed, some of the suspense within the action or arguments of the characters could evaporate and potentially disengage the thought of the audience from the onstage reasoning process presented by the performance.

The central interpretive point to be remembered here is that this brief analysis of fascination in *Macbeth* and *Othello* is not psychological in essence, but rather it is

phenomenological. As such, the psychiatric profiles of the tragic heroes are of minimal interest compared to their impact as dramatic phenomena. In other words, it is less profitable here to guess what might be going on in the "mind" of a fictional character, than it is to examine what the play in performance potentially suggests to an audience via its language, imagery and discernible staging conventions and directives. In “Hamlet Within the Prince,” Martin Wiggins reminds us that “For the purposes of critical interpretation, we must work with what we are given: parts of a character that are not visible, or not inferrable, are not there” (214).

Othello accepts the suggestion that he has been dishonored by Desdemona’s alleged duplicity and insincere affections towards him. He commits himself to her murder because of an inability to rise above this insidious and false supposition. That he can successfully assimilate into the upper levels of Venetian society and enjoy an ideal marriage with Desdemona is brought into doubt initially by his father-in-law's reaction to the marriage. Othello’s reasons for murder are stated to be the equivalent of an honor killing; but it actually has more to do with the fact that Iago has succeeded in not only alienating him from his surroundings, but also from his own sense of self. Iago successfully manages to besiege Othello's assumptions and beliefs about his marriage, his standing in Venetian society, his reputation—even bringing into question his ability to transcend the stereotypical clichés of the "nature" of a Moor. This self-detachment, pushed to an extreme where the audience is able to witness Othello enter into moments of reality-transcendence, ushers in the chaotic license to throw off mental discipline, and act upon impulse. The scenario is framed in jealousy, specifically sexual jealousy, but the operative fascination precipitates the loss of all that Othello holds dear from a mistaken sense of isolation created by racist malice.

Macbeth is seen resisting the fascinating enticements of prophetic assurance to a preconceived plot that might gain him the throne of Scotland, but ultimately we watch as he succumbs to the idea that he can enact this scenario and live with the consequences. His is the example of a mind that can foresee the horrible fallout of a murder as significant as regicide, yet finds himself led to attempt it in spite of reasonable compulsions to desist. He says that he has contemplated an ambitious bid for the throne, but has yet to act upon it. Perhaps this is because his ambitious impulses are stayed by a healthy operation of reason: "Art not without Ambition, but without / The illnesse should attend it" (4.311-312). What invites Macbeth into actually performing regicide is the equivocal, suggestive "prophecy" that he "shalt be King hereafter" (3.126). It is not the Weird Sisters' so-called witchcraft charm that changes his position, it is the suggestion that there will soon be an opportunity to act practically upon his usurpation fantasy. Yet even that insinuation is checked by reason, until Lady Macbeth convinces him that they can carry off the deed by transferring the guilt of the murder to Duncan's bodyguards. It is the erroneous supposition that prophecy somehow *guarantees* the imagined ordination of Macbeth's desired sovereignty that leads him to trust in a false security, which, as Hecate says, "Is Mortals cheefest Enemie" (16.1200).

Something to consider in the study of these two plays is the idea of meditation. Macbeth and Othello process a dizzying array of conjectures and imaginings. Macbeth, in his soliloquies, asides and monologues, shares some of these suppositions and imagery with the audience. Othello, with virtually no soliloquies, except one, in his role, shares fewer ideas directly with us. Yet we see them both meditate upon their situations from the very beginning of their respective plays. In fact, as Martin Wiggins observes in "*Macbeth* and Premeditation," the Thane of Glamis has been ruminating on the possibilities of doing away with Duncan before the audience has entered into the storyline of *Macbeth*. In and before the

events of the first four scenes of the play, "Macbeth's behaviour throughout has revealed a preconception of ambition and foul play, dangerous thoughts which the Weird Sisters have threatened to bring to light" (33).

Studying these two plays side by side, the audience's encounter with the staging of "evil" behavior seems to be illustrated, in one instance, from the inside-out (*Macbeth*), and in the other example from the outside but still closely connected to the thought/action relationship (*Othello*). Macbeth allows us to hear and observe his inner negotiations and their outward manifestation. Othello shows us the outward manifestations of an increasingly fascinated thought process, but we hear very little regarding the inner negotiations in his own words. Iago, however, serves almost like a kind of prophet-guide to Othello's journey—both predicting and frequently attempting to arrange the direction of his decisions and actions.

These meditations are arguably the most valuable elements of each play. Strip away the technical elements of the theatrical spectacle, the plot idiosyncrasies (compressed time, *Othello*'s "double time," *Macbeth*'s additional textual material not wholly of Shakespeare's creating), and what we are left with are still the remarkably compelling fundamentals of the unfolding central arguments. Just watching Macbeth and Othello reason through their challenges—with absolutely nothing else happening around them—would still be a very interesting evening in the theatre.

The meditative process simultaneously engages the audience—both the theatre patron and the reader. It is nearly impossible to experience these plays without reflecting upon the choices each hero makes and their demonstration of the difficulties of moral reasoning. The fascination of the audience operates in the same manner as it would anywhere else. The audience/reader agrees to be susceptible to the text by entering the theatre or turning to the first page of the play. The players/characters suggest a staged reality to be considered in place

of, or superimposed over the true reality of spectating or reading. Depending upon how open and suggestible the viewer is, he will experience some degree of reality-transcendence by accepting the textual elements temporarily as fact into his thought. In the scenarios, men fight, kill and die, gods and demons appear, the broad daylight of the Globe Theatre is taken for rainy night, and men and young boys in costume are accepted in their stage personas as queens, courtesans, bawds, nurses and shrews.

This all may sound a bit facile until it is remembered just how fascinating these "intising shewes" can be in performance. A reader may dress his imagination and transcend reality with relative ease if he is immersed in a book with minimal distractions; in the theatre the external distractions are more pronounced, but the actors have a profound potential to employ their art to overcome the artifice of placing their audience in an unfamiliar physical space and subsequently they create an environment where the spectators can become immersed in the story despite the artifice. In performance, *Macbeth* and *Othello* have worked their fascinating magic upon the theatre audience to provoke spontaneous screams, fainting and even attempts to intervene in the action.

Thomas Davies wrote in his 1784 *Dramatic Micellanies* that his viewing of a *Macbeth* performance starring David Garrick and Hannah Pritchard convinced him that

> The representation of this terrible part of the play [the murder of Duncan], by Garrick and Mrs. Pritchard, can no more be described than I believe it can be equalled…You heard what they spoke, but you learned more from the agitation of mind displayed in their action and deportment…The dark colouring, given by the actor to these abrupt speeches, makes the scene awful and tremendous to the auditors! The wonderful expression of heartful horror, which Garrick felt when he shewed his bloody hands, can only be conceived and described by those who saw him! (qtd. in Wells, *Shakespeare in the Theatre* 21)

Garrick was recorded as even fooling one of his fellow actors onstage. Bernice Kliman cites this anecdote from Kalman A. Burnim (*David Garrick: Director*), in her discussion of the actor on page twenty-six of *Shakespeare in Performance: Macbeth*—

> …Garrick, who through his face, his body and his voice could reveal his thought processes and minute changes in thought, carried his audience away. He was able to whisper so that the sound could be heard in the farthest gallery…He used this whisper to terrific effect in the daggers scene, when Macbeth returns from murdering Duncan, yet his voice could be so colloquial as to fool a pick-up actor playing the first murderer into thinking that Garrick, and not Macbeth, was telling him there was blood on his face (Burnim, *Garrick*, p. 117). (26)

In Gamini Salgado's *Eyewitnesses of Shakespeare*, there is a description of the John Kemble and Sarah Siddons performance of the Macbeths reported in J.R. Planche's *Recollections and Reflections*:

> I can remember, however, being greatly impressed by two effects; one, the wonderful expression of Kemble's face in his interview with Lady Macbeth after the murder of Duncan, act iii. scene 2. I can see him now, standing in the door-way in the centre of the scene. The kingly crown appeared a burthen and a torture to him. How terribly clear it was, before he uttered a word, that his mind was 'full of scorpions'…
> The other was the exulting exclamation of Mrs. Siddons, when, as Lady Macbeth, having read the letter, she greets her husband on his entrance…The effect was electrical. Her whole performance, indeed, impressed me with an awe that, when I met her in society, several years afterwards, I could not entirely divest myself of on being presented to her. (302)

Kliman tells how Siddons could mesmerize even from behind the scenes in a description of how she projected the force and power of Lady Macbeth:

> Most of all, the audience was captured by their sense of her nerve, her terrific will. Everyone and everything had to give way before that power. A backstage spectator who viewed the 1816 'return' performance from the opposite prompt door was close enough to see her face,…The spectator behind the scenes said that though he was privy to the workings of the illusions of the drama, seeing the maid daub Siddons's hands with paint before the actor's re-entrance, he nevertheless was filled with terror when she re-entered with the knives. (36)

While the quality of staging and performance was not on the same level as Garrick and Siddons, the author of this dissertation has had the singular experience of witnessing how the power of *Macbeth* in performance can work upon the sensibilities of the audience. On tour with the Iowa Shakespeare Festival in 1994, the author performed the role of Macduff. The production concept included the convention of having Macduff appear in the beginning of the

play *as* Macduff to deliver the lines of the Bloody Sergeant; the concept also dictated that the Sergeant appear very much wounded—covered with blood and bandages. Most of the performances were in outdoor spaces where the audience had easy access to the backstage area. After finishing the scene one afternoon, two boys appeared backstage, unexpected and unannounced, as the author washed off the blood and reset some props. As they observed the reset and the change of costume and make-up, the elder of the two (they were brothers) told the younger, "You see? There's nothing to be worried about. He's ok. I done told you all that blood was fake." There was a very visible sign of relief in the younger lad as it was explained to him that the seeming wounds were false and that the actor had only pretended to be hurt and lame. Once assured that all was well, they hurried back to their places to watch the rest of the show.

The same production featured a tricky staging element whereby Macduff kills and beheads Macbeth onstage. Though simple in its preparation, it created a shocking effect; the moment when Macduff killed Macbeth and almost immediately thereafter cut the "head" from Macbeth's body with a broadsword and held it up in blood-soaked rags in full view of the audience caused some of the more sensitive members of the audience to become physically distressed on several occasions.

Othello has caused strong and sometimes violent reactions from the audience in its long production history. Michael Neill catalogues an excellent and striking outline of some of the more notable incidents from the performance of the play in his introduction to the Oxford World's Classics, *The Oxford Shakespeare: Othello*. In 1822 in Baltimore, Maryland, a French novelist witnessed a soldier's violent intervention in Desdemona's death scene. Not only did he shout from the audience, he actually drew his gun and shot the actor playing Othello, breaking his arm. Edwin Forrest's portrayal of Iago in 1825 elicited a death threat

shouted from the audience, to the effect that if the patron could get his hands on Forrest after the show he would "[w]ring his neck." (c.f. *Oxford Othello* 8-9). Neill observes directly that

> Such absolute surrender to the power of Shakespeare's theatrical fiction would have astonished Rymer; yet the most conspicuous feature of the play's theatrical life has been precisely this extraordinary capacity to swamp aesthetic detachment—even to the point where (as in the case of the Baltimore guard) the boundary between fiction and reality has sometimes appeared to dissolve altogether. This has reputedly been true not only for audiences, but for performers: (8-9)

Neill's focus then shifts to how some Shakespearean players find the situations within the plays creating an undue influence upon some of their own thinking and behavior:

> This is precisely what seems to have happened after a performance by British officers and their wives in Freetown, Sierra Leone, in 1857: the commanding officer, who played Othello, shot his Cassio in cold blood, provoking a public scandal over heavy drinking and sexual promiscuity amongst the garrison community. (9)

Finally, he mentions the incident from the 1942 *Othello* starring Paul Robeson, which counted amongst its noteworthy accomplishments, a real-life embodiment of one of Iago's major anxieties. Robeson, playing Othello, began an adulterous affair with Uta Hagen, who played Desdemona. Ironically, Hagen also happened to be wife of Jose Ferrer who was playing Iago at the time.

By entering into an agreement to entertain suppositions, we make ourselves susceptible to mesmeric suggestion. Often it can be difficult to tell when we are operating within a condition of reality transcendence—like the subjects in Ernest Hilgard's study of hypnosis who were unable to determine when they had entered into such a state. The early modern "anti-theatricalists" were not so far off the mark when they decried the power of theatre to fascinate its auditors, and with their nascent fear of the Devil near the top of their thoughts, condemned the practice of playgoing—unless, perhaps, the players could prove that all fascinating spectacles were for the moral health of the theatre's customers.

Suggestion has no borders and follows no predictable blueprint. If an individual

develops a conceit that later turns into a passion, then maybe some of the ensuing suggestions and suppositions might fall into recognizable patterns. But the range of mischief that might be caused by fascinated misperception is wide, sometimes occurring through vulnerabilities that an individual may not even know he has exposed. Attacks, mental and physical, are more easily defended against if they come from only one direction. What makes the attacks against Macbeth and Othello so successful is the fact that they appear on several fronts, exploiting perhaps more than one susceptibility, and pressure the besieged heroes to defend too many vulnerable positions. Such is the nature of Shakespeare's dramatic genius that he shows us protagonists fighting continuous assaults upon their thinking and best intentions from positions that become increasingly hard to manage.

Yet, paradoxically, he also offers the audience a behind-the-scenes perspective on just how fragile these theatrical campaigns of aggressive mental suggestion are. If Macbeth stands firm after he declares "We will proceed no further in this Businesse:" (7.427), the play is over, presumably, and the Macbeths avoid catastrophe. Likewise, Desdemona might enjoy a longer honeymoon if her husband were to hold a conference with her, and Iago, Emilia and Cassio, to interrogate the question: "What is all this bother surrounding your handkerchief?" This is the captivating force of his greatest work; his audience sees, in the complexity of his scenarios and characterizations, an accurate reflection of the manifold assaults that they might experience upon their own thought, and an opportunity to objectively reason through possible solutions or remedies.

Othello provides Iago with an opportunity to destroy him by taking Iago's words at face value. He allows Iago to create a nightmare revisioning of his marriage without making effective attempts to verify the aspersions. His reliance on Iago's sense of honor is misplaced and it prevents him from seeing the truth of the situation. It is somewhat ironic that such an

astute master of the battlefield is a mere pawn in the maneuvers of disgruntled, albeit clever junior officer. What hope might he have in a long-term encounter with Venice's sophisticated civilian society with hundreds of Machiavels like Iago on the loose?

Macbeth has so many possible areas of intrusion into his seat of reason that it is small wonder that he ultimately exists in a liminal state of consciousness that has difficulty distinguishing appearance from reality. Once the seizure of Macbeth's imagination has begun, there is no redemptive hope left for a man who has come to the conclusion that:

> …for mine owne good,
> All causes shall giue way. I am in blood
> Stept in so farre, that should I wade no more,
> Returning were as tedious as go ore: (15.1158-1161)

A crucial element in these examples is the fact that because of their variously corrupted imaginings, Macbeth and Othello become murderers. Until the commission of the murders of Desdemona and Duncan, the fascination of the heroes is only a potential threat—a force of confusion and mental conflation of images and ideas. Once carried over into action, however, and after the fatal acts, it is mental malpractice at its worst: the enactment of unjustifiable homicide.

It is highly unlikely that Shakespeare ever read the Holy Koran (though if his understanding of Arabic was good enough it might conceivably have provided him some source material for *Othello*). If, however, by some strange chance he had ever heard an English version of Sura 133—especially the last two lines—he might have encountered something that resonates especially well with regard to the phenomenon of fascination and the themes of *Macbeth* and *Othello*:

Sura 133

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Say: I betake me for refuge to the Lord of the Daybreak

Against the mischiefs of his creation;
And against the mischief of the night when it overtaketh me;
And against the mischief of weird women;
And against the mischief of the envier when he envieth. (430)

CHAPTER SIX

MACBETH

> Behold, I will come against them that prophecie false dreames, sayeth the Lord, and doe tell them, and cause my people to erre by their lyes, and by their flatteries, and I sent them not, nor commaunded them: therefore they bring no profite vnto this people, sayth the Lord.
>
> —Jeremiah 23:32

The Meeting on the Heath

The play begins in chaos and confusion, which is a slight deviation from the normal tragic structure of beginning in order and ending in chaos. The advent of thunder and lightning announces the entrance of the Weird Sisters and in no other play of Shakespeare is there so auspicious a beginning. The playwright is leaving no doubt in the mind of the audience that this world is upside down and tormented. Most significantly, within the first eleven lines the Sisters have made it clear that they have targeted Macbeth specifically for some purpose.

> 1 WITCH
> Where the place?
> 2 WITCH Vpon the Heath.
> 3 WITCH
> There to meet with *Macbeth*. (1.6-7)

The Sisters are described as “weyward,” which, like “weird,” is derived from the Old English “wyrd”—meaning “fate.” The Folio may label the roles as "witch," but they refer to themselves as "Sister" and in 3.108 as "weyward Sisters." In one interpretation of the dramatic metaphor, Fate has focused its attention on Macbeth, and Macbeth speaks of dealing with and defying Fate, but there is no definitive evidence that the audience should accept *these* creatures as the Sisters Fate. The purpose of the Sisters’ choice is still mysterious at this point, but they are certainly seeking him as they “Houer through the fogge and filthie ayre”

(1.11). For a theatre audience, these initial events are significant. The hero of this story may be in for a few rough nights if creatures resembling witches are looking for him near a battlefield in the midst of a thunderstorm.

Macbeth is profiled for us by the battle reports of the bloody Sergeant and the Thane of Ross. His heroism and courage are superlative, and he receives godlike comparisons of his valor and martial prowess. After personally carving a passage through the rebel Macdonwald's vanguard, Macbeth not only confronts him, but slashes him "from the Naue toth' Chops, /And fix'd his Head vpon our Battlements" (2.33-34). While he is busy putting the remainder of Macdonwald's force to flight, the King of Norway attacks with the aid of the Thane of Cawdor, and presents an even more formidable threat to King Duncan's forces. With Banquo, Macbeth mounts a counterattack that not only stymies the rebellion, but vanquishes it, forcing surrender from Cawdor and Norway. Macbeth is seen as something of an avenging god in this encounter, "*Bellona's* Bridegroome" (2.65).

The hard-won victories and the valor of Banquo and Macbeth cause great joy, relief and celebration in Duncan's war camp, whereupon the king immediately declares capital sentence on Cawdor and awards Cawdor's considerable estate to the absent Macbeth. The Sergeant's report presents an intriguing scenario for the fate of all rebels. Neither Macbeth nor a first-time audience can easily discern how it foreshadows the tragic end of the story, yet the playwright implants the images of a rebellion decapitated, its leader hacked to death in battle and reduced to a disembodied figurehead of treason. As the events of the play unfold, this is exactly the end that Macbeth comes to. As he delivers the *coup de grâce* to Macdonwald, there is an analogous sense that Macdonwald's story is dovetailing into Macbeth's. Metaphorically, if Fortune has concluded its business with Macdonwald (and it would make for an interesting prequel to *Macbeth* to know the events of the Macdonwald

saga), then is its full attention now turned to the Thane of Glamis—recognizing that Macbeth has nearly achieved the acme of his fortune? Will he now reach the top, only to ride the downturn of Fortune's Great Wheel? For many people in an early modern theatre audience, this is a standard expectation for tragedy. Macbeth's demise exactly mirroring the battle circumstances of Macdonald's death is no coincidence. The rebellion in scene one foreshadows precisely the events of scene thirty: Macbeth has turned traitor to his honor, king and country, is sought out specifically by an avenging force in battle (Macduff), and is killed and beheaded by him—all within the frame of the Sisters' suggestions.

Fate, Fortune, the Devil, Beelzebub and other ministering spirits are signified within this play for the audience, but only Hecate, the Weird Sisters and a few other witches actually appear. Macbeth and other characters make reference to Fate, Fortune and the Devil but their presence and effects are figurative rather than actual. Ultimately, Macbeth is solely determinate in the action of killing Duncan and his two bodyguards, which fulfills his fantasy-fascination to become King of Scotland and inaugurates the ruin of his noble house and line.

