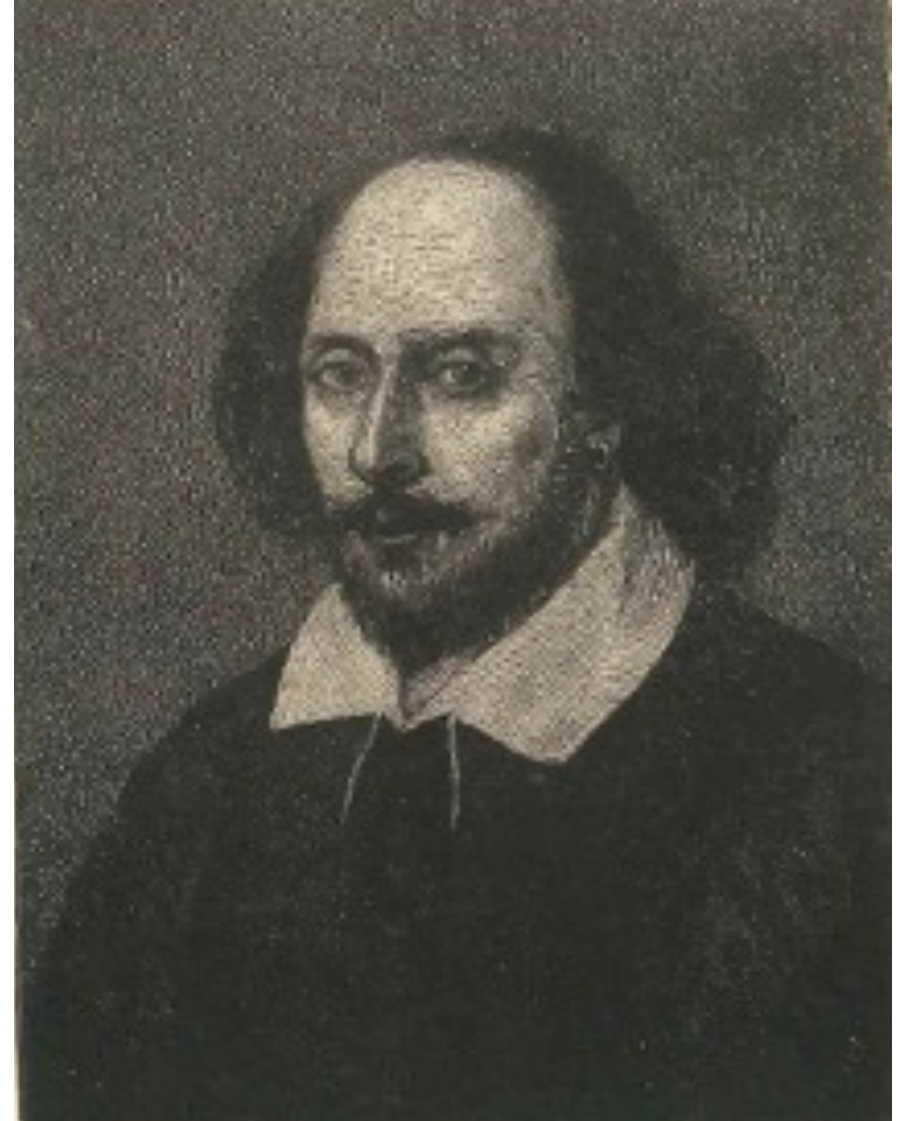


William Shakespeare's  
*Hamlet:*  
Soliloquy Standing Still —  
Part 1



VANDERBILT OSHER  
LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE

**READING SHAKESPEARE WITH FILM**

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October 24, 2023 (“Soliloquy Standing Still – Part 1”) **Hamlet**

Film: Sir Laurence Olivier (1948)

Film: Franco Zeffirelli – Mel Gibson (1990)

Film: Kenneth Branagh (1996)

Film: Robert Icke / Rhodri Huw / BBC – Andrew Scott (2018)

Clips from:

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Excerpts:

“What Happens in Hamlet” John Dover Wilson

“Shakespearean Tragedy: Hamlet” A.C. Bradley

“This is Shakespeare” Emma Smith

“Hamlet in Purgatory” Stephen Greenblatt

“A Will to Believe: Shakespeare and Religion” David Scott Kastan

## Act I.2

KING CLAUDIUS:

Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death  
The memory be green, and that it us befitted  
To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom  
To be contracted in one brow of woe,  
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature  
That we with wisest sorrow think on him  
Together with remembrance of ourselves.  
Therefore, our sometime sister, now our queen,  
Th' imperial jointress to this warlike state,  
Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,  
With an auspicious and a dropping eye,  
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,  
In equal scale weighing delight and dole,  
Taken to wife.

9

14

Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone  
With this affair along. For all, our thanks.  
Now follows, that you know, young Fortinbras,  
Holding a weak supposal of our worth,  
Or thinking by our later dear brother's death  
Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,  
Colleagued with this dream of his advantage,  
He hath not failed to pester us with message  
Importing the surrender of those lands  
Lost by his father, with all bands of law,  
To our most valiant brother. So much for him.  
Now for ourself and for this time of meeting.  
Thus much the business is: we have here writ

21

To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras –  
Who, impotent and bedrid, scarcely hears  
Of this his nephew's purpose – to suppress  
His further gait herein, in that the levies, 31  
The lists, and full proportions are all made 32  
Out of his subject; and we here dispatch  
You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltemand,  
For bearers of this greeting to old Norway,  
Giving to you no further personal power  
To business with the king, more than the scope  
Of these delated articles allow. 38  
Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty.

CORNELIUS, VOLTEMAND:

In that, and al things, will we show our duty.

KING:

We doubt it nothing. Heartily farewell.  
And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?  
You told us of some suit. What is't, Laertes?  
You cannot speak of reason to the Dane 44  
And lost your voice. What would thou beg, Laertes, 45  
That shall not be my offer, not thy asking?  
The head is not more native to the heart, 47  
The hand more instrumental to the mouth, 48  
Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.  
What wouldst thou have, Laertes?

Laertes:  
My dread lord,  
Your leave and favor to return to France,  
From whence though willingly I came to Denmark  
To show my duty in your coronation,  
Yet now I must confess, that duty done,  
My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France  
And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

KING:  
Have you your father's leave? What says Polonius?

POLONIUS:  
He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave  
By laborsome petition, and at last  
Upon his will I sealed my hard consent.  
I do beseech your give him leave to go.

KING:  
Take thy fair hour, Laertes. Time be thine,  
And thy best graces spend it at thy will.  
But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son — 64

HAMLET:  
A little more than kin, and less than kind! 65

KING:  
How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

HAMLET:  
Not so, my lord. I am too much in the sun. 67

QUEEN:  
Good Hamlet, cast thy knighted color off,  
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.  
Do not for ever with thy veiled lids 70  
Seek for thy noble father in the dust.  
Thou know'st 'tis common. All that lives must die,  
Passing through nature to eternity.

HAMLET:  
Ay, madam, it is common.

QUEEN:  
If it be,  
Why seems it so particular with thee?

HAMLET:  
Seems, madam? Nay, it is. I know not 'seems.'  
'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,  
Nor customary suits of solemn black,  
Nor windy suspiration of forced breath, 80  
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,  
Nor the dejected havior of the visage,  
Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,  
That can denote me truly. These indeed seem,  
For they are actions that a man might play,  
But I have that within which passeth show —  
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

KING:

'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,  
To give these mourning duties to your father,  
But you must know your father lost a father,  
That father lost, lost his, and the survivor bound  
In filial obligation for some term

92

To do obsequious sorrow. But to preserve  
In obstinate condolement is a course  
Of impious stubbornness. 'Tis unmanly grief.  
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,  
A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,  
An understanding simple and unschooled.