The Prophecy on the Road

The initial appearance of Macbeth's fixation comes as the result of his first meeting with the Weird Sisters. Their supernatural characteristics give them a power of credibility in Macbeth's estimation that entices belief in their revelations. The mesmeric quality of their *fascinum* is the power of prophecy. Not only is it alluring because of its source—alleged clairvoyance of the future—but it is doubly enthralling to Macbeth because it also happens to predict a cherished hope. Banquo is not as captivated, perhaps because he is less superstitious, perhaps because the prophecy is not so personally alluring. But it works quickly and deeply upon Macbeth once he receives an apparent confirmation of the veracity of the prediction. The Weird Sisters greet Macbeth as "*Thane* of Glamis, *Thane* of Cawdor"

and he "that shalt be King hereafter" (3.124-26). Because he is the current Thane of Glamis, Macbeth knows at least one third of the greeting is accurate, but he is curious as to the meaning of the other hails. The confirmation of the second prediction comes as he and Banquo are summoned to King Duncan by Ross and Angus:

ROSSE
And for an earnest of a greater Honor,
He bad me, from him, call thee *Thane* of Cawdor:
In which addition, haile most worthy *Thane*,
For it is thine.

BANQUO
What, can the devil speak true?

MACBETH
The *Thane* of Cawdor liues: why doe you dresse me
In borrowed Robes?

ANGUS
Who was the *Thane*, liues yet,
But vnder heauie Iudgement beares that Life,
Which he deserues to loose. (3.180-87)

Macbeth's temptation to place faith in the final prophecy is overwhelming and his imagination is jolted into the contemplation of the ramifications of his new status:

MACBETH (*aside*)
Glamys, and *Thane* of Cawdor:
The greatest is behinde. (*To Rosse and Angus*) Thankes for your paines.
(*To Banquo*) Doe you not hope your Children shall be Kings,
When those that gaue the *Thane* of Cawdor to me,
Promis'd no lesse to them?

BANQUO
That trusted home,
Might yet enkindle you vnto the Crowne,
Besides the *Thane* of Cawdor. (3.192-98)

Macbeth jumps slightly ahead of logic in the use of the term "promise." Prophecy is not necessarily promise, though when it coincides with wish fulfillment, it is often taken to be equivalent. Macbeth appears not to hear Banquo's caveat on this very point,

BANQUO

And oftentimes, to winne vs to our harme,
The Instruments of Darknesse tell vs Truths,
Winne vs with honest Trifles, to betray's
In deepest consequence. (3.199-202)

The assertion that Macbeth has previously contemplated supplanting Duncan, even presumably by violence if necessary, hangs upon his meditation concerning the last piece of the Weird Sisters' pronouncement. His use of the word "murder" is significant, as is his reaction to a strange sense of fear. If he was prepared to accept the crown as naturally and as innocently as he accepted the title of Thane of Cawdor, there would be no occasion for fear, and no contemplation of anything like murder. Yet the lines Shakespeare gives to Macbeth indicate that he is gripped by an imaginary pathology so strong that he describes physical symptoms. The strange fear would then make perfect sense if it were a revelation of a pre-existing murderous fantasy which makes Macbeth as susceptible to suggestion as Othello is in his suspicion of Desdemona's integrity. For the first time, Macbeth's "horrible imaginings" have achieved the status of a real possibility:

MACBETH

(*Aside*) This supernaturall soliciting
Cannot be ill; cannot be good. If ill?
Why hath it giuen me earnest of successe,
Commencing in a Truth? I am *Thane* of Cawdor.
If good? why doe I yeeld to that suggestion,
Whose horrid Image doth vnfixe my Heire,
And make my seated Heart knock at my Ribbes,
Against the vse of Nature? Present Feares
Are lesse then horrible Imaginings:
My Thought, whose Murther yet is but fantasticall,
Shakes so my single state of Man, that Function
Is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is,
But what is not. (3.207-19)

Besides Lady Macbeth and the Weird Sisters, Macbeth is subject to the influence of the goddess Hecate. Though her direct influence is confined to contributing a "vap'rous drop,

profound" to the magic that raises "Artificiall Sprights," she is nevertheless the "close contriuer of all harmes" (c.f.16.1174-95), and her presence as the overarching influence of the pagan underworld brings godlike elements into the story that engage the phenomenon of fascination on every level of existence: the human, the supernatural, and the deific.

It is interesting to speculate on the proposition of when Macbeth first entertains the notion of succeeding Duncan as King. The historical Macbeth killed the younger Duncan in battle, and reigned more or less competently for seventeen years (1040-1057). Shakespeare's king barely survives what appears to be an unspecified number of paranoid and unsatisfying months (years?) of turmoil. Almost from his first appearance in scene three, there is an indication that he has at least fantasized about usurping Duncan. As the Sisters greet him, Macbeth "starts" at the suggestion that he "shalt be King hereafter" (3.126). While this is not conclusive as to Macbeth's state of mind, it is very suggestive, because such a pronounced physical reaction, vehement enough for Banquo to comment upon it, indicates that Macbeth has been touched in the inner recesses of his thought.

The first salutation, "All haille *Macbeth,* haile to thee, *Thane* of Glamis" (3.124), carries with it no new or startling information. The second greeting gives him reason to pause: "All haile *Macbeth*, haile to thee *Thane* of Cawdor" (3.125). To Macbeth this seems odd, though not necessarily prescient, for he believes the Thane of Cawdor to be alive: "…the *Thane* of Cawdor liues /A prosperous Gentleman:" (3.148-9). Indeed, this is not, strictly speaking, prophecy; the audience has already witnessed Duncan condemn Cawdor and transfer his privileges to Macbeth in the previous scene. However, to Macbeth, it could seem prophetic, as he is unaware of the preceding events. What sounds prophetic in its tone and unexpected revelation—possibly engaging Macbeth's attention with subtle powers of fascination—is the third greeting: "All haile *Macbeth*, that shalt be King hereafter" (3.126).

Directly after this pronouncement Macbeth is seen to "start" by Banquo. Arguably, if Macbeth was innocent of malice aforethought towards Duncan, he might show signs of curiosity or confusion, but to move physically with enough violence to provoke comment, suggests that the enticement to the throne has touched him in an area at least secret if not guilty.

Martin Wiggins offers an insightful inquiry into the effect of the Sisters' interview with Macbeth and Banquo in "*Macbeth* and premeditation." He argues that Macbeth has already entertained the idea of replacing Duncan on the throne via regicide, to the point that the fantasy has reified into something more potent—a phantasm. The line between fascinated behavior and mental phantasms, recurrent obsession around a fixed idea, is a thin one. It does not require a large effort to progress from thought to action if the obsession is strong enough. Wiggins shows how Macbeth's premeditation upon the subject of taking the throne from Duncan has evolved into a powerful force. Accepting this premise, perhaps Macbeth can then be viewed as being so susceptible to a compelling supposition that the deed can now be accomplished once the Sisters have seemingly reanimated his fantasy. The causal connection between Macbeth's action and the Weird Sisters' proffered charm is explained by Wiggins's idea that

> Macbeth is the object of seduction, but he is also the prize. Banquo sees his companion's fascinated return to the witches' words as the first stage of a temptation which, unchecked, may lead him on to regicide. The audience, however, knows that it is not an innocent obsession, and can see that Macbeth is deceiving himself when he takes up Banquo's view… The Weird Sisters have solicited nothing. They cannot be advanced as a cause of the murder of Duncan, instruments of Satan like the witch in the Nathalocus story, because the murder pre-exists as an idea in Macbeth's mind. This is not a play about temptation; rather our attention is drawn to the long process of premeditation, the hideous phantasma between conception and action.
>
> None the less, the obsessional quality of this premeditation is referrable back to the witches' prediction: they are a factor, though no cause. (35)

The Sisters encourage what Wiggins calls the phantasma of Macbeth's premeditation to further degenerate into becoming what this study describes as a state of fascination. The perception of it becoming evil remains to be discovered later in the play.

At this point, Banquo notices his colleague's reaction and remarks:

> My Noble Partner
> You greet with present Grace, and great prediction
> Of Noble hauing, and of Royall hope,
> That he seemes wrapt withal: to me you speake not. (3.130-33)

The spelling of "rapt" here as "wrapt" suggests the enfolding, binding fixation that is taking hold in Macbeth's meditations upon the prophecies. The Sisters then proceed to reveal their knowledge about Banquo, but he seems to be less touched by them, perhaps because he is shown a lesser prospect of glory, and maintains a more objective perspective on the encounter. It is only when Macbeth perceives that the oracles are about to depart that he snaps out of his reverie to ask them to confirm their information:

> Stay, you imperfect Speakers, tell me more:
> By *Sinell's* death, I know I am *Thane* of Glamis,
> But how, of Cawdor? the *Thane* of Cawdor liues
> A prosperous Gentleman: And to be King,
> Stands not within the prospect of beleefe,
> No more then to be Cawdor. Say from whence
> You owe this strange Intelligence, or why
> Vpon this blasted Heath you stop our way
> With such Prophetique greeting? Speake, I charge you. (3.146-154)

The Sisters do not oblige him with an answer, but vanish instead to leave the two noble warriors to ruminate on their words.

Within a mere ten lines, the Thane of Ross and the Thane of Angus arrive to confirm that Macbeth is now Thane of Cawdor. Macbeth's fixation upon the Sisters's prophecy begins to intensify and once again he muses upon the contingencies so intently that Banquo observes for the second time, "Looke how our Partner's rapt" (3.219). The indication,

though, that Macbeth is considering darker designs is borne out in the following lines, mistaking, as Wiggins says, the fact that the supernatural intelligence is not a true soliciting:

> (*Aside*) This supernaturall soliciting
> Cannot be ill; cannot be good. If ill?
> Why hath it giuen me earnest of successe,
> Commencing in a Truth? I am *Thane* of Cawdor.
> If good? why doe I yeeld to that suggestion,
> Whose horrid Image doth vnfixe my Heire,
> And make my seated Heart knock at my Ribbes,
> Against the vse of Nature? Present Feares
> Are lesse then horrible Imaginings:
> My Thought, whose Murther yet is but fantasticall,
> Shakes so my single state of Man, that Function
> Is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is,
> But what is not. (3.207-19)

Clearly, this prophecy of the coming crown has touched a fearful and guilty chord within Macbeth and he vibrates with the resonance thereof. But for the present moment, he retreats into the safety of reason, "(*aside*) If Chance will haue me King, why, Chance may Crowne me, / Without my stirre" (3.220-1). A few lines later, he observes, "(*aside*) Come what come may, / Time, and the Houre, runs through the roughest Day" (3.223-4). This is as much to say that whatever is fated to be will be, for time and events will take their due course through even the direst of circumstances.

Macbeth seems willing to stand by for the moment and let things unfold naturally. The estate of Cawdor has suddenly come to him without the need for any dishonorable action; perhaps the throne can be gained without the need to perform an act that is capable of unfixing his hair just in the mere contemplation of it. As far as the action of the Sisters is concerned, they foreshadow Macbeth's eventual condition in the lines of the "First Witch" when she describes the torments she intends to inflict upon the Master o'th' *Tiger*:

> Ile dreyne him drie as Hay:
> Sleepe shall neyther Night nor Day
> Hang vpon his Pent-house Lid:
> He shall liue a man forbid: (3.95-98)

They also cast a formal charm of some kind:

> …goe about, about,
> Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,
> And thrice againe, to make vp nine.
> Peace, the Charme's wound vp. (3. 110-13)

The winding of the charm resonates with the image of its potential victims, Macbeth and Banquo, being wound up, bound or wrapped in whatever enthralling force the Sisters have attempted to generate. When they "all haile" Macbeth, do they ape the greeting that Judas supposedly offered to Jesus when he betrayed him in the Garden of Gethsemane? The Sisters begin and end their short interview with Macbeth and Banquo using "all haile" and perhaps that is a specific element to the charm. It is not a crucial element; as Wiggins says, the Sisters' efforts with the charm are not necessarily causal because Macbeth later is able to reason his way out of taking the damning path to regicide. But as the Sisters depart, the stage tableau shows their intended victim in the pose of being "wrapt" and the fantasy of attaining the throne does become Macbeth's overriding pre-occupation until he is invested as King at Scone.

Macbeth is able to recognize that he is meditating on the suggested prize; two-thirds of the tripartite greeting and its supposition have already come into being. Does Macbeth know that he is susceptible to fascination—bewitchment— because he has premeditated a regicide? He seems to display a thought process that is engaged towards fascination, but he is not yet suggestible enough to commit murder.

As Macbeth comes to learn later in the scene where he is lauded for his victories by Duncan, the path to the throne will apparently not be direct if left up to chance. As grateful as Duncan is to Macbeth and Banquo for their valor and conquest of the rebel host, he reserves the greatest honor for his eldest son, Malcolm, by creating him the Prince of Cumberland.

This is a significant check to Macbeth's fantasy about ascending the throne. Also this apparent variation from the tradition of tanistry by Duncan is politically volatile and supremely ill-timed considering the events of the war. Macbeth and Banquo are clearly the heroes of the day; the only contribution Malcolm seems to have made towards the effort was to be captured by the rebels. To distribute the spoils of war to worthy warriors while awarding the keys to the kingdom to one's son cannot fail to cause comment at the very least—heated opposition at the worst. In fact, Macbeth no sooner accepts the praise of his king, but he once again dwells on the Sisters' prophecy in another aside:

> (*aside*) The Prince of Cumberland: that is a step,
> On which I must fall downe, or else o'er-leape,
> For in my way it lyes. Starres hide your fires,
> Let not Light see my black and deepe desires:
> The Eye winke at the Hand; yet let that bee
> Which the Eye feares, when it is done, to see. (4.283-88)

There is no question that Macbeth is now entertaining the removal of Malcolm, Duncan, or both. He sees the necessity for taking action, and intimates that there will need to be a mental distancing from the act. Conscience, he realizes, will object and become an obstacle, but the fascination of gaining the throne has now tightened its grip upon his thought, and it is heading towards a greater impulse to action.

Macbeth's Letter

The letter Macbeth sends to his wife may or may not have had the effect he originally intended. If he was looking for someone to talk him out of committing regicide, he makes an egregious tactical error by enlisting the aid of his wife. Rather than urge him to see the catastrophic consequences associated with such a plan, she not only encourages it, but shames and cajoles him into putting his fantastical thoughts into hard action. If, however, Macbeth was breaking this intelligence to her in order to make her an accomplice in a treasonous plot,

then he could have selected no better "*Partner of Greatnesse*" (5.303). She not only joins him in the conspiracy, but she intends to take an active role in the deed itself. Prophecy, therefore, fascinates not one, but two principal characters, enticing them both to murder and treason.

Lady Macbeth appears for the first time meditating upon this letter, though as she reads it, we become aware of a slight interpretive issue. The Sisters have greeted Macbeth with titles and speculations of greatness but have not "promised" an outcome. So the line from the letter, "*thou might'st not loose the dues of reioycing by being ignorant of what Greatnesse is promis'd thee*" (5.303-5) is assumptive. But Lady Macbeth also interprets the prophecy of the throne as a guarantee. What is more, she is willing to overcome any moral objections Macbeth might have to "catch the neerest way" (5.310). Apparently, Lady Macbeth entertains a kind of fascination for the throne as well and sees nothing as an obstacle to it, except the absence of an opportunity to make it happen:

> …shalt be
> What thou art promis'd: yet doe I feare thy Nature,
> It is too full o'th' Milke of humane kindnesse,
> To catch the neerest way. Thou would'st be great,
> Art not without Ambition, but without
> The illnesse should attend it. What thou would'st highly,
> That would'st thou holily: would'st not play false,
> And yet would'st wrongly winne. Thould'st haue, Great Glamys,
> That which cryes, thus thou must doe, if thou haue it;
> And that which rather thou do'st feare to doe,
> Then wishest should be vndone. High thee hither,
> That I may powre my Spirits in thine Eare,
> And chastise with the valour of my Tongue
> All that impeides thee from the Golden Round,
> Which Fate and Metaphysicall ayde doth seeme
> To haue thee crown'd withall. (5.307-22)

If Lady Macbeth is accurate in her assessment of her husband, we can conclude that her observation of Macbeth's willingness to "wrongly win" confirms that his aspiration to the throne is not innocent but potentially criminal. Her joining a criminal fantasy, much less

aiding and abetting it, will now make her equally liable for whatever they chance to commit because of it.

Her following speech not only is an invocation to some sort of demonic possession, it is a request for total immersion into everything that will perpetuate the fascinated mental state until what is now a joint obsession with the Scottish throne has been satisfied:

> …fill me from the Crowne to the Toe, top-full
> Of direst Crueltie: make thick my blood,
> Stop vp th'accesse, and passage to Remorse,
> That no compunctious visitings of Nature
> Shake my fell purpose, nor keepe peace betweene
> Th'effect, and hit. Come to my Womans Brests,
> And take my Milke for Gall, you murth'ring Ministers,
> Where-euer, in your sightlesse substances,
> You wait on Natures Mischiefe. (5.334-42)

She confesses her maleficium and shows us how she will add the projection of her own ambition to that of her husband. They will achieve "soueraigne sway, and Masterdome" (5.362) by beguiling the time and looking like innocent flowers, but being the dangerous serpents underneath them (c.f. 5.354-58). Here the audience encounters an image connected in some ways to the legend of the expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Scotland is still recovering from a civil war—hardly an Eden at the present moment—but the association of the image tells us it will be a long while before the country ever comes to resemble the biblical Garden; the Macbeth's are about to create a very large opening for Chaos to enter in. Or, as Macduff says after the murder, "Confusion now hath made his Master-peece" (10.679).

"If 'twere done.."

Macbeth is quick to seize upon prophecy which is unexpectedly presented to him, betraying a weakness for auguries and portents. The fact that he has previously fantasized about being king, perhaps over the body of the incumbent, shows a willingness to subject virtue to expediency, and this is what the predictions of the Weird Sisters so powerfully

reinforce. Rather than raise an armed rebellion against Duncan to contest the throne as the Thane of Cawdor does in the beginning of the play, Macbeth dreams of a more direct and less honorable way to the crown. His fear of discovery and censure holds him at bay. This is revealed in scene seven when he gives all the virtuous reasons for not killing Duncan while he sleeps in Macbeth's castle:

> Hee's heere in double trust;
> First, as I am his Kinsman, and his Subiect,
> Strong both against the Deed: Then, as his Host,
> Who should against his Murtherer shut the doore,
> Not beare the knife my selfe. (7.408-12)

His resolve to let nature take its course in crowning him king quickly crumbles when Lady Macbeth shows him how they can commit the murder and get away with covering up their guilt, while suppressing censure and opposition if they are suspected.

Macbeth seizes as quickly upon this opportunity as he does the hope offered by the Weird Sisters' prophecy. Macbeth has to contend with multiple assaults upon his thought and given his strong predisposition to see himself as King of Scotland, he is apparently easy prey. Yet he still exhibits a strong sense of honor coupled with his overweening royal aspirations. This sense of honor, though, is seen to be unequal to the task of keeping his "Bosome franchis'd" (8.505) when Lady Macbeth persuades him in a remarkably short space—forty-eight lines. Lady Macbeth is able to recommit her husband to the plot against Duncan by questioning his sense of honor and assuring him that the deed, while complicated, can be carried off in spite of suspicion. Macbeth moves from "We will proceed no further in this Businesse" (7.427), to "I am settled, and bend vp / Each corporall Agent to this terrible Feat" by (7.475). The power of Lady Macbeth's conviction and steely resolve not only to spur Macbeth on, but to take an equal part in the maleficium is impressive. It is, in fact, the deciding factor in convincing Macbeth to proceed. Though she does no killing, she creates

the murderous opportunity, and stage-manages the tableau of the regicide. In addition, she attempts to manage the aftermath of the murder once they are formally placed on the throne, but she proves unequal to the task as Macbeth becomes too unstable to carry it through.

Lady Macbeth is the pivotal influence in goading Macbeth down the path to ruin. We see very little of her after the banquet scene and it is tempting to imagine that the true horror of what they have committed has finally dawned on her thought. Perhaps it is not a fully conscious realization, for she attempts to expurgate her guilt in her sleep-walking episodes. This element of the story lends an interesting perspective on the power of fascination to work even while the subject is asleep. Of course, this is where fascination would be thought to have the greatest power, as the victim is considerably more vulnerable when the rational faculties are dormant in the sleep-cycle. Thought is highly associative and capricious in the dream state; obsessions can take on a whole new reality outside of the parameters of conscious thought.

In the case of Lady Macbeth, we are presented with a portrait of an ambitious woman who seems to project that ambitious force of will onto her husband—who is already possessed of an ample share of it himself. However, her failure to perceive the consequences of unbridled ambition culminating in regicide proves fatal to both of them. In fact, it is more than a perceptive failure on her part; it is an outright misperception that they can endure the consequences and reign successfully with royal blood on their hands. There is great resonance in the fact that she goads Macbeth to commit regicide in order for her eventually to become queen, yet fails to understand that she imperils her own peace by her conspiracy and complicity. Her reasoning that if Macbeth can get away with the murder, they will be able to brave out the aftermath misses the symbolic implications that she will share directly in Macbeth's fate because she is more than his partner; she is one with him in deed and

consequence—condemning her to mental anguish over a guilt than she can literally never wash off.

She succeeds in moving Macbeth on where the Weird Sisters' prophecy has twice failed to make him do more than await the outcome of chance. Given that she exploits the weak portal of Macbeth's ambition to capitalize on an opportunity seemingly presented by the encounter with the Sisters, she also ruthlessly targets other vulnerable areas of his psyche as well. His successful resistance to the fascinating enticement of the Sisters' speech is based on logic, recognition of due loyalty, respect for honor and the laws of hospitality and the understanding that he could never get away with such an act while Duncan was his guest. These are all formidable and correct arguments. But Lady Macbeth is able to overcome them with an aggressive suggestion founded upon misperception—a redirecting of Macbeth's loyalty priorities and a false estimate of their chances for total success. She then challenges Macbeth's resolve with the brutal declaration:

> I haue giuen Sucke, and know
> How tender 'tis to loue the Babe that milkes me,
> I would, while it was smyling in my Face,
> Haue pluckt my Nipple from his Bonelesse Gummes,
> And dasht the Braines out, had I so sworne
> As you haue done to this. (7.450-455)

This rings false on two points: 1) that she would actually smash her own baby's skull in, when she is incapable of murdering Duncan, to whom she has no relation other than that of subject/sovereign. If she cannot kill him in his sleep because he resembles her father, it seems highly improbable that she could summon the will to beat her own flesh and blood to death while it was nursing. 2) There is no record of Macbeth taking an oath to perform the regicide. This use of "had I so sworne / As you haue done to this," is a subtle, escalating supposition, but it is only compelling to the rational thought if there has actually been a sworn oath. To posit that Macbeth has taken such an oath offstage is an understandable, but textually

unsupported conjecture. It is, however, a devious suggestion to convince Macbeth that he cannot go back on the plan without being forsworn, which is not actually the case.

What makes *Macbeth* so complex with regard to the operation of fascination, is that the plot does not rely on one source of mesmerism to entrap the hero. Though the primary source of the fascination of Macbeth's thought springs from the influence of the Sisters and Hecate, there is a powerful influence from Lady Macbeth that is crucial to the downfall of Macbeth. The supernatural influence is aided and abetted by a human influence. As Macbeth opens himself up to the influence of the Sisters by accepting their predictions as true, he likewise opens himself up to the influence of Lady Macbeth by accepting her counsel and assessment of the murder and subsequent cover-up. In each instance he does so not because he is stupid or unimaginative, but because he has been partially blinded to reason and clear foresight by his avaricious fixation upon his own greatness.

Lady Macbeth is fully aware of her power with her husband; she uses it to help him to the greatness that he obviously desires, but hesitates to grasp. The fact that they are presently childless perhaps contributes to the intensity of her focus upon her husband's estate. What is interesting to note about Lady Macbeth is that at no time prior to the murder of Duncan does she hesitate to promote the deed. Her single-minded focus on the regicide is very suggestive of the fact that *she* has become ensnared in the web of bewitching prophecy woven by the Sisters. Though not addressed directly in the prophecies, her inseparability from Macbeth brings her into the same path of destruction, unless she is able to resist it like Banquo. There is, however, little chance of that. The prophecy has worked upon Lady Macbeth's thought, perhaps to an even greater degree than Macbeth's, and what is crucial to note is that it has blinded her to the consequences to an even greater degree than her husband. If this were not the case, then in all likelihood Macbeth would successfully talk himself out of the regicide in

scene seven. In fact, it is Lady Macbeth that ensures the success of the Sisters' project, for Macbeth has already successfully resisted the pull of their charm:

> We will proceed no further in this Businesse:
> He hath Honour'd me of late, and I haue bought
> Golden Opinions from all sorts of people,
> Which would be worne now in their newest glosse,
> Not cast aside so soone. (7.427-31)

Macbeth's reasons for discontinuing the plot are famous and powerful. But the most significant reason, and the first one he mentions, is the fact that the assassination cannot "trammell vp the Consequence" (7.399), or capture all of the subsequent loose ends neatly in a net. Something will escape; murder will out.

> It will haue blood, they say: Blood will haue Blood:
> Stones haue beene knowne to moue, & Trees to speake:
> Augures, and vnderstood Relations, haue
> By Maggot Pyes, & Choughes, & Rookes brought forth
> The secret'st man of Blood. (15.1145-49)

Lady Macbeth dismisses the idea that the two of them cannot get away with the murder. First, she points out, the murder will have no witnesses and be performed upon the king while he sleeps. The guards will be drugged and unconscious, then subsequently blamed. Secondly, anyone who voices suspicions of the Macbeths' malfeasance will have no firm ground on which to make accusation, as the Thane and his wife will brave out the circumstances and defy potential accusers to show proof. The additional spur needed to prick the sides of his intent is Lady Macbeth and her delusion that they can actually succeed in a regicide and cover-up. No conscious deception or contrivance is necessary here because the underlying misapprehension masquerades as seeming truth—powerful enough to fool and ensnare another victim.

An "Ayre-drawne-Dagger"

Macbeth's fixation is so advanced by the time his wife rings the bell to cue him to the regicide that he reveals to the audience that he has started to hallucinate as a precursor to the murder. This is one of the deepest forms of fascinated thought, where the mental imagery is blended into and then mistaken for reality. Macbeth has entered a state of reality transcendence, evidenced by his confusion over the vividness of the mental image of the murder weapon:

> Is this a Dagger, which I see before me,
> The Handle toward my Hand? Come, let me clutch thee:
> I haue thee not, and yet I see thee still.
> Art thou not fatall Vision, sensible
> To feeling, as to sight? Or art thou but
> A Dagger of the Minde, a false Creation,
> Proceeding from the heat-oppressed Braine?
> I see thee yet, in forme as palpable,
> As this which now I draw. (8.511-19)

Though he is "bewitched" by what he is about to do, he is not hypnotized or fully hallucinating. He is still aware of his surroundings and can maintain a clearness of purpose without the need of an outside agent to dictate his actions. He can retreat at any time. But the fascinating images and possibilities draw him on and "marshall'st … the way that I was going" (8.520).

After the murder it is interesting to see how quickly both of the Macbeths fall into the condition that the Master of the Tiger supposedly suffers from in scene three. Lady Macbeth quickly shifts from urging her husband to do the deed to telling him "These deeds must not be thought / After these wayes: so, it will make vs mad" (9.573-4). To his visual hallucination, Macbeth adds an aural one: "Me thought I heard a voyce cry, Sleep no more: / *Macbeth* does murther Sleepe," (9.575-6). He cannot abide the imagery of the actual deed: "I am afraid, to thinke what I haue done: / Looke on it againe, I dare not" (9.591-2). Lady Macbeth thinks

that she can handle the visual power of the fatal tableau, but as we see during the later sleepwalking scene it completely overwhelms her thought. She chastises Macbeth for thinking "So braine-sickly of things" (9.585), yet she is the one who suffers the brain-sick malady of somnambulism.

Both of them have drastically altered their self-perception, and as regicides, they have dramatically changed their identities—more so than what they will shortly become when they are made King and Queen. Macbeth knows that he, at least, will have to maintain some mental distance from what he has just committed, "To know my deed, 'twere best not know my selfe" (9.613). The crime turns their sovereignty into tyranny—a tragic mockery of kingship.

Porter at the Door

The "drunken Porter" in scene ten presents a dramatic representation of the mechanical operation of the weak portal of suggestibility. Metaphorically, the drunken Porter could serve as an example of Reason compromised and Imagination dominant, liable to entertain anything that appears at the door of the mind. Without Reason and Judgment's corrective influence and their ability to balance appearances against a deeper understanding of reality, the mind can be overwhelmed with unfiltered stimuli and become vulnerable to a redirection of the victim's will that might not occur otherwise.

On a dramatic level, the Porter scene echoes the medieval stage conventions of the damned appearing at Hell Mouth, receiving their reward for allowing themselves to be captivated by iniquity. Both overtones suggest the warning that in regards to the workings of the mind's "castle," great care should be taken to maintain a sober and vigilant guard upon the portals—especially perception and imagination.

The scene is short and the comedy serves to provide a brief respite from the relentless focus on the coming regicide. In fact, the Porter scene distracts the audience's attention during the moments when Macbeth has gone to Duncan's bedroom to commit the murder. The play is so well-known that few audience members, except some first-time auditors, do not know that Macduff will soon find the body and exclaim, "O horror, horror, horror," (10.676). However, besides presenting the metaphorical conceit of the hazard of letting the porter to the door of thought become intoxicated, and allow in all kinds of criminal impulses, the scene also presents the audience with the image that at the moment Macbeth commits the regicide, his world is revisioned into a semblance of Hell.

Displaced Mirth

Macbeth's obsession with the throne of Scotland mutates from acquisition to retention after he returns from Scone and holds a royal feast for his subjects. Whereas Duncan was the obstacle to the former problem, Banquo now looms as an impediment to the latter. If Macbeth truly trusted the Sisters' prophecy, he would take assurance that he could remain king until Banquo's son(s) came of age. But a mind full of "scorpions" like Macbeth's sees vulnerabilities with regard to how long his kingship will last before Banquo's progeny take over the throne. The solution, to a fascinated mind and a now criminal hand is simple: kill Banquo and his heirs. Macbeth's reasoning is impeccable, dishonorable and brutally efficient. If his hired assassins had been completely successful in their commission to murder Banquo and Fleance, the play would have followed a much different scenario. But only Banquo is killed, keeping alive the prophecy that an heir of Banquo could one day take the throne.

The appearance of Banquo's ghost onstage in the banquet scene drives Macbeth from fascination to near madness. If the shock of seeing the ghost had gone any further in its extremity, Macbeth might well have fallen to the floor in a catatonic fit like Othello. Unlike

the imaginary dagger, the ghost is listed in the stage directions as making specific entrances and exits. Therefore the audience is intended to see it as well. Though Macbeth is the only one to see it onstage, the audience is permitted to experience a more concrete identification with Macbeth's fascination and horror at the sight of Banquo's gory visage. This is somewhat compensatory for the omission of Duncan's death tableau, which would have been too shocking to most early modern audiences—the graphic representation of a regicide—and would definitely have been censored by the Master of the Revels.

A spectacle such as this helps to portray the shocking jolt that Macbeth receives to his mental state and explains visually what is another step in the alteration of his self-image. He knows now that no sovereign sway will ever purge the blood of his victims from his hangman's hands. Macbeth is so deeply disturbed by the imagery of the murders he has committed or commissioned that he will now act upon his thoughts without allowing space for consideration. His hope is that once he becomes more comfortable with his new perspective of self and identity he can at least manage his political reign while his inner perturbations begin to sort themselves out: "My strange & self-abuse / Is the initiate feare, that wants hard vse: / We are but yong in deed" (15.1165-67).

Hecate and the Apparitions

Within the play's witchcraft theme, the prime movers in the web spun to ensnare Macbeth are the Weyward Sisters and the goddess of witchcraft, Hecate. Hecate takes less direct action in the ensnarement of Macbeth; instead she scolds the Sisters for presuming upon her prerogative:

> Sawcy, and ouer-bold, how did you dare
> To Trade, and Trafficke with *Macbeth*,
> In Riddles, and Affaires of death;
> And I the Mistris of your Charmes,
> The close contriuer of all harmes,

> Was neuer call'd to beare my part,
> Or shew the glory of our Art? (16.1170-76)

Hecate introduces a possible mediation (for the audience) between predetermination and free will—or even the classic style of tragic structure over the neoclassic. Macbeth does not have to bear his sufferings patiently before his early modern audience as his Greek counterpart might have done centuries before on the stages of Athens. In Shakespeare's era, an offer could be made by a god or demon, a prediction unfolded, but Macbeth does not have to grasp it. He, like the "noble Banquo," could refuse to pursue the prophecy if it meant compromising his honor or eternal soul. For some members of the audience—both early modern and present-day—if he is to suffer at all, he should be suffering for righteousness' sake, "For *it is* better (if the will of God be so) that ye suffer for well doing, then for euill doing" (I Peter 3:17).

To those members of a Renaissance audience versed in Christian ethos and the tradition of decades of Morality plays, his refusal to take a sinful course of action, whatever the consequences, would be consistent with making a "correct" decision. One comparison with another character in the play suggests the question, what might a figure like Edward the Confessor do if he found himself in Macbeth's situation? *The Tragedy of Edward the Confessor* might be conspicuously brief. But Macbeth, who is nominally Christian and voices Christian arguments within his attempt to solve his dilemma is spectacularly captivated by the pagan construct and turns to it more consistently for inspiration than church doctrine.

The Christian tones are held in relief to the backdrop of the order created by Hecate and the underworld spirits. Their order is that of vengeance for slights, payback for disrespect, and punishment for human weakness. How is it, then, that Macbeth becomes the target for their punitive energies? Is he not a virtually infallible hero fighting on the side of king and country? The audience is aware that he harbors secret and formidable ambitions, but

is that enough to damn him? Perhaps, but there is an additional clue to the prosecution from the spirits: he is a choleric, malicious and irreverent maverick. To Hecate, Macbeth apparently is a self-centered, avaricious schemer who pursues his own agenda, and does not pay proper homage to any deity. She profiles him in the following terms:

> HECAT
>
> And, which is worse, all you haue done
> Hath bene but for a wayward Sonne,
> Spightfull, and wrathfull, who (as others do),
> Loues for his owne ends, not for you. (16.1177-80)

If the reportage of Macbeth's inner character is accurate, then it is small wonder that Fate, Fortune, and the goddess of purification and expiation might conjoin to torment this "wayward son." In making the prosecution of Macbeth an agenda item for Hecate, the play as it exists in the surviving text, creates a third force targeting the destruction of Macbeth's reign. He has already had to deal with rebellious members of his own country, he realizes that England will be sending an army against him and now the audience perceives that a potent part of the pagan or supernatural underworld is in the final stages of assaulting his tenuous security.

The methods of fascination employed by the Sisters against Macbeth are graphically overt—to the point of masque-like spectacle. With their hook baited and set in scene three, the Sisters stand by to watch the destructive power of what they perceive to be their mental charm work upon its victim. When Hecate arrives to chide them, not so much for their actions as for their omitting her from the proceedings, she indicates that Macbeth was not a prime choice for their efforts as he is not a likely convert to their ways. She implies that perhaps Macbeth would damn himself to the underworld without too much aid from them. But, as the Sisters have initiated this project, Hecate decides that it should be followed through with proper procedure and ritual. She commands her minions to prepare a ceremony

that will finish the job on Macbeth's imagination, and put a proper closure to his destruction. Hecate herself will prepare the apparitions Macbeth encounters:

> Vpon the Corner of the Moone
> There hangs a vap'rous drop, profound,
> Ile catch it ere it come to ground;
> And that distill'd by Magicke slights,
> Shall raise such Artificiall Sprights,
> As by the strength of their illusion,
> Shall draw him on to his Confusion.
> He shall spurne Fate, scorne Death, and beare
> His hopes 'boue Wisedome, Grace, and Feare:
> And you all know, Security
> Is Mortals cheefest Enemie. (16.1190-1200)

Macbeth pays little respect to the Sisters (and any attendant spirits) when he arrives at their lair. His greeting is a wonderfully self-centered tirade, ending in a brusque command. This can be evidence of Hecate's previous assessment of his character, or simply the result of the strain he has endured since the regicide. In any event, his thought is ripe for capture, because he indicates that he is prepared to believe anything the spirits will tell him, even if they detail the Apocalypse. From this point, Macbeth is totally lost. If he is willing to take the ensuing prophecy as patent truth, *prima facie*, then he commits himself totally to whatever path they lay before him, blind to the pitfalls and possible destruction.

There are numerous ways to stage the entrance of the apparitions, but the strongest staging concepts again seem to lie in those presentations that materially represent them onstage. They are detailed in the stage directions and the spectacle is infinitely more fascinating for the viewer if he can see what Macbeth sees. As with the Ghost of Banquo in scene fifteen, Macbeth actually sees them, not because he is hallucinating, but because there is an actual manifestation to be witnessed. Everything that appears onstage is specifically designed to overwhelm Macbeth's consciousness, just as it works to amaze and fascinate the theatrical audience that is witnessing the play.

When Macbeth enters, there are six "witches" and the goddess of witchcraft herself confronting him. In the course of the scene, he witnesses three fascinating apparitions, and eight phantom kings followed by the most frightening specter that he has seen to date: the ghost of Banquo. This is a perfectly conceived and executed attack upon the reasoning faculties of the victim. Macbeth stands little to no chance of seeing through any equivocation within the prophecies, even though the visual evidence is right there before his eyes. It is for this reason that the physical manifestation of the apparitions is so important to any production: the audience must see what Macbeth sees, though not necessarily with his eyes.

The first apparition appears accompanied by *"Thunder. 1. Apparation, an Armed Head*" (18.1375.1). It warns Macbeth to beware of Macduff, but does not state the particular reason. However, the visual image the apparition presents offers ground for rich speculation, which perhaps should occur to Macbeth, but apparently does not. The head is not attached to a body, symbolizing not only the possibility of Macduff at the head of a rebellion, but also Macbeth's own future (a disembodied head) at the hands of the Thane of Fife. It also reflects back upon the violence Macbeth visited upon Macdonwald, turning that traitor's rebellion into a headless cause. If Macbeth, through his actions, has become a traitor to his country and crown, will he not suffer the same fate? The apparition does not (or is not allowed to) elaborate, despite Macbeth's curiosity. Here we may also detect an operative element of the fascinating influence: allow little time to reflect upon new information, allow reason little room to work out the truth.

Macbeth is rebuffed in his interrogation of the First Apparition by the First Witch, and immediately a second image appears: a bloody child. This Second Apparition is as elegantly subtle a messenger as the first, but more potent in its push to lead Macbeth into the trap of

overconfidence: "Be bloody, bold, & resolute: Laugh to scorne / The powre of man: For none of woman borne / Shall harme *Macbeth*" (18.1386-88). Hearing that, who would not take comfort from the prediction that no human could harm him? It does leave open the possibility for lethal accident, or death by wild beast, but Macbeth's thought is currently very narrowly focused upon Macduff. He therefore replies:

> Then liue, *Macduffe*: what need I feare of thee?
> But yet Ile make assurance double sure,
> And take a Bond of Fate: thou shalt not liue,
> That I may tell pale-hearted Feare, it lies;
> And sleepe in spight of Thunder. (18.1389-93)

Again, however, Macbeth seems to miss the visual clues presented by the apparition that undermine the apparent veracity of its warning. A bloody child could represent to Macbeth the futility of such a creature being the instrument of his doom—if it was born through the natural process. However, babies born in this manner are less likely to be covered in blood than they are likely to be covered in amniotic fluid. A blood soaked babe is more likely to be the result of a birth by Cesarean section; we find out later that this is the reality of Macduff's birth. The image of the Second Apparition should suggest, "Equivocation! Look more deeply into this!" It is, perhaps, too subtle a projection to a mind charging down another course of thought. Macbeth may be ignorant of the full impact of the Second Apparition, but he elects the correct course for his personal safety; he decides to hold equivocating prophecy to its seeming promises and plots the murder of Macduff to "make assurance double sure" (18.1390).