For what we know must be and is a common  
As any the most vulgar thing to sense,

100

Why should we in our peevish opposition  
Take it to heart? Fie, 'tis a fault to heaven,  
A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,  
To reason most absurd, whose common theme  
Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,  
From the first corse till he that died to-day,  
'This must be so.' We pray you throw to earth

This unprevailing woe, and think of us  
As of a father, for let the world take note,  
You are the most immediate to our throne,  
And with no less nobility of love

Than that which dearest father bears his son  
Do I impart toward you. For your intent  
In going back to school in Wittenberg,

114

It is most retrograde to our desire,  
And we beseech you, bend you to remain  
Here in the cheer and comfort of our eye,  
Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

QUEEN:

Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet.  
I pray thee stay with us, go not to Wittenberg.

HAMLET:

I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

KING:

Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply.  
Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come.  
This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet  
Sits smiling to my heart, in grace whereof  
No jocund health that Denmark drinks to-day  
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,  
And the king's rouse the heaven shall bruit again,  
Respeaking earthly thunder. Come away.

127

*Flourish. Exeunt all but Hamlet.*



Hamlet:	
O that this too too sullied flesh would melt,	129
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew,	
Or that the everlasting had not fixed	
His canon; gainst self-slaughter. O God, God,	132
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable	
Seem to me all the uses of this world!	
Fie on 't, ah, fie, 'tis an unweeded garden	
That grows to seed. Things rank and gross in nature	
Posses it merely. That it should come to this,	137
But two months dead, nay, not so much, not two,	
So excellent a king, that was to this	
Hyperion to a satyr, so loving to my mother	140
That he might not betwixt the winds of heaven	141
visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth,	
Must I remember? Why, she would hang on him	
As if increase of appetite had grown	
By what it fed on, and yet within a month —	
Let me know think on't; frailty, thy name is woman —	
A little month, or ere those shoes were old	
With which she followed my poor father's body	
Like Niobe, all tears, why she, even she —	149
O God, a beast that wants discourse of reason	150
Would have mourned longer — married with my uncle,	
My father's brother, but no more like my father	
Than I to Hercules. Within a month,	
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears	
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,	155
She married. O, most wicked speed, to post	
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!	
It is not nor it cannot come to good.	
But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue.	

**HAMLET:**  
**Act I.IV**

HAMLET:  
So oft it chances in particular men  
That (for some vicious mole of nature in them,) 24  
Their virtues else, be they as pure as grace,  
Shall in the general censure take corruption  
From that particular fault.

HORATIO:  
Look, my lord, it comes.

HAMLET:  
Angels and ministers of grace defend us!  
Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damned, 40  
Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,  
Be thy intents wicked or charitable,  
I will speak to thee. I'll call thee Hamlet,  
King, father, royal Dane. O, answer me!

HORATIO:  
Do not, my lord.

HAMLET:

Why, what should be the fear?  
I do not set my life at a pin's fee,  
And for my soul, what can it do to that,  
Being a thing immortal as itself?

HORATIO:

What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,  
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff  
That beetles o'er his base into the sea,  
And there assume some other horrible form,  
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason  
And draw you into madness? Think of it.

71

73

HAMLET:

I'll follow it.

MARCELLUS:

You shall not go, my lord.

HAMLET:

Hold off your hands.

HAMLET:

By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me!  
I say, away! Go on. I'll follow thee.

85

MARCELLUS:

Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

**HAMLET**  
**Act I.V**

GHOST:  
Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing  
To what I shall unfold.

HAMLET:  
Speak. I am bound to hear.

GHOST:  
So are thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

HAMLET:  
What?

GHOST:  
I am thy father's spirit,  
Doomed for a certain term to walk the night,  
And for the day confined to fast fires,  
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature  
Are burnt and purged away,  
But that I am forbid  
To tell the secrets of my prison house,  
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word  
Would harrow up the soul.  
List, list, O, list!  
If thou didst ever thy dear father love —

11

GHOST:  
Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

HAMLET:  
Murder?

GHOST:  
Murder most foul, as in the best it is,  
But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.

GHOST:

'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,  
A serpent stung me.

But know, thou noble youth,  
The serpent that did sting thy father's life  
Now wears his crown.

HAMLET:

O my prophetic soul!  
My uncle?

GHOST:

Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,  
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts —  
O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power  
So to seduce! — won to his shameful lust  
The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen.

42

But soft, methinks I scent the morning air.  
Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,  
My custom always of the afternoon,  
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole  
With juice of cursed hebona in a vial,  
And in the porches of my ears did pour  
The leperous distilment.

61

62

Thus was I sleeping by a brother's hand  
Of life, of crown, of queen at once dispatched,  
Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,  
Unhouseled, disappointed, unaneled 77  
No reck'ning made, but sent to my account  
With all my imperfections on my head.

O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!  
If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not.  
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be  
A couch for luxury and damned incest. 83

But howsomever thou pursues this act,  
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive  
Against thy mother aught. Leave her to heaven  
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge  
To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once.  
The glowworm shows the matin to be near 89  
And gins to pale his uneffectual fire.  
Adieu, adieu, adieu. Remember me.

HAMLET:

Remember thee?

Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat

In this distracted globe. Remember thee?

97

Yea, from the table of my memory

98

I'll wipe away all trivial fond records.

And thy commandment all alone shall live

Within the book and volume of my brain,

Unmixed with baser matter. Yes, by heaven!

O most pernicious woman!

O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!

My tables – meet it is I set it down

That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain.

So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word:

It is 'Adieu, adieu, remember me.'

I have sworn't.

**Hamlet**  
**Act II.2**

**HAMLET:**

No such matter. I will not sort you with the rest  
Of my servants, for, to speak to you like an honest man, I  
Am most dreadfully attended. But in the beaten way of  
Friendship, what make you at Elsinore?

267

**ROSENCRANTZ:**

To visit you, my lord; no other occasion.

**HAMLET:**

Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks, but  
I thank you; and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too  
dear a halfpenny. Were you not sent for? Is it your own  
Inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, come, deal  
Justly with me. Come, come. Nay, speak.

271

**GUILDENSTERN:**

What should we say, my lord?

**HAMLET:**

Why, anything – but to th' purpose. You were  
Sent for, and there is a kind of confession in your looks,  
Which your modesties have not craft enough to color.  
I know the good king and queen have sent for you.

**ROSENCRANTZ:**

To what end, my lord?



HAMLET:

That you must teach me. But let me conjure you  
By the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our  
Youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and  
By what more dear a better propose can charge you  
Withal, be even and direct with me whether you were  
Sent for or no.

281

283

284

ROSENCRANTZ:

What say you?

HAMLET:

Nay then, I have an eye of you. — If you  
Love me, hold not off.

GUILDENSTERN:

My lord, we were sent for.

HAMLET:

I will tell you why. So shall my anticipation pre-	290
vent your discovery, and your secrecy to the king and	291
queen moult no feather. I have of late – but wherefore I	292
Know not – lost all my mirth, forgotten all custom of exercise;	
and indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition	
That this goodly frame the earth seems to me a sterile	
Promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look	
You, this brave o’erhanging firmament, this majestical	297
Roof fretted with golden fire – why, it appeareth nothing	298
To me but a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors.	
What a piece of work is a man, how noble in reason,	
How infinite in faculties; in form and moving how express	301
And admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension	
How like a god ; the beauty of the world, the	
Paragon of animals! And yet to me what is this quintessence	304
Of dust? Man delights not me – nor woman	
Neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.	

Hamlet  
Act II.2

HAMLET:

Ay, so God bye to you. — Now I am alone.

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!

Is it not monstrous that this player here,

But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,

Could force his soul so to his own conceit

537

That from her working all his visage waned,

Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect,

A broken voice, and his whole functioning suiting

With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing,

For Hecuba!

What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,

That he should weep for her? What would he do

Had he the motive and the cue for passion

That I have? He would drown the stage with tears

And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,

Make mad the guilty and appal the free,

Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed

The very faculties of eyes and ears.

Yet I,

A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak

552

Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,

553

And can say nothing. No, not for a king,

Upon whose property and most dear life

A damned defeat was made. Am I a coward?

Who calls me a villain? Breaks my pate across?

Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face?