The Third Apparition plays the trickster with Macbeth by switching quietly over from symbolic representation to an almost literal presentation: "*Thunder. 3 Apparation, a Childe Crowned, with a Tree in his hand*" (18.1393.1). There is no direct indication that this apparition is to represent Malcolm, but it is suggested by the child, i.e. a young king such as

Malcolm will be if he ascends the throne. The tree image, however, is taken by Macbeth to be symbolic in its meaning. Apparently, he sees a symbol of impossibility—a baby lifting a tree—and joyously concludes that only an impossibility like a forest uprooting and marching against him can fulfill this prophecy. He indulges in a false sense of security by missing the literal message of the image: the young prince (and his forces) will actually cut the trees of Birnam Wood and hold them in their hands while they march against Dunsinane. The equivocation again hides in plain sight.

At this point, the show for Macbeth is over, and the spirits have fulfilled their obligation to his rude command. But Macbeth is unsatisfied, because the most galling part of the prophecy on the heath in scene three remains mysterious. He demands that the assembled coven reveal the nature of Banquo's due and in no uncertain terms threatens them rudely with a curse if they demur. This sort of prompting instantly procures Macbeth's behest, and he has now affronted the dark assembly twice with his wrath. They, therefore, are only too glad to show him the unequivocal truth of Banquo's legacy, for they suspect beforehand the effect it will have on Macbeth. The reappearance of the Ghost of Banquo delivers the figurative dagger to Macbeth's heart and hopes with his smile and the projected triumph of his progeny. As Macbeth tries to reconcile the enormity of his humiliation, Hecate lays bare the reason for tormenting him—his own arrogance and insolence:

> I Sir, all this is so. But why
> Stands *Macbeth* thus amazedly?
> Come Sisters, cheere we vp his sprights,
> And shew the best of our delights.
> Ile Charme the Ayre to giue a sound,
> While you performe your Antique round:
> That this great King may kindly say,
> Our duties, did his welcome pay. (18.1432-39)

At the end of this scene, Macbeth is lost, heart and soul to the obsessive fixation of his

own agenda. He has "in blood / Stept in so farre, that should I wade no more, / Returning were as tedious as go ore" (15.1159-61). With this giving over to the impulse to see the end of a course of action that he knows is wrong, he suspends reason and the intervention of conscience. Every action he takes from now on will be for his own security and his own indulgence:

> From this moment,
> The very firstlings of my heart shall be
> The firstlings of my hand. (18.1453-55)

Final Revelations

Macbeth and Richard III are perhaps the only examples in Shakespeare of grasping opportunists who realize that to gain the crown, they must risk damning themselves for the sake of what may be a tenuous reign—and then do it anyway. As a dramatic encounter with the issue of "what is the price of fame, and what is the cost of glory" Macbeth's temptation revolves around Christ's question in Mark 8, verse 36: "For what shall it profit a man, though he should win the whole world, if he lose his soule?" More importantly, once lost, what is the price of getting it back, if that is possible: "Or what exchange shall a man give for his soule?" (Mark 8: 37).

Once he has taken full possession of his "prophecied" fortune, it would take a complete breakdown in the fascinating effects of the seductive prophecy to release him from it. It is remarkable that Macbeth sees so clearly how ruinous his act of regicide will be, yet is bewitched into thinking that he is somehow exempted from similar consequences from the effects of another prophecy—and this is exactly what happens. The first prophecy of the Sisters comes to fruition, but an unforeseen element of the prognostication is that it will be subject to the prophecies of others who will bear a contingent impact on Macbeth's elevation to the throne.

For a soldier, it is not the manner of death that holds much terror for the mind, but in many cases, it is the matter of honor and reputation that can comprise the more serious loss. For Macbeth, who has wagered his soul for present gain, it is this loss that galls him more than the eventual loss of his life; it is the subtle, unnoticed influence of fascination, slowly undermining the strong foundation of reason that has been left lightly guarded by the pursuit of ambition and personal sense. For Macbeth, the loss of respect and friends is worse than any injury he could receive in battle. For Macbeth, the realization that he has entered the hell of a tortured psyche before he has enjoyed a minute of the crown is the "deepe damnation" (7.416) of his act of regicide.

Lady Macbeth also realizes too late that there will be no enjoying the object of their plot, when after all their scheming,

> Nought's had, all's spent,
> Where our desire is got without content:
> 'Tis safer, to be that which we destroy,
> Then by destruction dwell in doubtfull ioy. (13.950-53)

The true effect of fascination is to produce upon the body as well as the mind the effects of whatever is cherished in thought. As the Macbeths' experience bears out, there is no need to wait for Heaven, Hell or the Underworld; whatever governs the mental state ultimately governs the material state. Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking attempt to purge her tortured soul mirrors Macbeth's reflection that

> I have liu'd long enough: my way of life
> Is faln into the Seare, the yellow Leafe,
> And that which should accompany Old-Age,
> As Honor, Loue, Obedience, Troopes of Friends,
> I must not looke to haue: but in their steed
> Curses, not lowd but deepe, Mouth-honor, breath
> Which the poore heart would faine deny, and dare not. (23.1920-29)

CHAPTER SEVEN

OTHELLO

Hating the Moor

As the twenty-first century witnesses an increasingly global exploration of Shakespeare, Bernard Spivack's observation in *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil* still rings true that in the literature of scholarship and criticism,

> …Iago has been rationalized to the last inch of his human similitude. But the hard and literal enigma of Othello's fatal ancient remains intractable. There is still no successful mediation between his terrible vividness, as we feel it on the one hand, and the blank he presents to our scrutiny on the other. (3)

There is no definitive solution to the problem of Iago's "psyche" in terms of clinical psychological observation. Perhaps it is because Shakespeare left enough of his profile indeterminate, or under-motivated, that attempts to fathom him to the depths have been frustrated. But as a dramatic functionary, Iago is very straightforward. He is the means by which Othello's mind is ensnared, and he creates the potential to enact the great tragedy surrounding the deaths of Othello and Desdemona. Iago shares the top of the list of Shakespeare's Machiavels with Richard III, keeping company with such notorious and compelling characters as Aaron, Edmund, York, and Hamlet's uncle Claudius. As a character type, he traces his lineage back through Barabas in Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta,* Lorenzo in Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, the Vice characters of pre-Elizabethan drama, and even to associations with the tempters, adversaries and devils of religious dramas and sacred writings. There is even evidence of his type in the "clever slave" of classical comedies, which Spivack traces so thoroughly in *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil*—a fine study of Iago and his predecessors.

The intrigue of Iago is built upon a trio of factors which invites much speculation, but textually only exists in the reported facts that he: 1) resents Cassio's appointment to the Lieutenancy over him, 2) hates Othello, and 3) is resolved to get Cassio's place because he considers it the privilege of his seniority and quality of service amongst the officer corps. A stated reason for hating Othello is that Iago believes he has had sexual intercourse with Emilia, a servant to Othello's wife, Desdemona. The fact that Iago is married to Emilia explains the justification for a possible hatred, but even if Iago is mistaken, he engenders the conceit of this infidelity in the thought of the audience. In any event, Iago does not require proof of the transgression to nurse his animus:"I, for meere suspition in that kind, / Will doe, as if for surety" (3.667-668).

Othello is a less spectacular treatment of the effects of fascination, but it is no less compelling or horrible than *Macbeth*. The audience views scenes which take place indoors with more frequency than in *Macbeth*, and the mood of *Othello* seems to be more suffocating in its intensity as we see Iago's plot wind around and bind itself to Othello's imagination like a constricting snake. *Othello* uses snake imagery to support the "poison" (4.978) of Iago's malice, "Where is that Viper" (15.3188), so the suffocating theme carries some internal and external metaphorical suggestions. This sits in contrast to the feeling that *Macbeth* unfolds with more unbridled speed, slashing from one danger to another. Ironically, however, though the audience is placed in an aesthetically close proximity to Othello, we are not given that type of access to his inwardness that Macbeth provides. We are meant, perhaps, to see the operation of fascination more from the external evidence of behavior and public speech than from Othello's "thinking" or private meditations.

Othello gives the audience little reason to hate him until he actually kills Desdemona. Because this happens at the end of the play, we can entertain a kind of hope that Othello

might dispel the fascination of his thought and discern the true reality of what has been happening on Cyprus. Macbeth earns our opprobrium early in his story and we as auditors experience a kind of fear in both plays—generally a fear *of* what Macbeth *will* do, and a fear *for* what Othello *might* do.

Iago seems to be the only character in the play that truly hates Othello. We know this, because he tells us directly. *Othello* offers the audience more access to the projector of the maleficium than to the victim of the fascination. We see the internal operations upon the subject of the process of mesmeric bewitchment in Macbeth, and we see the external operations upon the subject in Othello, because we have access to the internal mechanics of Iago's demonstration of "evil eye" projection. In the early scenes, Iago has yet to reveal a specific plan, if he has already preconceived one against Othello, but he clearly states that he has conceived a malice which will almost certainly find a way to hurt Othello: "Tho I doe hate him, as I doe hell paines, / Yet for necessity of present life, / I must shew out a flag, and signe of loue, / Which is indeed but a signe" (1.157-60). Later he repeats that he hates Othello, but shares more of the passion behind it:

> …I doe suspect the lustie Moore,
> Hath leap'd into my seate, the thought whereof
> Doth like a poisonous minerall gnaw my inwards,
> And nothing can, or shall content my soule,
> Till I am euen'd with him, wife, for wife:
> Or failing so, yet that I put the Moore,
> At least, into a Iealousie so strong,
> That Iudgement cannot cure; (4.976-83)

In this play it is Iago who represents the issue of premeditated villainy, though it is not as specific early on as Macbeth's premeditated concept of regicide. It is similar, though; for all intents and purposes Othello holds a version of sovereign power once the army arrives in Cyprus and Iago has already mounted a campaign against him.

Iago likes power. He speaks of war as his trade, and there is no reason to assume that

he follows or cares for any other. With all of his hopes for advancement, status and fortune bound up in the army, his being passed over for Othello's lieutenancy is a difficult check to accept. It is exacerbated by the fact that the chosen officer is a "bookish Theorique," (1.23) and not as experienced in the field as Iago. Othello has seen Iago's proof at Rhodes and Cyprus before, and his promotion of Cassio over Iago is a bitter disappointment. In addition to this professional slight, Iago mentions that there is a rumor that Othello has cuckolded him with Emilia. These two circumstances, one actual, the other unprovable by textual evidence and technically imaginary, combine to create a sense of grievance in an ambitious officer like Iago. If it is true that Iago despises most of mankind for living lives which do not,

> Keepe yet their hearts, attending on themselues,
> And, throwing but shewes of seruice on their Lords,
> Doe well thriue by 'em, and when they haue lin'd their coates,
> Doe themselues homage, (1.51-54)

then it is easy to suppose that he would crave power over others who he regards as unworthy, and would chafe at the power they might exercise over him.

There may be a good reason for Othello's promotion of Cassio over Iago, however. Does Othello recognize Iago's talent and mastery of tactics, but not his abilities or mastery of strategy? Is Cassio any more qualified in these matters? There is no textual evidence to suggest it, but there is a feeling that Iago, though perceived by others as honest and fairly reliable in battle, is perhaps not the stuff of the higher ranks. This is borne out in the play by the fact that Iago, in some degree like Lady Macbeth, does not foresee the greater consequences of his actions. It is important to remember that in the world of the play, Iago has two major objectives: to make money by gulling Roderigo in a hopeless effort to win Desdemona, and to redress his sense of injury against his commanders by simultaneously supplanting Cassio and shaking Othello's confidence in his new marriage by the suspicion of being cuckolded by Lieutenant Cassio. That is as far as Iago contrives until the scene shifts to

Cyprus. He does not initially plot the death of Desdemona, Othello, or even Cassio. He embarks on a devious tit-for-tat campaign to gain an office he covets and to induce what he conceives to be needful suffering in his two adversaries from a projection of malice that "Doth like a poisonous minerall gnaw my inwards" (4.978).

At the opening of the play, Iago is serving in the command of the foreign mercenary general, Othello, as the ensign, or standard-bearer. Othello has been accommodated into Venetian society, but perhaps he has not yet been fully accepted. He has just eloped with the daughter of a wealthy and powerful senator, Brabantio. The elopement is significant because Desdemona is a Venetian, and Venetian ladies as Iago says, are capable of being "super subtle" (3.641). Desdemona is later accused directly of "Lechery, by this hand: an Index and obscure prologue to the history of lust and foule thoughts:" (4.939-40), but there is no verification of the assertion that Desdemona would accept the role of someone's mistress. So the disappointment Iago may have with Othello and Desdemona's elopement would tend to center more on the fact that it upsets his efforts to secure a match between Desdemona and Roderigo—who is desirous of the hand of Brabantio's daughter—rather than as a circumstance that interferes with his own designs on Desdemona. Iago has been taking money from Roderigo to effect a match with Desdemona, but it seems that neither Desdemona, nor Brabantio want any part of the deal. It may matter little to Iago, as he clearly states that he is more interested in prying money from Roderigo "Thus doe I euer make my foole my purse:" (3.661), than he is in providing him service.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge was baffled by the apparent lack of motivation for Iago's malice. Other critics have also expressed surprise that Iago does what he does from some apparently specious and fantastical justifications. But we are not dealing here with a real person. Even if we were, modern and historical records contain many instances of people

committing comparable crimes to those found in *Othello*, and sharing less information about the motivating forces. In the argument for the operation of fascination, valid psychological impulses are somewhat irrelevant because they do not need to be present. Causality is observed in the process of Conceit → Imagination unchecked by Reason → reality transcendence → distortion of perception and consequence → Action. The cause of the resultant action proceeds from a perceived *need* to alter the status quo. In *Macbeth* the need is to ensure that Duncan's death creates a vacancy on the Scottish throne and that Malcolm does not directly succeed him. In *Othello*, the perceived need is also to create a vacancy for a coveted office and for Iago to purge the malice of resentment onto the two objects of his envy: Othello and Cassio. The preliminary actions conform almost exactly to the profile of a person emanating *malocchio*, or "evil eye" maleficium.

The core of Iago's initial plan is rather simple: bring Cassio into disrepute by exploiting his human weaknesses, rather than mount a smear campaign or directly attacking his person. If Cassio is to fall and make a place for Iago, Iago must be seen to be innocent of connivance and appear a shining example—one which Othello should have chosen in the first place. The plot against Othello is also simple: use Othello's human weaknesses defined by what he is susceptible to and what may be suggestible to him. To compound Cassio's humiliation, advancing the supposition that Cassio has slept with Desdemona is almost irresistible. Once introduced, the concept that Othello has been betrayed and deceived by the seemingly virtuous Desdemona will not leave his imagination. Iago's so-called "evidence" recalls some of the imagery that Othello has of his courtship with Brabantio's daughter—her ability to hide from her father the fact that Othello had won her heart and her hand, and their success in concealing their subsequent marriage from Brabantio.

Upon the arrival of the Venetian army in Cyprus, Othello is seemingly secure in his position as a respected commander and the new husband of one of the most beautiful ladies of Venice. Othello's military training and habit would be to investigate any assault against him or his forces. He is very capable, so in order to ensnare him, an attack must have all appearances of truth. Iago does not have the advantages of royal power or supernatural amazement to aid him. He must use actual circumstance and convention and reinterpret them for Othello. He must also change Othello's perception of himself and his environment; the altered perception must be a supposititious substitute, an alternate view aptly suggesting what is behind or underneath that which Othello is experiencing directly with his senses. Toward that end, he reinterprets Othello's experience of Cassio's deference to him as a mocking display of respect from one who has made him a cuckold. Desdemona's playful embrace of her own sexuality and social confidence becomes revisioned for Othello as a cover for lecherous availability. When the two of them appear together, Iago brings every look and behavior into question, making *direct suggestions* to Othello's thought in order to advance the necessary reality transcendence that will carry Othello past the point of an easy mental recovery.

Othello's "otherness" is a point of vulnerability that Othello himself is conscious of—a Christianized Moor married into Venetian society. He is also vulnerable because of his inexperience in love and marriage. But the most potent weak portal for Othello is his trusting nature. He "is of a free and open nature, / That thinkes men honest, that but seeme to be so;" (3.677-78). Iago also asserts that "These Moores are changeable in their wills:" (3.632) so that the opportunity he must create is one which preys upon Othello's native insecurities and takes advantage of his willingness to be led to the truth. A general relies on accurate intelligence to inform his maneuvers and it is just this propensity that leaves him susceptible

to suggestion and supposition. If the operation and effects of the fascination of Othello's thought are seen and understood by the audience, their sense of Othello's tragic fall is intensified not only by the nearly bestial transformation he undergoes within his obsession, but by the gossamer-thin essence of the web spun to ensnare him.

Doubt and Reputation

Cassio comes into Iago's web not so much as a conspirator for Desdemona's affections, but as a disgraced comrade who has lost all sense of direction and purpose through the humiliation of being demoted for dereliction of duty. Before his disgrace, it would have been next to impossible for Iago to work upon Cassio. Cassio is "a proper man," and shows innate tendencies to affect a moral and social superiority to his fellows in the army. Such is his concern with reputation that he guards it jealously and is not initially susceptible to the efforts of someone such as Iago. But that does not prevent Iago from creating a weakness in Cassio's defenses. By seizing on a physical flaw, Cassio's low tolerance for alcohol, Iago constructs a simple but effective trap to destroy Cassio's precious self-image. Once Cassio has disgraced himself and has been cashiered by Othello for being drunk on watch and inciting a brawl (all carefully stage-managed by Iago), the playwright highlights the issues of reputation and doubt in the purview of the audience's thought. Cassio leads the illustration with

> Reputation, reputation, reputation, Oh I ha lost
> my reputation: I ha lost the immortall part of my selfe,
> and what remaines is beastiall, my reputation, *Iago*,
> my reputation. (6.1262-65)

What we come to see later is that Iago's plot against Othello touches the heart of Othello's greatest susceptibility and the soldier's central vulnerability: the loss of honor.

Iago suggests to Othello what others in the play might believe: that Desdemona is only sexually fascinated with him, and when that fascination ends, she will return to her natural tastes and cultural biases. This casual treatment of the marriage sacrament and the seemingly low esteem for the abandoned spouse which such an act engenders can be deadly to a soldier's sense of honor. Iago's insinuations that Desdemona has already taken a lover and that her alleged dalliance with Michael Cassio is the result of her ending her infatuation with Othello, is one of the elements of the supposititious argument that drives Othello into a passion.

Othello does not appear to be overly jealous with regard to the sexual element of the provoking cause:

> I had bin happy if the generall Campe,
> Pyoners, and all, had tasted her sweete body,
> So I had nothing knowne: O now for euer
> Farewell the tranquile mind, farewell content:
> Farewell the plumed troopes, and the big warres:
> That makes ambition vertue: O farewell,
> Farewell the neighing Steed, and the shrill Trumpe,
> The spirit-stirring Drumme, th'eare-peircing Fife;
> The royall Banner, and all quality,
> Pride, pompe, and circumstance of glorious warre.
> And O you mortall Engines, whose rude throates,
> Th'immortall *Ioues* dread clamours counterfeit;
> Farewell, *Othello's* Occupation's gone. (9.1797-1809)

Obviously adultery would bother most men, but the greatest pain for Othello seems to stem from the public knowledge of an alleged affair and the subsequent humiliation, damage to his reputation and the loss of a personal sense of honor. Indeed, he ends this speech convinced that his entire career is destroyed, and perhaps with it his sense of identity.