Tweaks me by the nose? Give me the lie i' th' throat

As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?	
Ha, 'swounds, I should take it, for it cannot be	561
But I am pigeon-livered and lack gall	562
To make oppression bitter, or ere this	
I should ha' fatt'd all the region kites	564
With this slave's offal. Bloody, bawdy villain!	565
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!	566
O, vengeance!	
Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,	
That I the son of a dear father murdered,	
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,	
Must like a whore unpack my heart with words	
And fall a-cursing like a very drab,	
A stallion! Fie upon't, foh! About, my brains.	573
Hum—	
I have heard that guilty creatures sitting at a play	
Have by the very cunning of the scene	
Been struck so to the soul that presently	577
That have proclaimed their malefactions.	
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak	
With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players	
Play something like the murder of my father	
Before mine uncle. I'll observe his looks.	
I'll tent him to the quick. If he do blench	583
I know my course. <b>The spirit that I have seen</b>	
<b>May be a devil, and the devil hath power</b>	
<b>T' assume a pleasing shape, yea and perhaps</b>	
<b>Out of my weakness and my melancholy,</b>	
<b>As he is very potent with such spirits,</b>	
<b>Abuses me to damn me. I'll have grounds</b>	589
<b>More relative than this. The play's the thing</b>	590
<b>Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king</b>	

HAMLET:  
Act III.I

To be, or not to be – that is the question:  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles  
And by opposing end them. To die, to sleep –  
No more – and by a sleep to say we end  
The heartache, and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to. 'Tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep –  
To sleep – perchance to dream : ay, there's the rub, 65  
For in that sleep of death what dream may come  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil, 67  
Must give us pause. There's the respect 68  
That makes calamity of so long life. 69  
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,  
Th' oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely  
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,  
The insolence of office, and the spurns  
That patient merit of th' unworthy takes,  
When he himself might his quietus make 75  
With a bare bodkin? 76

Who would fardels bear,  
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,  
But that the dread of something after death,  
The undiscovered country, from whose bourn 79  
No traveller returns, puzzles the will,  
And makes us rather bear those ills we have  
Than fly to others that we know not of?  
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,  
And thus the native hue of resolution  
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,  
And enterprises of great pitch and moment 86  
With this regard their currents turn awry 87  
And lose the name of action.

## “What Happens in Hamlet”

By: John Dover Wilson  
(pages 204-208)

Shakespeare, as everyone know, never furnishes an explanation for Hamlet’s inaction. All he does is to exhibit it to us as a problem, turning it round and round, as it were, before our eyes so that we may see every side of it, and then in the end leaving us to draw our own conclusions. Hamlet himself tries to explain it both in the Hecuba soliloquy and in the soliloquy provoked by the spectacle of Norwegian army; but his failure to do so exhibits the attempts as part of the problem. Before we examine these attempts, before we ourselves attempt to draw the box which has foiled the greatest Shakespearian critics, let us first of all do what Shakespeare tacitly asks us to do, let us *watch!* Hamlet. Before we discuss his character let us study his behavior.

This is to take things in their proper order, their dramatic order: for Hamlet’s behaviour begins to strike us as strange long before we ought to be troubling ourselves about his delay. Almost from the outset, in fact, it presents us with another problem, which we shall find is technically associated with the delay, though dramatically distinct from it. I mean the problem of Hamlet’s madness. We have already glanced at this in dealing with the “antic disposition”. The time has come to consider it more carefully. Let us, therefore, retrace our steps and watch Hamlet’s behaviour from his entry in the first act, gathering impression as we proceed, that is to say, as Shakespeare reveals more and more to us; but when we come to the second half of the play reserving for convenience the question of the procrastination until we have completed a general survey of his supposed insanity.