Othello's circumstances, a Moor in a European environment, a converted Christian, a commanding general, a viceroy or territorial governor, a black man who has eloped with his beautiful, upper-class white bride, might all combine to groom his thought to be hyper-sensitive to any imprecations of his public persona—as it would in most people outside of the

theatrical stage. The audience can project their own assumptions about Othello's inner negotiations by noting the dilemma Shakespeare has presented to his tragic hero and then reflect or meditate upon the possible consequences and actions a man jealous of his honor might pursue.

The argument here is never to say that Othello is not provoked to sexual jealousy, but that his need to salvage his perceived loss of honor and reputation is the driving force within his fascinated thought. Damage to Othello's reputation is perhaps recoverable in that it involves the repair of the outward perception of his public appearance. Damage done to Othello's sense of honor is an internal issue that permanently disfigures his understanding of his own identity. Regardless of the validity of Iago's suppositions, Othello is trapped into perceiving himself either as a cuckolded gull, or by acting upon insufficiently interrogated surmises and insinuations with disastrous final effects—an incompetent general and a tragic fool.

"The Mischief of The Envier When he Envieth"

Essay IX: "Of Lyers"

> Verily, lying is an ill and detestable vice. Nothing makes us men, and no other meanes keeps us bound one to another, but our word; knew we but the horror and waight of it, we would with fire and sword pursue and hate the same, and more justly than any other crime." I see all men generally busied (and that verie improperly) to punish certaine innocent errours in children, which have neither impression nor consequence, and chastice and vex them for rash and fond actions. Onely lying, and stubbornnesse somewhat more, are the faults whose birth and progresse I would have severly punished and cut off; for they grow and increase with them: and if the tongue have once gotten this ill habit, good Lord how hard, nay how impossible it is to make her leave it? (Montaigne, 47)

Even if virtue and truth build strong defenses, the assault of intractable hatred will seldom rest until it is destroyed. Montaigne cites stubbornness and lying as two traits that he would have severely and universally punished. These are also two of the traits that Iago

displays in his campaign of undermining the domestic happiness of Othello and Desdemona, the aspirations of Cassio, and the hopes of Roderigo. A lie has no power other than what is given to it by human thought and action. Usually it is impossible to operate against the bulwarks of strong defenses. Therefore, the lie must alter the perceived reality in order to bypass the natural mental objections and resistance. It must make strength seem weak, established fact appear dubious, and virtue to seem corrupt. Only then can it proceed with division and conquest. Iago works the entry of Chaos into Othello's newly happy world with his ingeniously effective practice of deceit and supposition.

Though he makes no direct invocations or supplications to familiar spirits (as in the case of Lady Macbeth), it is interesting to compare Iago's behavior to that of a sorcerer. In many ways, he resembles the lay practitioner of sorcery which Jeffrey B. Russell characterizes in *A History of Witchcraft* as one who might employ

> …the use of magic,… in order to harm those whom one hated for no just reason. Sorcery was a form of unjust aggression springing from jealousy, envy, greed, or other base human desires. (21)

Even in pagan societies, there was a distinction made between good magic and evil magic, similar to the Judeo-Christian traditions of angels and angelic human works, and demons and diabolical human works. What intrigues the thought, and engages the moral centers of the spectator are the behaviors—both mental and physical—of the victims of his machinations. Iago, unlike Othello, apparently does not gain any insight from his actions. He looks into people and situations with a marvelous sagacity for personal weakness, but never addresses his own fascination with envy.

The comparison of Iago to a sorcerer is not a new idea. He has been described as many different incarnations of the Devil, the Vice character from the Morality plays, a Machiavel, the unrequited lover of Othello, and other characterizations. But the methodology

of military undermining to "level" those he has cause to hate finds some currency with perception theory as it relates to a surface stability that does not exhibit the fatal weakening of elemental foundations. Iago says that he will

> …diet my reuenge,
> For that I doe suspect the lustie Moore,
> Hath leap'd into my seate, the thought whereof
> Doth like a poisonous mineral gnaw my inwards,
> And nothing can, or shall content my soule,
> Till I am euen'd with him, wife, for wife:
> Or failing so, yet that I put the Moore,
> At least, into a Iealousie so strong,
> That Iudgement cannot cure; (4.975-983)

Iago is neither rich nor powerful in his status as Othello's ensign. He is a common soldier who has proven himself on the battlefield, yet seemingly exhibits traits or tendencies that retard his advancement in the officer ranks. He exists in the midst of his society. He has command of others, yet is commanded by many higher officers. He is married, but not wealthy. His wife is a servant to his general's wife. He is known, but not famous, generally trusted, but not generally admired. He is a typical man of his time; outwardly, he is too mediocre, unremarkable, and even a bit crude. By revealing his internal thoughts, Shakespeare gives us one of the most indelible dramatic character profiles of the Devil as Everyman. This is not to assert that Iago is a devil. Both he and Aaron see themselves as completely human. They merely engage in what can be interpreted as diabolical behavior. If it is argued by some that they do the Devil's work, then it must be stated that they do so independently of any sense of obligation to him. They both satisfy their needs by pursuing their personal agenda and priorities. The audience never sees either of them bind themselves to supernatural forces, as Lady Macbeth does to spirits, or Edmund in *King Lear* does to his goddess: Nature.

Othello identifies the root of Iago's power in act three:

> This fellowe's of exceeding honesty,
> And knowes all qualities with a learn'd spirit
> Of humaine dealings: (9.1710-12)

It is this appearance of integrity that Iago exploits in his attack on Othello's peace and harmony. Othello implies that Iago has a keen facility for observation, and that he is astute in the matters of human behaviors and motives. Iago would know better than most that it is near-truths and suggested probabilities that fascinate the imagination more effectively than outright prevarication, which might only be employed with greater risk and ideally only as a last resort. The powers of suspicion and doubt drive the wheels of a runaway imagination better than the fragile workings of a direct lie. Iago does not need to lie outright and does so only when there is no way to gainsay his assertion. His genius in distorting perception does his work so much more effectively and perniciously, at the same time holding open the door to escape. He needs only confess that he was mistaken in his assessment, and that the appearances he based his conclusions upon were deceiving. It would be hard to prove malicious intent in that case, and the circumstances would support such a defense better than they would an outright fabrication.

In a dramatically ironic turn, he implants the aggressive suggestion in Othello's mind that Desdemona is the one who is the deceiving devil. He perverts Othello's image of Desdemona by assigning to her many of the malignant traits that he possesses: breach of faith, secret contrivance, unbridled will and dissimulation. By using the fact that she was willing to elope with Othello against the probable wishes of her father, Iago can sow relentless doubt in Othello's mind concerning her integrity. Though in all other respects Desdemona may be an exemplary woman of virtue, Iago can plausibly seize upon both her own transgression of filial propriety, and the general reputation of Venetian women to suggest convincingly that Desdemona is not the paragon of womanhood that Othello conceives her to be. Once

Desdemona is perceived to be just like all other Venetian society ladies, her virtues and forthrightness are brought into question and then it is a simple matter of opportunity for Iago to misrepresent every instance of Desdemona's speech and behavior as an attempt to conceal her infidelity.

It takes time for Iago to work upon Othello because Othello is not predisposed to doubt Desdemona. Suspicions must be generated if they are not already established. Othello does not meditate upon suspicion and doubt, but upon happiness and confident security. Once the suspicions are embraced and subsequently "confirmed," the distorted perception and behavior needs only to be supported and maintained until the ends are achieved.

Othello's sense of Desdemona's true devotion to him is both an asset and a weak portal. It is an asset as long as Othello has no reason to doubt it. However, if a doubt can be made to insinuate itself and grow like a virus—Iago's "poison"—then it is a devastating breach in Othello's defenses. M. R. Ridley describes it thus in the second *Arden* edition:

> ' I know our country disposition well' (as you do not); 'In Venice they do let God see the pranks…' by this he [Iago] not only increases Othello's suspicions, but also does all he can to avert a direct challenge from Othello to Desdemona. If to a Venetian lady of quality adultery is no more than a 'prank', Othello dreads some such answer as 'It is not so; but what an if it were?', or in other words 'My dear Othello, why are you making such a pother about a trifle?' And he dare not risk that. Iago then attacks Othello's possible sense of inferiority, or at any rate unsuitability, suggesting that Desdemona may have been only temporarily swept off her feet and may now 'fall to match you with her country forms, And happily repent', and finally, the leperous distilment now safely poured into his victim's heart, he leaves it to corrode, with pretended counsels of moderation, 'let me be thought too busy in my fears.' (xliv)

Handkerchiefs and Ocular Proofs

Iago uses suggestion, supposition and Othello's susceptibility on the issues of reputation and honor to poison mentally what is from all accounts a truly loving relationship. He separates the affections of the two lovers by destroying Othello's hopes that he can settle

securely into Venetian society with his innocent young bride. Iago engineers some circumstances and employs people to cross purposes, but he accomplishes nearly all of his maleficium solely with words— and one flimsy, yet potent, physical object: Othello's wedding gift to Desdemona, the strawberry-embroidered handkerchief. Iago metaphorically lays siege to a strong tower and with little more than words and wit, he manages to undermine the whole structure, and bring it crashing down. Unfortunately for him, he is also crushed in the wreckage.

There has been so much written about this play that it can easily be forgotten that a large part of what Iago causes to happen is not the result of his ingenious master planning. He skillfully takes advantage of opportunities, and seeks them out; but he also takes great risks, and succeeds by unforeseen lucky chances (dramatic devices?) that no expert planner would rely upon. Othello makes the decision to kill Desdemona. Iago is sufficiently carried away—fascinated in his own scheming—to abet the deed and lead Othello's murderous bias towards a fatal retribution in suggesting the manner of her death. Iago is forced by circumstance to arrange the elimination of Roderigo and fortuitously sees a way to quell Cassio at the same time. But this plan is ultimately a failed plot, and Iago must himself intervene to kill Roderigo and attempt the same on Cassio. At the end, he cannot control Emilia, and kills her as well, but not before she unmasks him, and brings about his downfall. Able officers are sometimes required to improvise in a campaign, but skillful planning and preparation reduce the effects of chance and provide greater opportunities for success. The success of Iago's plot is largely the result of his ability to capitalize on presented opportunities, rather than on the relentless and calculated planning of someone like Richard III.

It is Othello's "wak'd wrath" that turns Iago's initial plot on its head. It is doubtful that Iago anticipates the intensity of Othello's aroused passion, or the unexpected physical attack accompanied by Othello's lines:

> (*taking Iago by the throat*)
> Villaine, be sure thou proue my Loue a whore,
> Be sure of it, giue me the oculer proofe,
> Or by the worth of mine eternall soule,
> Thou hadst bin better haue beene borne a dog,
> Then answer my wak'd wrath.
>
> IAGO Ist come to this?
>
> OTHELLO
> Make me to see't, or at the least so proue it,
> That the probation, beare no hinge, nor loope,
> To hang a doubt on: or woe vpon thy life.
>
> IAGO
> My noble Lord.
>
> OTHELLO
> If thou doest slander her, and torture me,
> Neuer pray more, abandon all remorce.
> On horrors head, horrors accumilate:
> Do deeds, to make heauen weepe, all earth amaz'd,
> For nothing canst thou to damnation ad
> Greater then that. (9.1810.1-1825)

From this moment, Iago realizes just how far his plan has gone. He is now in personal danger. Before this, he might have been able to equivocate or retreat. Now he is fully exposed as another target for Othello's anger and he has no choice but to "prove" what is ultimately unable to be proved. He can no longer insinuate, he must graduate into active fraud and deception—depending upon Othello's thought being so fascinated with the disgrace that the alleged, fantasy love affair will have on him, that Othello will not discern the truth of Desdemona's and Cassio's innocence. Once Othello decides to confront either Desdemona or Cassio directly, and test the validity of Iago's assertion, Iago is finished. His alarmingly thin plot will instantly be discovered, and he will be ruined past all recovery.

Iago bears little verifiable ill-will specifically to Desdemona, but in desperation to save himself, he is willing to let her be sacrificed along with Cassio, who, he now realizes, must die, and quickly fans the flame of Othello's anger towards him. It is during this scene that Iago makes his most brilliant move. Forced to show Othello tangible proof of Desdemona's disloyalty, he demurs that it is impossible to catch them in the act. This is a certain truth, leading Iago to invite Othello to consider the imagery of what is a devastating, yet wholly fictitious scene: Cassio making love to Desdemona *in his sleep*. Othello is just distracted enough not to interrogate the fact that the action is performed in a dream and retold by one of the most unreliable of narrators:

IAGO
…I lay with Cassio lately,
And being troubled with a raging tooth,
I could not sleep. There are a kinde of men
So loose of soule, that in their sleepes
Will mutter their affaires, one of this kinde is Cassio:
In sleepe I heard him say, Sweete Desdemona,
Let vs be wary, let vs hide our loues;
And then sir, would he gripe and wring my hand,
Cry oh sweete creature, then kisse me hard,
As if he pluckt vp kisses by the rootes,
That grew vpon my lips, laie his leg ore my thigh,
And sigh, and kisse, and then cry, cursed fate,
That gaue thee to the Moore.

OTHELLO O Monstrous, monstrous.

IAGO Nay, this was but his dreame.

OTHELLO
But this denoted a fore-gone conclusion.

IAGO
Tis a shrewd doubt, tho it be but a dreame,
And this may helpe to thicken other proofes,
That doe demonstrate thinly.

OTHELLO I'le teare her all to peeces. (9.1865-83)

Once Iago has cleared himself some space from immediate personal danger, he resumes his effort to plant what little physical evidence he can offer to show Cassio and Desdemona as lovers. Already in possession of the handkerchief, Iago lies about it being in Cassio's hands—presumably because it is a love token given to Cassio by Desdemona. Knowing that no one but he can produce the "evidence" of the handkerchief, Iago becomes secure that Othello has now crossed the line into a fascinated passion that Reason will have great difficulty in removing:

OTHELLO
Now doe I see tis true, looke here Iago,
All my fond loue, thus doe I blow to heauen,—tis gone. (9.1896-97)

After they commit themselves to the fatal course of Othello's mad passion "In the due reuerence of a sacred vow" (9.1911), Othello crosses over into criminal conspiracy:

I greete thy loue:
Not with vaine thankes, but with acceptance bounteous,
And will vpon the instant put thee to't,
Within these three dayes, let me heare thee say,
That Cassio's not aliue.

IAGO My friend is dead:
Tis done at your request, but let her liue.

OTHELLO
Dam her lewd minks: O dam her, dam her,
Come, goe with me apart, I will withdraw
To furnish me with some swift meanes of death,
For the faire diuell: now art thou my Leiutenant.

IAGO I am your owne for euer. (9.1919-29)

To focus attention on Othello's vanity, his impaired reasoning and his desire to assert more authoritative control over his domain as a result of his insecurity, is to discover the real need within the outward forms of his struggle and to mitigate the idea that he is simply a jealous man. The fascination of betrayal works him into a jealous passion, but he is not predisposed to jealousy by a tragic flaw—regardless of the general stereotypes Iago puts into

the atmosphere concerning Moors. True, the Moor was a theatrical figure renowned for embodying qualities such as jealousy, wrath, caprice and usually carrying the dramatic weight of villainy. But Shakespeare broke new ground with the character of Othello, consciously giving him lines and stage presence in direct opposition to the stereotype. The beauty of the tragedy is that despite the repositioning and ennobling of Othello, Shakespeare shows us this hero who descends into the behaviors of the reductive stereotype once his imagination has been bewitched by Iago's mental malpractice. When Othello recovers his reason at the end of the play, he realizes that he has no hope of recovering his honor, reputation or place because his temporary devolution into the behaviors and thinking of the archetypal Moorish stage villain has destroyed everything he has worked his whole life to achieve.

Having been taken in by an obsessively mesmeric deception—being made a fool in the eyes of his men and society—seems to be the stronger justification for the almost complete fixation that Iago's premise has on Othello's conscious thought. Ironically, of course, there is no deception proceeding from the object of Othello's wrath, Desdemona. Perhaps this is what maddens him; there is no deception there to detect. Like the maneuvers of the Turkish fleet, Iago has feinted in one direction—loyal honesty to his commander—to ensure the success of his attack on other targets altogether: Cassio and the Lieutenancy. However, unlike the Venetian Senate, Othello does not discern the deceptive tactic because his thought is preoccupied with the ramifications that Desdemona's supposed betrayal will have for him personally. Macbeth may lose the faculty of sleep because of his struggle with a fascinated state of mind, but nowhere in the Shakespeare canon is the fascinating element at work in so powerful a manner as it is with Othello. At times, it literally produces a complete paralysis.

The epileptic fit, "trance," catatonic state—whatever form it takes onstage—is a completely debilitating overload of the mental processes, which in the early modern medical

model, serves to throw the alignment of all the vital spirits, animal spirits, humors and sensive motions out of order and function. The seizure of Othello's body through the temporarily derailed mind/body relationship has only one textual precedent:

> OTHELLO
> …It is not words that shake me thus, (pish)
> Noses, Eares, and Lippes: is't possible. Confesse?
> Hadkercher? O diuell.
> *He fals downe in a traunce*
>
> IAGO
> Worke on, my medicine workes: thus credulous fooles are caught,
> And many worthy and chaste dames, euen thus
> All guiltlesse, meete reproach; What ho my Lord,
> My Lord I say, *Othello*,—
> *Enter Cassio*
> How now *Cassio*.
>
> CASSIO What's the matter?
>
> IAGO
> My Lord is falne into an Epilepsy,
> This is his second fit, he had one yesterday. (11.2170-76)

It may be that Othello suffers from a medical pathology such as epilepsy, but close reading of the text discovers that it only manifests itself in Cyprus, and only after Iago has begun his mental malpractice against Othello.

Iago knows how powerful the bewitching obsession is, perhaps from his own struggles with it, and it increases the viewer's sense of trepidation that he uses it to madden and destroy a soldier as powerful as Othello. Again, there is a sense of progression put before the audience that follows, in some manner, Macbeth's path to the throne. If Iago gains the Lieutenancy, and Othello subsequently becomes incapable, the lieutenant will take the reins of power. Indeed, this is what actually happens in *Othello*. But unfortunately for Iago, Cassio is made the commanding officer in the end because Lieutenant Iago follows General Othello in discharge, disgrace and, presumably, death.

In order for the marriage of Othello and Desdemona to be rent asunder by suspicion, Othello's fundamental understanding of his place in society and his relationship to his wife must undergo a radical change. Othello asks Iago to "give me the ocular proof" of Desdemona's supposed breach of faith. E.A.J. Honigman outlines an interesting, but by no means definitive, element of Othello's composition. On page nineteen of his introduction to the third *Arden* edition of *Othello*, he asserts:

> Shakespeare seems to suggest that Othello sees less clearly than Iago, that he depends on Iago's eyes… Othello's lines can be played straight, without any hint of defective eyesight; an ageing Moor with failing vision gives them added point, partly explains his general dependence on Iago, and puts more sting into taunts such as 'Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see' and 'Look to your wife, observe her well with Cassio' (1.3.293, 3.3.200: a deliberate echo?). Othello's own psychic need for ocular proof ('Make me to see't', 3.3.363ff.) may be related to his unacknowledged infirmity. (19)

This is an apt conjecture, but Othello can still be "blind" and retain perfect physical vision. The overload of imagery, combined with the phenomenon of reality transcendence within a fascinated mental state, perhaps carries more dramatic weight by enriching the complexity of Othello's situation than a simple defect like myopia.

There are a number of ways in which the interpretation of the role of Othello can be taken that will diminish his grandeur as a dramatic creation, and all of them should be avoided. He is not a "gull", "dolt", "murderous coxcomb", or "fool" as Emilia tags him. He is cruel and passionate in his actions, a result of his martial prowess aroused and improperly focused upon innocent targets—driven by a misguided sense of redress. But he is no fool—until he orders Cassio's death and kills Desdemona. Then he becomes Iago's puppet. He, like Macbeth, has accepted intelligence from what he considers an unimpeachable source—his own conclusions based upon what he thinks he has witnessed. Like Macbeth, he is provoked by a seeming prophecy; in a more subtle form in this case, Brabantio's lines "Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see:/She has deceived her father, and may thee," (1.3.286) can serve

as a constant source of funding for his suspicion that Desdemona has cuckolded him with Cassio. Also in coincidence with Macbeth, Othello's confirmation of what has become the suggested reality manifests itself in the form of an "apparition:" Cassio's discussion with Iago about Bianca. This "false show" appears to confirm Iago's insinuations regarding Cassio and Desdemona to Othello's susceptible thought:

> I, let her rot and perish, and be damb'd to night,
> For she shall not liue: no, my heart is turn'd to stone;
> I strike it, and it hurts my hand: O the world hath not
> A sweeter creature, she might lie by an Emperours side,
> And command him taskes. (11.2303-09)

It is important to see the necessity for maintaining the high status of the tragic hero, and not let critical relativism bring the argument either to flights of poetic hyperbole, or needlessly deconstructive impulses. However Othello is played by the actor, Iago's practice upon him should be clearly seen as a maneuver of deceptive appearances, an echo of the tactics of the Turkish fleet that the Venetian Senate recognizes: "tis a Pageant, / To keepe vs in false gaze" (3.305-6). The substitution of appearances for reality, as mentioned previously, is one of the chief artifices of the operation of fascination.

Othello is deceived on a grand scale by Iago, and in one important moment by Emilia. The consequence of Emilia's lie in scene ten, has enormous impact later when Othello asks to see the handkerchief:

> DESDEMONA
> Where should I loose that handkercher, *Emillia*?
> EMILLIA I know not, madam. (10.1952-3)

Emilia knows exactly where the handkerchief was misplaced, and to whom she gave it, even if she cannot testify exactly to its current whereabouts. When Othello demands the handkerchief, Desdemona does not lie to him, in effect, though she cannot produce the one he asks for. Her vaguely equivocal response is that she has somehow lost possession of it

temporarily, but that it is not lost to her forever. She sees it as a condition that will be remedied by a thorough search. This idea compounds the tragic sense within the experience of Othello's audience: why does Othello not adopt the same strategy for his lost sense of trust in Desdemona? He might conduct a thorough search through the so-called evidence and redeem the whole situation.

The true lie in the scene comes from Emilia's silence. Shakespeare's decision to leave her onstage to witness the exchange between Othello and Desdemona compounds the intensity of suspense that the audience feels. If Emilia comes forward at this point to declare, "My lord, Iago has the handkerchief. He asked me to procure it for him, and so I did, not knowing his intent," then the plot is soon uncovered, the fascination with Desdemona's faithlessness is quickly dispelled, and the play turns in a completely different direction.

In the introduction to the second *Arden* edition of *Othello,* M.R. Ridley makes the observations that Othello

> …has some vulnerable, and in certain circumstances very dangerous, weaknesses. In the first place his intellectual power is nowhere near on a par with his other qualities. "Whenever he thinks he is a child" and not even a very intelligent child. (54)
>
> Whenever Othello trusts his instinct he is almost invariably right ("If she be false, oh then Heaven mocks itself. I'll not believe it"); whenever he thinks, or fancies himself to be thinking, he is almost invariably and ruinously wrong…He cannot endure to feel baffled, and, when he does, passion not only assays to lead the way but succeeds. (55)

The power of that passion is enormous. Othello's decline is horrific. He descends from a noble general to a virtually inarticulate beast that roars after its quarry. Othello makes the nearly complete transition into the fearful demon that Brabanzio takes him for. It is not without a certain irony that when Othello is called to account for his and Desdemona's deception of Brabanzio, he willingly submits himself to the Doge and the Senate. He correctly trusts that these representatives of judgment will discern the truth of the matter, and save him from lynching or exile. Yet when the case of Desdemona and Cassio's alleged

deception is brought before Othello, he does not let proper probity and judgment decide. Why does he demonstrate such a large departure from reason? It is because he is obsessed with an erroneous supposition. Added to that is his position as the martial governor of Cyprus; he is, in effect, The Law. He is also supposedly the wronged party. He is *misled* in his thinking that he can act as an objective prosecutor and executor of justice in Cyprus—his military domain. While that may be true in the case of Cassio's breach of the peace, his jurisdiction does not extend to punishing either Cassio or Desdemona for adultery—at least without a proper court martial.

His fascinated thinking is responsible for drawing the fatal conclusion that he must bring justice to himself, by himself and for himself, under the guise of acting for the good of the colony and company. The obsession that permeates his thought is arguably more responsible for the final ruination than Ridley's more simplistic observation that Othello's native intellect is unable to cope with Iago's assaults. It is more a result of the erosion of a lifetime of self-image construction that fixes his thought to attempt, violently, to redeem the perceived damage done to it. His thought processes suffer more from a temporarily overwhelming confusion than from the lack of natural function to discern or interpret data. The data that Othello is led to examine is corrupt, not his ability. The only possible way around that is for Othello to take the lead and run a thorough investigation, but even then suspicion and doubt are so ingrained at this point, they might affect the interpretation of Othello's own evidence.

With the possible exception of revenge, jealousy is the worst of all scenarios to find oneself bound to. To practise upon another person's identity via their concept of self-worth or security of place is to strike them hard and cut them deeply. The great tragedy of jealousy is that it not only seems to effect a pernicious and almost unbreakable hold on thought, because

so much of our identity is defined by our interpersonal relationships, but the loss of the ability to self-reference can vacate the governance of reason and judgment. In the extremes of the obsession, even corrective information can be dismissed by the sufferer because the state of reality transcendence has reached the point of reducing the subject to the reactionary traits of an animal. Othello certainly descends to this mental quagmire as his speech becomes more monosyllabic and guttural in Cyprus—departing from the lofty eloquence he exhibits in Venice.

Iago is adept at exploiting the passions of his victim. The revolving obsession he nurtures in Othello that Desdemona was capable of deceiving her own father, and can easily deceive Othello is unshakeable as a sort of prophetic curse to the prepossessed imagination of a husband who was an equal sharer in the guilt of a seemingly innocent deception whose ramifications are now beginning to make themselves known. Othello, loved of Desdemona, as Brabantio was once loved of her, now feels acutely his father-in-law's loss, as he contemplates losing Desdemona to the supposed affections of his own subordinate.

Hamlet begins with a Ghost roaming Castle Elsinore. *King Lear* opens with a king unnaturally dividing the kingdom. *Macbeth* unleashes storm, war and witches within the initial action of the play. *Othello* quietly, yet relentlessly breaks holes in the atmospheric harmony to admit Chaos by presenting a fourth example of what would earlier be seen as unnatural order: miscegenation. The mixed-race marriage provokes a stir in the play's environment, littering the theatre with racial epithets, but the fundamental magnet for the malice directed towards Desdemona and Othello is the fact that they married quickly and in secret. It undermines the credibility of both of them to some degree because they knew the marriage ceremony would be controversial. They deliberately shunned transparency and familial courtesy.

Brabantio perhaps viewed Othello as an inferior in race, faith, and social position; the language he chooses during his prosecution of Othello before the Doge of Venice supports the profile. Can Othello now escape the same thoughts in regards to Cassio? There is great credit in the idea that Othello would be mortified to be cuckolded by a subordinate officer that he has to publicly cashier for creating a disturbance of the peace and seriously wounding Montano, the former Governor of Cyprus. Whether Iago realizes it consciously, his plot against the lovers will have its maximum effect in the auspicious timing of their re-adjustment of personal identity in the context of their elopement.

The Murder of Desdemona & Final Revelations

As his scheme gathers momentum, Iago baits and harries Othello, "practising vpon his peace and quiet, / Euen to madnesse" (4.991-92). The power of fascination works on long after passion has been invoked. After Iago's campaign to madden Othello and supplant Cassio has succeeded, the pathology of Othello's artificially generated jealousy might well carry on into his murder of Desdemona. But Shakespeare does not trace this scenario in a neat and tidy formula by having Othello kill Desdemona at the height of his passion. When he finally smothers her, he is distracted, fascinated, but he is not passionate. He is cold, resolved, and even courteous—allowing Desdemona to pray so that he "would not kill thy vnprepared spirit, / No, heauens fore-fend, I would not kill thy soule" (15.2930-31).

The evidence is presented by the change in Othello after he recovers from his fit in scene eleven. This is the nadir (or apex?) of his passion and is one of the devices that Shakespeare utilizes to create an even more horrific climax to his play. The heinous murder that Othello commits is not a crime of passion; it is an act of madness. It is a madness induced by a fascinated obsession for the need to execute a personal sense of justice. When Othello recovers from his fit, he becomes a far more deadly and frightening figure because his

thought is fixed; there is now no room in his thought for discussion of *if*, there is only room for the discussion of *how*. Granted, the conclusions that he has drawn from Iago's "evidence" are erroneous and he quickly receives yet more erroneous "oculer proof" when Iago "interrogates" Cassio about his relationship with Desdemona in full view—but not within the full hearing—of Othello, who watches from a concealed location. The audience begins to come to the realization that though his passion has subsided, he is no less determined to do away with the supposed lovers—and now, in an even more chilling presentation of murder, it will be performed in cold blood. The effort to move Othello's thought back to Reason and Order would now have to be massive and no one but Iago and perhaps Emilia, possess enough of the facts to be able to persuade Othello away from this fatal course. Othello's enactment of an honor killing upon his innocent wife demonstrates that Chaos has enveloped the scene once again—not just in Othello's mind, but in the physical space he occupies.

The horror of the final scene stems not from sudden, lamentable passion, but rather from Othello's obsessive brutality: "For nought I did in hate, but all in honour" (15.3198). David Bevington makes a series of observations in his introduction to the play, in the fourth edition of his *The Complete Works of Shakespeare* that provide a fitting summation of this fall. But they also point to the redemptive power of Othello's final ironic and tragic realization that he had been right to love and trust Desdemona:

> Othello's tragedy is not that he is easily duped, but that his strong faith can be destroyed at such terrible cost. Othello never forgets how much he is losing. The threat to his love is not an initial lack of his being happily married, but rather the insidious assumption that Desdemona cannot love him because such a love is unnatural. The fear of being unlovable exists in Othello's mind, but the human instrument of this vicious gospel is Iago. (1118)

> The horror and pity of *Othello* rests, above all, in the spectacle of a love that was once so whole and noble made filthy by self-hatred…Despite the loss, however, Othello's reaffirmation of faith in Desdemona's goodness undoes what the devil-like Iago had most hoped to achieve: the separation of Othello from his loving trust in one who is good. In this important sense, Othello's self-knowledge is cathartic and a

compensation for the terrible price he has paid…His greatness appears in his acknowledgment of this truth and in the heroic struggle with which he has confronted an inner darkness we all share. (1121)

CONCLUSION

FALSE EVIDENCE APPEARING REAL AS MENTAL MALPRACTICE

> And fassion not your selues like vnto this world, but be yee changed by the renewing of your minde, that yee may prooue what that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God is.
>
> Be not ouercome of euill, but ouercome euill with goodnesse.
> —Romans 12:2, 21
>
> I would we were all of one minde, and one minde good:
> —*Cymbeline*, 27.2803-2804

Whether supposedly evil forces are at work upon them, or the tragic heroes exhibit the human failings common to all of us who might find ourselves confronted with a life-and-death dilemma, the need to be a competent navigator through such challenges is paramount. As seen in the tragedies, mental "malpractice," through a fascinated fixation of the thought, conspires against harmony and security.

In constructing the argument along paths from superstition to suggestion theory, regarding the pervasive yet mostly unreconciled phenomenon of fascination as the specific cause of metaphysical malpractice, the attempt has been to highlight forcible imaginings as the transformative power that moves individuals to re-identify themselves in ways that cause an inner conflict with the developed notions of personal sense. Applied to the Shakespearean tragic hero, the onstage destruction is instructive to the audience as a means to recognize the operation of the perils of accepted suggestion and uninterrogated belief as coercive forces within the daily negotiations of non-theatrical existence. As fascination began its redefinition away from the superstition of the evil eye within sixteenth and seventeenth-century England, it began to appear more as a phenomenon of pathology, rather than as an operation of magic,

and thereby becoming increasingly identified with one of the negative operations of the faculty of imagination. From the treatises of the early modern writers who took up the study of Renaissance "psychophysiology," there emerges the contemporary postulation that these chaotic operations of imagination create a certain type of disorder in the microcosm—a disorder in the court of the mind, perhaps.

If these imaginings are allowed to gravitate into an obsession, which, to reiterate the theory of Baudouin, "is nothing more than a mental fascination, a fascination by images, memories, ideas, from which we cannot free the mind, simply because we think we cannot free it" (87), there exists the potential danger that such disorder will burst forth into the macrocosm of society with ruinous effects. Shakespeare's placement of idealized, yet accessibly human and susceptible protagonists at the center of his dramatic arguments portrays the negotiations of being a sober and watchful porter at the door of thought for an early modern audience in ways that the pulpit might find difficult to compete against. Indeed the nascent power of theater to fascinate and tempt people to attend the spectacle of these arguments engendered an almost obsessive reaction in the campaigns of the "anti-theatricalist" writers to permanently censor the playhouses altogether.

Yet the genius of figures like Macbeth and Othello rose so far above the rude "intisments" decried by the antitheatricalists, that even today they provide a basis for discourse both within an early modern understanding of the prevalent issues and within the complexities of twenty-first century encounters with the dilemma of separating fact from fiction. We can still be led by Shakespeare to understand the dangers of ignorant or malicious suppositions, even while we sometimes find ourselves obsessing over the question of acting upon them.

Shifting the responsibility for such provocations from the human psyche to the influence of a force such as the Devil provides little comfort when it is realized that no matter what the stated source of the temptation, seduction or suggestion, it is the wrestling with the promptings that becomes the essence of the causality of our action. The caveat is to become more aware of the perceived "evil" that plays havoc with structures of our own subjectivity. Nathan Johnstone argues well for the fact that this is both a modern concern, and perhaps one significant issue of early modern Protestantism—at least in Shakespeare's England:

> …the prevalence of internal temptation is suggestive of a potential for an even more complex concern over subjectivity. Since the Devil's intrusions into the mind were effectively disguised as ordinary thoughts, the individual could be hoodwinked into sin by believing them to be an expression of his inner nature. To the godly who felt temptation most keenly, and to the moralists who used it to construct didactic narratives of human frailty, the Devil threatened to turn the inner self into the traitor to the soul. If the logic of temptation was followed, the internal self could no longer be trusted to be the true self. (291)

Viewing these two plays in performance provides a vivid experience of how that "internal self" undergoes radical changes under such challenges—whether or not the Devil could be proved to be behind those challenges. Shakespeare allows his audience to see many beliefs in action and many possible rationales, but he is particularly apt in showing the individual being determinate in all final effects. The theatre is a useful tool to consider more closely the question of the very existence of evil. Even if philosophy should prove conclusively that evil does not, in fact, exist, there will still be an ongoing internal struggle with reconciling what could be termed "relative good." The degree to which we influence our surroundings, and make an impact—constructively or destructively—on our understanding of the "outward," will be bound to the direction of where the "inward" leads us. Montaigne muses upon this in his "Essay XL: 'That the Taste of Goods or Evils Doth Greatly Depend on the Opinion we Have of Them." His central point is worth reiteration:

> If that which we call evill and torment, be neither torment, nor evill, but that our fancie only gives it that qualitie, it is in us to change it: and having the choice of it, if none compel us, we are very fooles, to bandy for that partie, which is irksome unto us: (269)

The clearest mental discernment, as the preceding experiences of Shakespeare's tragic heroes show, is ultimately above what material evidence is able to provide. Even in the face of compelling "oculer proofs," the judgment must be made against a shifting (hopefully a progressively), evolving inner standard of truth and goodness. The theatre can aid in that reflective effort, but can only go so far, as Huston Diehl points out:

> Rejecting any simple dichotomy between theatre and truth, Shakespeare's tragedies raise provocative questions about inwardness and theatricality, plainness and cunning, truth and illusion. How can inward truths manifest themselves except through visible signs and externals? Does plain speaking itself constitute a theatrical performance? How can someone know the difference between the authenticity of a virtuous person and the fraudulent posture of a villain like Iago, who maliciously poses as a plain-speaking and honest man? Can a fiction convey the truth? Can a theatrical illusion serve a moral purpose? Shakespeare provides no simple answers to these questions, but his interest in them like his interest in authority, scepticism, faith, magic, false belief, and despair, indicates how fully his tragedies engage the religious controversies spawned by the Protestant Reformation. (101)

When the theatre is engaged in provoking such questions, it requires its audience to engage the fascination-defeating faculty of insight. Real proofs of the realities behind the appearances only come into focus when suggestion has been dispelled by inspiration or true perception. The ideal condition, such as total perception, is frequently impossible. It is a convenience of the theatrical interrogation that the audience is privy to so much information. In real-life constructs such perspicacity is seldom achieved without a sustained and rational effort. As Montaigne says, evil itself is a perception—one that can be incredibly engaging. But usually it proceeds from a perceived *lack* of some thing: truth, loyalty, respect. Rarely is it a *something* that motivates from its own potent reality.

Evil for evil's sake is the essence of demonology, but even in that tradition it is, due to the Fall from Heaven, dependent for its genesis upon the frustrated efforts and the perceived

lack of advancement that Lucifer claimed he was owed. The more frequent, demonstrable human evil is often a window for Chaos created by ignorance and false belief. Alex Aronson concurs with such an argument by summarizing the point in his opinion that,

> The moral evil resulting from such a lack of insight, Shakespeare implies, does not necessarily reside in "nature." Neither the body nor the mind is *a priori* evil. It is "man-made" and can be explained as originating in a false sense of security ("I see, therefore I am"), an inflated self-confidence that puts all trust in the physical ability to perceive, to measure, to calculate, to establish an ocular proof of "truth" which in effect is not open to such visual measurements at all. The refusal to face a truth that ought to be confronted in terms of imaginative awareness only is the undoing of the tragic hero. (421)

Finally, do we not take away from the experience of these two tragedies a heightened awareness of the manifold and subtle influences that subject our thought to assumptions that we must constantly prove or disprove? The evolution of the inner nature will never be free from this process, yet there exists the choice, as Montaigne argues, to see ourselves as masters of such assertions. The price paid for that mastery is more or less eternal vigilance and discernment—the primacy of perception's quest to discern the real. Burton says we should take up this task without fear. However it is approached, the false "evidences" appearing real to the thought largely comprise the sense of fear felt within some of these negotiations. But that falsity itself is reason to allay the fear. We might just hear Lady Macbeth, of all voices, telling us "O proper stuffe: / This is the very painting of your feare:/…shame it selfe, / Why do you make such faces?" (15.1083-1090). Indeed, if evil is a misconception of good—the supposed absence of order and the imagined rule of chaos—why should we stare fascinated at nothingness?

WORKS CITED

Aquinas, St. Thomas. *Summa Contra Gentiles*. *Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas*. Ed. Anton C. Pegis. Vol. 2. New York: Random, 1944.

—. *On Evil*. Trans. Jean Oesterle. Notre Dame: U of Notre Dame P, 1995.

Aristotle. "De Poetica." Trans. Ingram Bywater. *The Basic Works of Aristotle*. Ed. Richard McKeon. New York: Random, 1941.

Aronson, Alex. "Shakespeare and the Ocular Proof." *Shakespeare Quarterly*. Vol. 21, No. 4 (1970): 411-429.

Aughterson, Kate, ed. *The English Renaissance: An Anthology of Sources and Documents*. London: Routledge, 1998.

Augustine, St. Bishop of Hippo. *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*. Trans. Edward B. Pusey. New York: Random, 1949.