### *SORE DISTRACTION*

Yet we must be careful. A “behaviourist” interpretation may be as incomplete and misleading as any other purely psychological study of Hamlet. For he is not a living man or an historical character; he is a single figure, if the most prominent figure, in a dramatic composition. We can no more analyse his mind than we can dissect his body. We cannot consider him be himself, apart from the other characters, apart from the cloud of suggestion about him with which his creator constantly infects our imaginations from beginning to end of the drama. Nothing, I have noted is about Hamlet’s inability to act until the end of 2.2. but Shakespeare has begun to wrap him in an atmosphere of dejection long before that. The whole tone of act I, for example, is one of despondency and failure. Nine lines from the opening of the play, before we have even heard that there is a Prince of Denmark, the sentry Francisco has struck the note of heart-sickness. To Horatio and Marcellus the apparition suggests “something rotten” or “some strange eruption: in the state of Denmark. The Ghost himself speaks ominously of

the fat weed  
That rots itself in ease on Lethe wharf.

And Hamlet himself concludes the act with the bitter cry:

The time is out of joint, O cursed spite,  
That ever I was born to set it right!

But the most striking instance of Shakespeare’s cunning in preparing the minds of his audience for effects he will introduce later is a speech in 1.4, the relevance of which to the theme of *Hamlet* as a whole has been somewhat neglected. I refer to the meditative lines occasioned by the braying of the kettle-drum and trumpet, heard by Hamlet, Horatio and Barnardo from the battlements as King Claudius “drains his draughts of Rhenish down”. After remarking that the unhappy reputation for drunkenness, which such revelling has given the Danes, takes.

From our achievements, though performed at height,  
The pith and marrow of our attribute,

Hamlet continues,

So, oft chances in particular men,  
That for some vicious mole of nature in them,  
As in their birth, wherein they are not guilty  
(Since nature cannot choose his origin),  
By the o’ergrowth of some complexion,  
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,  
Or by some habit, that too much o’er-leavens  
The form of plausible manners – that these men,  
Carrying I say the stamp of one defect,  
Being nature’s livery, or fortune’s star,  
His virtues else be they as pure as grace,  
As infinite as man may undergo,  
Shall in the general censure take corruption  
From that particular fault.



It is not accident of the press, as emending editors assume, that leads the speaker to pass from the plural to the singular. He is thinking of himself, or rather Shakespeare is asking us to think of him; and though at this stage of the play, we do not see the point, the magician is plying us with suggestion. A lesser dramatist would have placed the lines in Horatio's mouth and made him utter them as an epitaph over his dead friend; Shakespeare works them into the overture, to sound in our ears before he has shown us anything at all of the "complexion" which will break down the pales and forts of Hamlet's "reason". The lines end with a passage unhappily corrupt, though if we emend it, as I believe we may, it offers, by means of an alchemical metaphor, what probably takes us as near as we can get to Shakespeare's own judgment upon Hamlet:

The dram of evil  
Doth all the noble substance often dote  
To his own scandal.

In other words, the character of the man might have been pure gold but for the touch of evil or weakness which brings him to ruin. There was no spot-lighting in the Elizabethan stage, but Shakespeare knew a better way of shedding the ray of illusion upon the features of his characters, the way of poetry.

## Shakespearean Tragedy: Hamlet

A.C. Bradley

(Pages 133-138)

This incident is, again, the turning-point of the tragedy. So far, Hamlet's delay, thought it is endangering his freedom and his life, has done no irreparable harm; but his failure here is the cause of all the disasters that follow. In sparing the king, he sacrifices Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Laertes, the Queen and himself. This central significance of the passage is dramatically indicated in the following scene by the reappearance of the Ghost and the repetition of its charge.

Polonius is the first to fall. The old courtier, whose vanity would not allow him to confess that his diagnoses of Hamlet's lunacy was mistaken, had suggested that, after the theatricals, the Queen should endeavour in a private interview with her son to penetrate the mystery while he himself would repeat his favourite part of the eavesdropper (III.i.184ff). It has now become quite imperative that the Prince should be brought to disclose his secret; for his choice of the 'Murder of Gonzago', and perhaps his conduct during the performance, have shown a spirit of exaggerated hostility against the King which has excited general alarm. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern discourse to Claudius on the extreme importance of his preserving his invaluable life, as though Hamlet's insanity had now clearly shown itself to be homicidal. When, then, at the opening of the interview between Hamlet and his mother, the son, instead of listening to her remonstrances, roughly assumes the offensive, she becomes alarmed; and when, on her attempting to leave the room, he takes her by the arm and forces her to sit down, she is terrified, cries out, 'Thou wilt not murder me?' and screams for help. Polonius, behind the arras, echoes her call; and in a moment Hamlet, hoping the concealed person is the King, runs the old man through the body.