Babb, Lawrence. *The Elizabethan Malady: A Study of Melancholia in English Literature from 1580 to 1642*. East Lansing: Michigan State College P, 1951.

Bacon, Francis. *The Advancement of Learning. The Oxford Francis Bacon*. Ed. Michael Kiernan. Vol. IV. Oxford: Clarendon, 2000.

—. "Of Envy." *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall*. Ed. Michael Kiernan. Oxford: Clarendon, 1985.

—. "Of Boldnesse." *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall*. Ed. Michael Kiernan. Oxford: Clarendon, 1985.

Baudouin, Charles S. *Suggestion and Autosuggestion: A Psychological and Pedagogical Study Based Upon the Investigations Made by the New Nancy School*. Trans. Eden and Cedar Paul. 2nd ed. London: Allen, 1945.

Bevington, David, ed. *The Complete Works of Shakespeare: Updated Fourth Edition*. New York: Longman, 1997.

Blount, Thomas. *Glossographia: or a Dictionary, Interpreting all such Hard Words, Whether Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, French, Teutonick, Belgick, British or Saxon; as are now used in our refined English Tongue*. London: Newcomb, 1656.

Briggs, K.M. *Pale Hecate's Team: An Examination of the Beliefs on Witchcraft and Magic Among Shakespeare's Contemporaries and His Immediate Successors*. London: Routledge, 1962.

Bullokar, John. *An English Expositor: Teaching the Interpretation of the hardest words vsed in our Language*. London: Legatt, 1616.

Burton, Robert. *The Anatomy of Melancholy, What it is, With all the Kindes, Cavses, Symptomes, Prognostickes, and Several Cures of it*. 1621. Facsimile ed. Amsterdam: Da Capo, 1971.

—. *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. 1625. Ed. Floyd Dell and Paul Jordan-Smith. New York: Farrar, 1927.

Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Trans. Henry Beveridge. Vol. 1. London: Clarke, 1953.

Campbell, Lily B. *Shakespeare's Tragic Heroes: Slaves of Passion*. 1961. London: Methuen, 1986.

Cavendish, Richard. *The Black Arts*. London: Routledge, 1967.

Cawdrey, Robert. *A Table Alphabeticall, conteyning and teaching the true writing, and vnderstanding of hard vsuall English wordes, borrowed from the Hebrew, Greeke, Latine, or French &c*. London: I.R. for Edmund Weauer, 1604.

Clark, Stuart. *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe*. Oxford: OUP, 1997.

Coolidge, John S. *The Pauline Renaissance in England*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1970.

Cotgrave, Randle. *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongves*. London: Islip, 1611.

Davies, Thomas. *Dramatic Micellanies: Macbeth*. 3 vols. 1784. 148-9. *Shakespeare in the Theatre: An Anthology of Criticism*. Ed. Stanley Wells. Oxford: Clarendon, 1997.

de Greef, Wulfert. "Calvin's Writings." *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin*. Ed. Donald K. McKim. Cambridge: CUP, 2004.

de Montaigne, Michel Eyquem. *Essays*. Trans. John Florio. 1910. Vol. 1. London: Everyman, 1980.

Diehl, Huston. "Religion and Shakespearean Tragedy." *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Tragedy*. Ed. Claire McEachern. Cambridge: CUP, 2002. 86-102.

Dufrenne, Mikel. *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*. Trans. Edward S. Casey, Albert A. Anderson, Willis Domingo and Leon Jacobson. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1973.

Elworthy, Frederick William. *The Evil Eye and Practices of Superstition*. New York: Julian, 1958.

Frye, Northrop. *Northrop Frye on Shakespeare*. Ed. Robert Sandler. New Haven: Yale UP, 1986.

Ferrater-Mora, José. "Reality as Meaning." *New Essays in Phenomenology: Studies in the Philosophy of Experience*. Ed. James M. Edie. Chicago: Quadrangle, 1969. 131-147.

Gerrish, B.A. "The Place of Calvin in Christian Theology." *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin*. Ed. Donald K. Kim. Cambridge: CUP, 2004. 289-304.

Gettings, Fred. *Encyclopedia of the Occult: A Guide to Every Aspect of Occult Lore,*

Belief, and Practice. London: Rider, 1986.

Gosson, Stephen. *Playes Confuted in fiue Actions, Prouing that they are not to be suffered in a Christian common weale, by the waye both the Cauils of Thomas Lodge, and the Play of Playes, written in their defence, and other obiections of Players frendes, are truly set downe and directlye aunsweared*. London: Thomas Gasson, 1582.

—. *The Schoole of Abuse, Conteining a plesaunt inuective against Poets, Pipers, Plaiers, Iesters, and such like Caterpillers of a Commonwelth: Setting vp the Flagge of Defiaunce to their mischieuous exercise, and overthrowing their Bulwarkes, by Prophane Writers, Naturall reason, and common experience: A discourse as pleasaunt for Gentlemen that fauour learning, as profitable for all that wyll follow vertue*. London: Thomas Woodcocke, 1579.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1988.

—. "Shakespeare Bewitched." *New Casebooks: Shakespeare's Tragedies*. Ed. Susan Zimmerman. London: Macmillan, 1998. 109-139.

Gregory, Joshua C. "Magic, Fascination and Suggestion." *Folklore*. Vol. 63, No.3. (1952): 143-151.

Hattaway, Michael. "Tragedy and Political Authority." *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Tragedy*. Ed. Claire McEachern. Cambridge: CUP, 2002. 103-122.

Hilgard, Ernest R. *Hypnotic Susceptibility*. New York: Harcourt, 1965.

The Holy Bible:

The Anchor Bible: Galatians. Trans. J. Louis Martyn. New York: Doubleday, 1997.

The Holy Bible, conteyning the Olde Testament and the Newe. "Bishop Bible." London: Christopher Barker, 1595.

The Geneva Bible: A fascsimile of the 1560 edition. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1969.

The Interpreter's Bible: The Holy Scriptures in the King James and Revised Standard Versions with General Articles and Introduction, Exegesis, Exposition for Each Book of the Bible in Twelve Volumes. Vol. 10. New York: Abingdon, 1953.

Nouum Testamentum Latine Secundum Editionem Sancti Hieronymi Ad Codicum Manuscriptorum Fidem Recensuerunt. "Vulgate Bible." Ed. John Wordsworth and Henry Julianus White. Oxford: OUP, 1911.

The Holy Koran. Trans. J.M. Rodwell. London: Phoenix Press, 1994.

Honigman, E.A.J., ed. *The Arden Shakespeare: Othello*. Surrey (UK): Nelson, 1997.

Hyperius, Andreas. *Two Common Places Taken Ovt of Andreas Hyperivs A Learned diuine, whereof, In the one, He sheweth the force that the Sonne, Moone and Starres haue ouer men, &c. In the other, Whether the Deuils haue bene the shewers of Magicall artes, &c.* Trans. R.V. (R. Vaux). London: Iohn Wolfe, 1581.

Institoris, Henricus (Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger). *Malleus Maleficarum*. 1486. Trans. Montague Summers. 1928. New York: Blom, 1970.

James I. *Daemonologie*. 1597. Facsimile ed. Amsterdam: Da Capo, 1969.

Johnson, Samuel. *A Dictionary of the English Language: in which the Words are deduced from their Originals, and Illustrated in their Different Significations by Examples from the best Writers, to which are prefixed, A History of the Language, and An English Grammar*. Vol. 1. London, 1755. New York: AMC, 1967.

—. *Miscellaneous Observations of the Tragedy of Macbeth. Selections from Johnson on Shakespeare*. Ed. Bertrand H. Bronson and Jean M. O'Meara. New Haven: Yale UP, 1986.

Johnstone, Nathan. *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: CUP,

2006.

Jonson, Ben. *Every Man in His Humour*. 1598. *The Complete Plays of Ben Jonson*. Ed. G.A. Wilkes. Vol. 1. Oxford: Clarendon, 1981. 177-273.

Kelly, Henry Ansgar. *The Devil, Demonology and Witchcraft*. Doubleday: New York, 1968.

Kliman, Bernice W. *Shakespeare in Performance: Macbeth*. 2nd ed. Manchester: MUP, 2004.

Kors, Alan C. and Edward Peters, eds. *Witchcraft in Europe 1100-1700: A Documentary History*. London: Dent, 1973.

Lake, Peter and Michael Questier. *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in Post-Reformation England*. New Haven: Yale, 2002.

Laurentius, M. Andreas. *A Discourse of the Preservation of the Sight: of Melancholike Diseases; of Rheumes, and of Old Age*. 1599. Trans. Richard Surphlet. (Shakespeare Assoc. Facsimile No. 15) Oxford: OUP, 1938.

Lavater, Lewes. *Of Ghostes and Spirites Walking by Nyght*. 1572. Ed. J. Dover Wilson and May Yardley. Oxford: OUP, 1929.

Lykiardopoulos, Amica. "The Evil Eye: Towards an Exhaustive Study." *Folklore*. Vol. 92, No. 2. (1981): 221-230.

MacFarlane, Alan. *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England: A Regional and Comparative Study*. New York: Harper, 1970.

Mebane, John S. *Renaissance Magic and the Return of the Golden Age: The Occult Tradition and Marlowe, Jonson, and Shakespeare*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1989.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *The Primacy of Perception and Other Essays on Phenomenological Psychology, the Philosophy of Art, History and Politics*. Ed. James M. Edie. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1964.

Middleton, Thomas. *Women Beware Women. Oxford World Classics*. Ed. Richard Dutton. Oxford: OUP, 1999.

Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*. Ed. Roy Flanagan. New Jersey: Simon, 1993.

Munday, Anthony. *A second and third blast of retrait from plaies and Theaters: the one whereof was founded by a reuerend Byshop dead long since; the other by a Worshipful and zealous Gentleman now aliue: one showing the filthines of plaies in times past; the other the abhomination of Theaters in the time present both expresly prouing that the common-weale is nigh vnto the cursse of God, wherein eitherplaiers bemade or, Theaters maintained*. London, 1580.

Naso, Publius Ovidius. *Shakespeare's Ovid Being Arthur Golding's Translation of the Metamorphoses*. Ed. W.H.D. Rouse. London: Centaur, 1961.

—. *Metamorphoses*. Trans. A.D. Melville. Oxford: OUP, 1986.

Neale, J.E. *Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments, 1584-1601*. 2 vols. London: Cape, 1965.

Neill, Michael, ed. *The Oxford Shakespeare: Othello*. Oxford: OUP, 2006.

Notestein, Wallace. *A History of Witchcraft in England: From 1558 to 1718*. 1911. New York: Russell, 1965

O'Connell, Michael. "The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm, Anti-Theatricalism, and the Image of the Elizabethan Theater." *ELH*. Vol. 52, No. 2 (1985): 279-310.

Oxford English Dictionary. 2nd ed. 1989.

"Bewitch."

"Bewitchment."

"Bewitched."

"Fascinate."

"Fascination." Def. 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b.

"Psychology."

Paster, Gail Kern. *Humoring the Body: Emotions and the Shakespearean Stage*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2004.

Rankins, William. *A Mirrour of Monsters: Wherein is plainely described the manifold vices, & spotted enormities, that are caused by the infectious sight of Playes, with the description of the subtile flights of Sathan, making them his instruments*. London: 1587.

Ridley, M.R., ed. *The Arden Edition of William Shakespeare: Othello*. 2nd ed. London: Methuen, 1958.

Robbins, Rossell Hope. *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology*. London: Nevill, 1959.

Russell, Jeffrey B. *A History of Witchcraft: Sorcerers, Heretics, and Pagans*. London: Thames, 1980.

—. *The Devil: Perceptions of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1977.

Salgado, Gamini. *Eyewitnesses of Shakespeare: First Hand Accounts of Performances 1590-1890*. London: Sussex UP, 1975.

Schmitt, Charles B., Quentin Skinner and Eckhard Kessler, eds. *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*. Cambridge: CUP, 1988.

Schumaker, John F. "The Adaptive Value of Suggestibility and Dissociation." *Human*

Suggestibility: Advances in Theory, Research, and Application. Ed. John F. Schumaker. New York: Routledge, 1991. 108-131.

Scot, Reginald. *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*. Arundel: Centaur, 1964.

Shumaker, Wayne. *The Occult Sciences in the Renaissance: A Study in Intellectual Patterns*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1972.

Spivack, Bernard. *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil*. New York: Columbia UP, 1958.

Stubbes, Philip. *Anatomie of Abuses*. 1583. Ed. Frederick J. Furnivall. London: New Shakespeare Soc., 1877-79.

Thomas, Keith. "The Relevance of Social Anthropology to the Historical Study of English Witchcraft." *Witchcraft Confessions & Accusations*. Ed. Mary Douglas. London: Tavistock, 1970. 47-79.

---. *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century England*. London: Penguin, 1971.

Veron, John. *A Dictionarie in Latine and English, heretofore set forth by Master Iohn Veron, and now newlie corrected and enlarged, For the vtilitie and profit of all young students in the Latine toong, as by further search therein the shall find: By R.W.* London: Newberie and Denham, 1584.

Watson, Robert N. "Tragedies of Revenge and Ambition." *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Tragedy*. Ed. Claire McEachern. Cambridge: CUP, 2002. 160-181.

Walker, Greg. "The Renaissance in Britain." *The Short Oxford History of the British Isles: The Sixteenth Century*. Ed. Patrick Collinson. Oxford: OUP, 2002. 146-147.

Wells, Stanley, Gary Taylor, John Jowett and William Montgomery, eds. *William Shakespeare The Complete Works: Original Spelling Edition*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1986.

Weyer, Johann. *Witches, Devils, and Doctors in the Renaissance: Johann Weyer, De praestigiis daemonum*. 1583. Ed. George Mora. Trans. John Shea. Binghamton NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts, 1991.

Wiggins, Martin. *Journeymen in Murder: The Assassin in English Renaissance Drama*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1991.

—. "Hamlet within the Prince." *New Essays on Hamlet*. Ed. Burnett, Mark Thornton, and John Manning. New York: AMS Press, 1994. 214.

—. "Macbeth and premeditation." *The Arts, Literature and Society*. Ed. Arthur Marwick. London: Routledge, 1990. 23-47.

Williams, George Walton. "Hamlet and the Dread Commandment." *Shakespeare's Universe: Renaissance Ideas and Conventions—Essays in honour of W.R. Elton*. Ed. John M. Mucciolo. Aldershot (UK): Scolar Press, 1996. 60-68.

Wright, Thomas. *The Passions of the Minde in Generall*. 1604. Chicago: U of Illinois Press, 1971.

Yates, Francis A. *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age*. London: Routledge, 1979.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aquinas, St. Thomas. *Summa Contra Gentiles. Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas*. Ed. Anton C. Pegis. Vol. 2. New York: Random, 1944.

---. *On Evil*. Trans. Jean Oesterle. Notre Dame: U of Notre Dame P, 1995.

Aristotle. "De Poetica." Trans. Ingram Bywater. *The Basic Works of Aristotle*. Ed. Richard McKeon. New York: Random, 1941.

Aronson, Alex. "Shakespeare and the Ocular Proof." *Shakespeare Quarterly*. Vol. 21, No. 4 (1970): 411-429.

Aughterson, Kate, ed. *The English Renaissance: An Anthology of Sources and Documents*. London: Routledge, 1998.

Augustine, St. Bishop of Hippo. *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*. Trans. Edward B. Pusey. New York: Random, 1949.

Babb, Lawrence. *The Elizabethan Malady: A Study of Melancholia in English Literature from 1580 to 1642*. East Lansing: Michigan State College P, 1951.

Bacon, Francis. *The Advancement of Learning. The Oxford Francis Bacon*. Ed. Michael Kiernan. Vol. IV. Oxford: Clarendon, 2000.

---. "Of Envy." *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall*. Ed. Michael Kiernan. Oxford: Clarendon, 1985.

---. "Of Boldnesse." *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall*. Ed. Michael Kiernan. Oxford: Clarendon, 1985.

Barton, John, and John Muddiman, eds. *The Oxford Bible Commentary*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001.

Bate, Jonathan. *The Genius of Shakespeare*. London: Picador, 1997.

Baudouin, Charles S. *Suggestion and Autosuggestion: A Psychological and Pedagogical*

Study Based Upon the Investigations Made by the New Nancy School. Trans. Eden and Cedar Paul. 2nd ed. London: Allen, 1945.

Beadle, Richard, ed. "XXII The Smiths, The Temptation." *The York Plays*. London: Edward Arnold, 1982. 186-191.

Bevington, David, ed. *The Complete Works of Shakespeare: Updated Fourth Edition*. New York: Longman, 1997.

Blits, Jan H. *The Insufficiency of Virtue: Macbeth and the Natural Order*. Maryland: Rowman, 1996.

Blount, Thomas. *Glossographia: or a Dictionary, Interpreting all such Hard Words, Whether Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, French, Teutonick, Belgick, British or Saxon; as are now used in our refined English Tongue*. London: Newcomb, 1656.

Bradbrook, Muriel Clara. *Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1960.

Breton, Nicholas. "Daffodils and Primroses, Part 2d: Poems." *The Works in Verse and Prose of Nicholas Breton*. Ed. Alexander B. Grosart. Vol. I. New York: AMS, 1966.

Briggs, K.M. *Pale Hecate's Team: An Examination of the Beliefs on Witchcraft and Magic Among Shakespeare's Contemporaries and His Immediate Successors*. London: Routledge, 1962.

Bullokar, John. *An English Expositor: Teaching the Interpretation of the hardest words vsed in our Language*. London: Legatt, 1616.

Burton, Robert. *The Anatomy of Melancholy, What it is, With all the Kindes, Cavses, Symptomes, Prognostickes, and Several Cures of it*. 1621. Facsimile ed. Amsterdam: Da Capo, 1971.

---. *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. 1625. Ed. Floyd Dell and Paul Jordan-Smith. New York: Farrar, 1927.

Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Trans. Henry Beveridge. Vol. 1. London: Clarke, 1953.

Campbell, Lily B. *Shakespeare's Tragic Heroes: Slaves of Passion*. 1961. London: Methuen, 1986.

Cavendish, Richard. *The Black Arts*. London: Routledge, 1967.

Cawdrey, Robert. *A Table Alphabeticall, conteyning and teaching the true writing, and vnderstanding of hard vsuall English wordes, borrowed from the Hebrew, Greeke, Latine, or French &c*. London: I.R. for Edmund Weauer, 1604.

Clark, Stuart. *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern E*urope. Oxford: OUP, 1997.

Coolidge, John S. *The Pauline Renaissance in England*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1970.

Cotgrave, Randle. *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongves*. London: Islip, 1611.

Crystal, David and Ben. *Shakespeare's Words: A Glossary and Language Companion*. London: Penguin, 2002.

Davidson, Clifford. *The Primrose Way: A Study of Shakespeare's Macbeth*. Iowa: Westburg, 1970.

Davies, Thomas. *Dramatic Micellanies: Macbeth*. 3 vols. 1784. 148-9. *Shakespeare in the Theatre: An Anthology of Criticism*. Ed. Stanley Wells. Oxford: Clarendon, 1997.

de Greef, Wulfert. "Calvin's Writings." *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin*. Ed. Donald K. McKim. Cambridge: CUP, 2004.

de Montaigne, Michel. *The Complete Essays: Translated and Edited with an Introduction and Notes by M.A. Screech*. London: Penguin, 1991.

de Montaigne, Michel. *Essays*. Trans. John Florio. 1910. Vol. 1. London: Everyman, 1980.

Diehl, Huston. "Religion and Shakespearean Tragedy." *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Tragedy*. Ed. Claire McEachern. Cambridge: CUP, 2002. 86-102.

Dufrenne, Mikel. *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*. Trans. Edward S. Casey, Albert A. Anderson, Willis Domingo and Leon Jacobson. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1973.

Duncan-Jones, Katherine. *Ungentle Shakespeare: Scenes From His Life*. London: Arden Shakespeare, 2001.

Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1983.

Egan, Maurice Francis. *The Ghost in Hamlet: And Other Essays in Comparative Literature*. New York: AMS, 1971.