Evidently this act is intended to stand in sharp contrast with Hamlet's sparing of his enemy. The King would have been just as defenseless behind the arras as he had been on his knees; but here Hamlet is already excited and in action, and the chance comes to him so suddenly that he has no time to 'scan' it. It is a minor consideration, but still for the dramatist not unimportant, that the audience would wholly sympathize with Hamlet's attempt here, as directed against an enemy who is lurking to entrap him, instead of being engaged in a business which perhaps to the bulk of the audience then, as now, seemed to have a 'relish of salvation in't'.

We notice in Hamlet as the opening of this interview, something of the excited levity which followed the *denouement* of the play-scene. The death of Polonius sobers him; and in the remainder of the interview he shows, together with some traces of his morbid state, the peculiar beauty of nobility of his nature. His chief desire is not by any means to ensure his mother's silent acquiescence in his design of revenge; it is to save her soul. And while the rough work of vengeance is repugnant to him, he is at home in this higher work. Here that fatal feeling, 'it is no matter', never shows itself. No father-confessor could be more selflessly set upon his end of redeeming a fellow-creature from degradation, more stern or pitiless in denouncing the sin, or more eager to welcome the first token of repentance. There is something infinitely beautiful in that sudden sunshine and love which breaks out when, at the Queen's surrender,

O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain,  
He answers,

O throw away the worser part of it,  
And live the purer with the other half.

The truth is that, though Hamlet hates his uncle and acknowledges the duty of vengeance, his whole heart is never in this feeling or this task, but his whole heart is in his horror at his mother's fall and in his longing to raise her. The former of these feelings was the inspiration of his first soliloquy; it combines with the second to form the inspiration of his eloquence here. And Shakespeare never wrote more eloquently than there.

I have already alluded to the significance of the reappearance of the Ghost in this scene; but why does Shakespeare choose for the particular moment of its reappearance the middle of a speech in which Hamlet is raving against his uncle? There seems to be more than one reason. In the first place, Hamlet has already attained his object of stirring shame and contrition in his mother's breast, and is now yielding to the old temptation of unpacking his heart with words, and exhausting in useless emotion the force which should be stored up in his will. And, next, in doing this he is agonizing his mother to no purpose, and in despite of her piteous and repeated appeals for mercy. But the Ghost, when it gave him his charge, had expressly warned him to spare her and here again the dead husband shows the same tender regard for his weak unfaithful wife. The object of his return is to repeat his charge.

Do not forget: this visitation  
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose;

But, having uttered this reminder, he immediately bids the son to help the mother and ‘step between her and her fighting soul’.

And, whether intentionally or not, another purpose is served by Shakespeare’s choice of this particular moment. It is a moment when the state of Hamlet’s mind is such that we cannot suppose the Ghost to be meant for an hallucination; and it is of great importance here that the spectator or readers should not suppose any such thing. He is further guarded by the fact that the Ghost proves, so to speak, his identity by showing the same traits as were visible on his first appearance – the same insistence on the duty of remembering, and the same concern for the Queen. And the result is that we construe the Ghost’s interpretation of Hamlet’s delay (‘almost blunted purpose’) as the truth, the dramatist’s own interpretation. Let me add that probably no one in Shakespeare’s audience had any doubt of his meaning here. The idea of later critics and readers that the Ghost is an hallucination is due partly to failure to follow the indication just noticed, but partly also to two mistakes, the substitution of our present intellectual atmosphere for the Elizabethan, and the notion that, because the Queen does not see and hear the Ghost, it is meant to be unreal. But a ghost, in Shakespeare’s day, was able for any sufficient reason to confine its manifestation to a single person in a company; and here the sufficient reason, that of sparing the Queen, is obvious.