Elliott, G.R. *Dramatic Providence in Macbeth: A Study of Shakespeare's Tragic Theme of Humanity and Grace*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1958.

Elton, William R. *King Lear and the Gods*. San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1966.

Elworthy, Frederick William. *The Evil Eye and Practices of Superstition*. New York: Julian, 1958.

Foakes, R.A. "Images of Death: Ambition in Macbeth." *Focus on Macbeth*. Ed. John Russell Brown. London: Routledge, 1982.

Frye, Northrop. *Northrop Frye on Shakespeare*. Ed. Robert Sandler. New Haven: Yale UP, 1986.

Frye, Roland Mushat. *Shakespeare and Christian Doctrine*. London: Oxford UP, 1963.

Ferrater-Mora, José. "Reality as Meaning." *New Essays in Phenomenology: Studies in the Philosophy of Experience*. Ed. James M. Edie. Chicago: Quadrangle, 1969. 131-147.

Gerrish, B.A. "The Place of Calvin in Christian Theology." *The Cambridge Companion to*

John Calvin. Ed. Donald K. Kim. Cambridge: CUP, 2004. 289-304.

Gettings, Fred. *Encyclopedia of the Occult: A Guide to Every Aspect of Occult Lore, Belief, and Practice*. London: Rider, 1986.

Gosson, Stephen. *Playes Confuted in fiue Actions, Prouing that they are not to be suffered in a Christian common weale, by the waye both the Cauils of Thomas Lodge, and the Play of Playes, written in their defence, and other obiections of Players frendes, are truly set downe and directlye aunsweared*. London: Thomas Gasson, 1582.

---. *The Schoole of Abuſe, Conteining a pleſaunt inuective against Poets, Pipers, Plaiers, Iesters, and such like Caterpillers of a Commonwelth: Setting vp the Flagge of Defiaunce to their mischieuous exercise, and overthrowing their Bulwarkes, by Prophane Writers, Naturall reason, and common experience: A discourse as pleasaunt for Gentlemen that fauour learning, as profitable for all that wyll follow vertue*. London: Thomas Woodcocke, 1579.

Granville-Barker, Harley. *Prefaces to Shakespeare: Second Series*. London: Sidgwick, 1930.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1988.

---. "Shakespeare Bewitched." *New Casebooks: Shakespeare's Tragedies*. Ed. Susan Zimmerman. London: Macmillan, 1998. 109-139.

Greer, Germaine. "Macbeth: Sin and the Action of Grace." *Shakespeare: Macbeth a Casebook*. Ed. John Wain. Rev. ed. London: Macmillan, 1994.

Gregory, Joshua C. "Magic, Fascination and Suggestion." *Folklore*. Vol. 63, No.3. (1952): 143-151.

Grillot de Givry, Émile. *The Illustrated Anthology of Sorcery, Magic and Alchemy*. Trans. J. Courtenay Locke. New York: Causeway, 1973.

Gurr, Andrew and Mariko Ichikawa. *Staging in Shakespeare's Theaters*. New York: OUP, 2000.

Halliday, F.E. *Shakespeare in His Age*. London: Duckworth, 1971.

Hattaway, Michael. "Tragedy and Political Authority." *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Tragedy*. Ed. Claire McEachern. Cambridge: CUP, 2002. 103-122.

Heilman, Robert B. *Magic in the Web: Action and Language in Othello*. Kentucky: U of Kentucky P, 1956.

Hilgard, Ernest R. *Hypnotic Susceptibility*. New York: Harcourt, 1965.

Holden, Anthony. *William Shakespeare: An Illustrated Biography*. London: Little, 2001.

Holmes, Martin. *Shakespeare's Public*. London: Murray, 1960.

---. Shakespeare and His Players. London: Murray, 1972.

The Holy Bible:

The Anchor Bible: Galatians. Trans. J. Louis Martyn. New York: Doubleday, 1997.

The Holy Bible, conteyning the Olde Testament and the Newe. "Bishop's Bible." London: Christopher Barker, 1595.

The Geneva Bible: A fascsimile of the 1560 edition. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1969.

The Interpreter's Bible: The Holy Scriptures in the King James and Revised Standard Versions with General Articles and Introduction, Exegesis, Exposition for Each Book of the Bible in Twelve Volumes. Vol. 10. New York: Abingdon, 1953.

Nouum Testamentum Latine Secundum Editionem Sancti Hieronymi Ad Codicum Manuscriptorum Fidem Recensuerunt. "Vulgate Bible." Ed. John Wordsworth and Henry Julianus White. Oxford: OUP, 1911.

Honan, Park. *Shakespeare: A Life*. New York: Oxford UP, 1998.

Honigman, E.A.J., ed. *The Arden Shakespeare: Othello*. Surrey (UK): Nelson, 1997.

Hyperius, Andreas. *Two Common Places Taken Ovt of Andreas Hyperivs A Learned diuine, whereof, In the one, He sheweth the force that the Sonne, Moone and Starres haue ouer men, &c. In the other, Whether the Deuils haue bene the shewers of Magicall artes, &c*. Trans. R.V. (R. Vaux). London: Iohn Wolfe, 1581.

Institoris, Henricus (Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger). *Malleus Maleficarum*. 1486. Trans. Montague Summers. 1928. New York: Blom, 1970.

James I. *Daemonologie*. 1597. Facsimile ed. Amsterdam: Da Capo, 1969.

Johnson, Samuel. *A Dictionary of the English Language: in which the Words are deduced from their Originals, and Illustrated in their Different Significations by Examples from the best Writers, to which are prefixed, A History of the Language, and An English Grammar*. Vol. 1. London, 1755. New York: AMC, 1967.

—. *Miscellaneous Observations of the Tragedy of Macbeth*. *Selections from Johnson on Shakespeare*. Ed. Bertrand H. Bronson and Jean M. O'Meara. New Haven: Yale UP, 1986.

Johnstone, Nathan. *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: CUP, 2006.

Jonson, Ben. *Eastward Ho!*. *The Complete Plays of Ben Jonson*. Ed. G.A. Wilkes. Vol. 2. Oxford: Clarendon, 1981. 349-431.

---. *Every Man in His Humour*. 1598. *The Complete Plays of Ben Jonson*. Ed. G.A. Wilkes. Vol. 1. Oxford: Clarendon, 1981. 177-273.

---. *The Devil is an Ass*. *The Complete Plays of Ben Jonson*. Ed. G.A. Wilkes. Vol. 4. Oxford: Clarendon, 1981. 121-242.

Kelly, Henry Ansgar. *The Devil, Demonology and Witchcraft*. Doubleday: New York, 1968.

Kiefer, Frederick. *Fortune and Elizabethan Tragedy*. San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1983.

Kliman, Bernice W. *Shakespeare in Performance: Macbeth*. 2nd ed. Manchester: MUP, 2004.

Knight, G. Wilson. *The Wheel of Fire: Interpretations of Shakespearean Tragedy*. 4th ed. London: Methuen, 1965.

Kors, Alan C. and Edward Peters, eds. *Witchcraft in Europe 1100-1700: A Documentary History*. London: Dent, 1973.

Kott, Jan. *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*. Trans. Boleslaw Taborski. London: Methuen, 1964.

Lake, Peter and Michael Questier. *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in Post-Reformation England*. New Haven: Yale, 2002.

Laurentius, M. Andreas. *A Discourse of the Preservation of the Sight: of Melancholike Diseases; of Rheumes, and of Old Age.* 1599. Trans. Richard Surphlet. (Shakespeare Assoc. Facsimile No. 15) Oxford: OUP, 1938.

Lavater, Lewes. *Of Ghostes and Spirites Walking by Nyght*. 1572. Ed. J. Dover Wilson and May Yardley. Oxford: OUP, 1929.

Lucy, Margaret. *Shakespeare and the Supernatural*. Liverpool: Shakespeare Press-Jaggard, 1906.

Lykiardopoulos, Amica. "The Evil Eye: Towards an Exhaustive Study." *Folklore*. Vol. 92, No. 2. (1981): 221-230.

MacFarlane, Alan. *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England: A Regional and Comparative Study*. New York: Harper, 1970.

Maple, Eric. *The Complete Book of Witchcraft and Demonology: Witches,*

Devils, and Ghosts. New Jersey: Barnes, 1966.

Marlowe, Christopher. *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus (A-Text*). *Doctor Faustus and Other Plays*. Ed. David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen. Oxford: Clarendon, 1995.

Marx, Steven. *Shakespeare and the Bible*. New York: Oxford UP, 2000.

Mebane, John S. *Renaissance Magic and the Return of the Golden Age: The Occult Tradition and Marlowe, Jonson, and Shakespeare*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1989.

Mendl, Robert William Sigismund. *Revelation in Shakespeare*. London: Calder, 1964.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *The Primacy of Perception and Other Essays on Phenomenological Psychology, the Philosophy of Art, History and Politics*. Ed. James M. Edie. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1964.

Middleton, Thomas. *Women Beware Women*. *Oxford World Classics*. Ed. Richard Dutton. Oxford: OUP, 1999.

Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*. Ed. Roy Flanagan. New Jersey: Simon, 1993.

Miola, Robert S. *Shakespeare's Reading*. New York: Oxford UP, 2000.

Munday, Anthony. *A second and third blast of retrait from plaies and Theaters: the one whereof was founded by a reuerend Byshop dead long since; the other by a Worshipful and zealous Gentleman now aliue: one showing the filthines of plaies in times past; the other the abhomination of Theaters in the time present both expresly prouing that the common-weale is nigh vnto the cursse of God, wherein eitherplaiers bemade or, Theaters maintained*. London, 1580.

Naso, Publius Ovidius. *Shakespeare's Ovid Being Arthur Golding's Translation of the Metamorphoses*. Ed. W.H.D. Rouse. London: Centaur, 1961.

—. *Metamorphoses*. Trans. A.D. Melville. Oxford: OUP, 1986.

Neale, J.E. *Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments, 1584-1601*. 2 vols. London: Cape, 1965.

Neill, Michael, ed. *The Oxford Shakespeare: Othello*. Oxford: OUP, 2006.

Nicoll, Allardyce. *British Drama: An Historical Survey From the Beginnings to the Present Time*. London: Harrap, 1927.

Notestein, Wallace. *A History of Witchcraft in England: From 1558 to 1718*. 1911. New York: Russell, 1965

O'Connell, Michael. "The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm, Anti-Theatricalism, and the Image of the Elizabethan Theater." *ELH*. Vol. 52, No. 2 (1985): 279-310.

Oxford English Dictionary. 2nd ed. 1989.

"Bewitch."

"Bewitchment."

"Bewitched."

"Fascinate."

"Fascination." Def. 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b.

"Psychology."

Palmer, Alan and Veronica. *Who's Who in Shakespeare's England*. London: Methuen, 2000.

Parr, Johnstone. *Tamburlaine's Malady: And Other Essays on Astrology in Elizabethan Drama*. Alabama: U of Alabama P, 1953.

Partridge, Eric. *Shakespeare's Bawdy*. London: Routledge, 1956.

Paster, Gail Kern. *Humoring the Body: Emotions and the Shakespearean Stage*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2004.

Rankins, William. *A Mirrour of Monsters: Wherein is plainely described the manifold*

vices, & spotted enormities, that are caused by the infectious sight of Playes, with the description of the subtile flights of Sathan, making them his instruments. London: 1587.

Ridley, M.R., ed. *The Arden Edition of William Shakespeare: Othello*. 2nd ed. London: Methuen, 1958.

Robbins, Rossell Hope. *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology*. London: Nevill, 1959.

Roberti, Francesco Cardinal. *Dictionary of Moral Theology*. Ed. Monsignor Pietro Palazzini. Trans. Henry J. Yannone. 2nd Ed. London: Burns, 1962.

Rogers, Frederick. *The Seven Deadly Sins*. London: Bullen, 1907.

Rogers, Louis William. *The Ghosts in Shakespeare: A Study of the Occultism in the Shakespeare Plays*. New York: Haskell, 1972.

Russell, Jeffrey B. *The Devil: Perceptions of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1977.

—. *A History of Witchcraft: Sorcerers, Heretics, and Pagans*. London: Thames, 1980.

—. *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1984.

Salgado, Gamini. *Eyewitnesses of Shakespeare: First Hand Accounts of Performances 1590-1890*. London: Sussex UP, 1975.

Sargeaunt, W.D. *Macbeth: A New Interpretation of the Text of Shakespeare's Play*. London: Cranton, 1937.

Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*. 2 vols. New York: Dover, 1971.

Schmitt, Charles B., Quentin Skinner and Eckhard Kessler, eds. *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*. Cambridge: CUP, 1988.

Schoenbaum, S. *William Shakespeare: A Documentary Life*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1975.

Schumaker, John F. "The Adaptive Value of Suggestibility and Dissociation." *Human Suggestibility: Advances in Theory, Research, and Application*. Ed. John F. Schumaker. New York: Routledge, 1991. 108-131.

Scot, Reginald. *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*. Arundel: Centaur, 1964.

Shakespeare, William. *Cymbeline. The Complete Works: Original Spelling Edition*. Eds. Stanley Wells, Gary Taylor, John Jowett and William Montgomery. Oxford: Clarendon, 1986.

---. *The First Part of the Contention. The Complete Works: Original Spelling Edition*. Eds. Stanley Wells, Gary Taylor, John Jowett and William Montgomery. Oxford: Clarendon, 1986.

---. *Hamlet. The Complete Works: Original Spelling Edition*. Eds. Stanley Wells, Gary Taylor, John Jowett and William Montgomery. Oxford: Clarendon, 1986.

---. *Julius Caesar. The Complete Works: Original Spelling Edition*. Eds. Stanley Wells, Gary Taylor, John Jowett and William Montgomery. Oxford: Clarendon, 1986.

---. *Macbeth. The Complete Works: Original Spelling Edition*. Eds. Stanley Wells, Gary Taylor, John Jowett and William Montgomery. Oxford: Clarendon, 1986.

---. *The Merchant of Venice. The Complete Works: Original Spelling Edition*. Eds. Stanley Wells, Gary Taylor, John Jowett and William Montgomery. Oxford: Clarendon, 1986.

---. *Othello. The Complete Works: Original Spelling Edition*. Eds. Stanley Wells, Gary Taylor, John Jowett and William Montgomery. Oxford: Clarendon, 1986.

---. *The Rape of Lucrece. The Complete Works: Original Spelling Edition*. Eds. Stanley Wells, Gary Taylor, John Jowett and William Montgomery. Oxford: Clarendon, 1986.

---. Richard III. The Complete Works: Original Spelling Edition. Eds. Stanley Wells, Gary Taylor, John Jowett and William Montgomery. Oxford: Clarendon, 1986.

---. *Sonnets and "A Louers Complaint". The Complete Works: Original Spelling Edition*. Eds. Stanley Wells, Gary Taylor, John Jowett and William Montgomery. Oxford: Clarendon, 1986.

---. *Titus Andronicus. The Complete Works: Original Spelling Edition*. Eds. Stanley Wells, Gary Taylor, John Jowett and William Montgomery. Oxford: Clarendon, 1986.

---. *Venus and Adonis. The Complete Works: Original Spelling Edition*. Eds. Stanley Wells, Gary Taylor, John Jowett and William Montgomery. Oxford: Clarendon, 1986.

Sharpe, James. *The Bewitching of Anne Gunther: A Horrible and True Story of Football, Witchcraft, Murder and the King of England*. London: Profile, 1999.

Shumaker, Wayne. *The Occult Sciences in the Renaissance: A Study in Intellectual Patterns*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1972.

Smith, Molly. *The Darker World Within: Evil in the Tragedies of Shakespeare and his Successors*. New Jersey: AUP, 1991.

Spade, Paul Vincent. "Medieval Philosophy". The Oxford History of Western Philosophy. Ed. Anthony Kenny. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994.

Spivack, Bernard. *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil*. New York: Columbia UP, 1958.

Stallybrass, Peter. "Macbeth and Witchcraft." *New Casebooks: Macbeth*. Ed. Alan Sinfield. London: Macmillan, 1992.

Stubbes, Philip. *Anatomie of Abuses*. 1583. Ed. Frederick J. Furnivall. London: New Shakespeare Soc., 1877-79.

Styan, J.L. *Shakespeare's Stagecraft*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998.

Summers, Montague. *The History of Witchcraft and Demonology*. London: Routledge, 1973.

Thomas, Keith. "The Relevance of Social Anthropology to the Historical Study of English Witchcraft." *Witchcraft Confessions & Accusations*. Ed. Mary Douglas. London: Tavistock, 1970. 47-79.

---. *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century England*. London: Penguin, 1971.

Thomson, Peter. *Shakespeare's Professional Career*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992.

Tillyard, Eustace Mandeville Wetenhall. *The Elizabethan World Picture*. London: Chatto, 1943.

Traister, Barbara Howard. *Heavenly Necromancers: The Magician in English Renaissance Drama*. Columbia, MO: U of Missouri P, 1984.

Turner, Robert. *Elizabethan Magic*. Dorset: Element, 1989.

Veron, John. *A Dictionarie in Latine and English, heretofore set forth by Master Iohn Veron, and now newlie corrected and enlarged, For the vtilitie and profit of all young students in the Latine toong, as by further search therein the shall find: By R.W.* London: Newberie and Denham, 1584.

Vickers, Brian. *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984.

Walker, Greg. "The Renaissance in Britain." *The Short Oxford History of the British Isles: The Sixteenth Century*. Ed. Patrick Collinson. OUP. Oxford, 2002.

Watkins, Ronald, and Jeremy Lemmon. *In Shakespeare's Playhouse: Macbeth*. London: David & Charles, 1974.

Watson, Robert N. "Tragedies of Revenge and Ambition." *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Tragedy*. Ed. Claire McEachern. Cambridge: CUP, 2002.

Wells, Stanley, Gary Taylor, John Jowett and William Montgomery, eds. *William Shakespeare The Complete Works: Original Spelling Edition*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1986.

Wells, Stanley. *Shakespeare the Poet and his Plays*. London: Methuen, 1997.

Wells, Stanley, Gary Taylor, John Jowett and William Montgomery. *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion*. Revised ed. London: Norton, 1997.

West, Robert Hunter. *The Invisible World: A Study of Pneumatology in Elizabethan Drama*. New York: Octagon, 1969.

Weyer, Johann. *Witches, Devils, and Doctors in the Renaissance: Johann Weyer, De praestigiis daemonum*. 1583. Ed. George Mora. Trans. John Shea. Binghamton NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts, 1991.

Wiggins, Martin. *Journeymen in Murder: The Assassin in English Renaissance Drama*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1991.

—. *Shakespeare and the Drama of his Time*. New York: Oxford UP, 2000.

—. "Hamlet within the Prince." *New Essays on Hamlet*. Ed. Burnett, Mark Thornton, and John Manning. New York: AMS Press, 1994. 214.

—. "Macbeth and premeditation." *The Arts, Literature and Society*. ed. Arthur Marwick. London: Routledge, 1990. 23-47.

Williams, George Walton. "Hamlet and the Dread Commandment." *Shakespeare's*

Universe: Renaissance Ideas and Conventions—Essays in honour of W.R. Elton. Ed. John M. Mucciolo. Aldershot (UK): Scolar Press, 1996. 60-68.

Wilks, John S. *The Idea of Conscience in Renaissance Tragedy*. London: Routledge, 1990.

Wills, Garry. *Witches and Jesuits: Shakespeare's Macbeth*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995.

Wilson, Ian. *Shakespeare: The Evidence*. New York: St. Martin's, 1993.

Wind, Edgar. *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*. London: Faber, 1958.

Woodman, David. *White Magic and English Renaissance Drama*. New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 1973.

Woolley, Benjamin. *The Queen's Conjuror: The Science and Magic of Dr. Dee*. London: Harper, 2001.

Wright, Thomas. *The Passions of the Minde in Generall*. 1604. Chicago: U of Illinois Press, 1971.

Yates, Francis A. *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age*. London: Routledge, 1979.