At the cost of this scene it appears that Hamlet has somehow learned of the King’s design of sending him to England in charge of his two ‘school-fellows’. He has no doubt that this design covers some villainous plot against himself, but neither does he doubt that he will succeed in defeating it; and as we saw, he looks forward with pleasure to this conflict of wits. The idea of refusing to go appears not to occur to him. Perhaps (for here we are left to conjecture) he feels that he could not refuse unless at the same time he openly accused the King of his father’s murder (a course which he seems at no time to contemplate); for by the slaughter of Polonius he has supplied his enemy with the best possible excuse for getting him out of the country. Besides, he has so effectually warned this enemy that, after the death of Polonius is discovered, he is kept under guard (IV.iii.14). He consents then, to go. But on his way to the shore he meets the army of Fortinbras on its march to Poland; and the sight of these men going cheerfully to risk death ‘for an egg-shell’, and ‘making mouths at the invisible event’, strikes him with shame as he remembers how he with so much greater cause for action, ‘lets all sleep’; and he breaks out into the soliloquy, ‘How all occasions do inform against me!’.

This great speech, in itself not inferior to the famous 'To be or not to be', is absent not only from the First Quarto but from the Folio. It is therefore probable that, at any rate by the time when the Folio appeared (1623), it had become customary to omit it in theatrical representation; and this is still the custom. But, while no doubt it is dramatically the least indispensable of the soliloquies, it has a direct dramatic value, and a great value for the interpretation of Hamlet's character. It shows that Hamlet, though he is leaving Denmark, has not relinquished the idea of obeying the Ghost. It exhibits very strikingly his inability to understand why he has delayed so long. It contains that assertion which so many critics forget, that he has cause and will strength and means to do it'. On the other hand – and this was perhaps the principal purpose of the speech – it convinces us that he has learnt little or nothing from his delay, or from his failure to seize the opportunity presented to him after the play-scene. For, we find, both the motive and the gist of the speech are precisely the same as those of the soliloquy at the end of the Second Act ('O what a rogue'). There too he was stirred to shame when he saw passionate emotion awakened by a cause which, compared with his, was a mere egg-shell. There too he stood bewildered at the sight of his own dullness, and was almost ready to believe – what was justly incredible to him – that it was the mask of mere cowardice. There too he determined to delay no longer: if the King should but blench, he knew his course. Yet this determination led to nothing then; and why, we ask ourselves in despair should the bloody thoughts he now resolves to cherish ever pass beyond the realm of thought?

## This is Shakespeare

By: Emma Smith

(pages 166-172)

In sharing a name, father and son cannot be entirely distinguished; young Hamlet cannot form an autonomous identity for himself. This psychological overlap has sometimes been literalized in stage productions: one review of Richard Eyre's 1980 production at the Royal Court in London described how 'Jonathan Pryce, in what is effectively his first soliloquy, plays both sides of the conversation between Hamlet and his dead father, adopting for the latter a deep voice wrenched from his stomach'; Laurence Olivier also voiced the ghost's lines in his 1948 film. Such doublings suggest the strong psychic overlap between dead father and troubled son. The repeated names link *Hamlet* more closely than we often allow to the concerns with political and psychological succession that characterize Shakespeare's history plays of the 1590s. In many ways *Hamlet's* closest canonical neighbour is not the later tragedies of *Othello* and *Macbeth* but the earlier *Henry IV*, another story of a prince trying to escape the burden of a father with whom he shares the same name (and we can see that that play goes to considerable onomastic lengths to hide the fact that the prince – variously dubbed Hal or Harry – is, like his father, 'Henry', a name he can only really inherit, like the crown itself, on the death of his father).

So when Claudius tells Hamlet that mourning for his father's death is unnatural, he is not merely callous. He articulates a quite different worldview, a different understanding of teleology. Claudius looks forward, Hamlet backward. Nature's 'common theme / Is death of fathers' (1.2.103-4), he tells the black-clad prince – 'you must know your father lost a father, / That father lost, lost his son' (89-90). Stuff happens, time passes, the son outlives the father. Get over it. Move on. Claudius's pragmatic approach to succession and progress is quite different from the impeded and circular 'Remember me' which structures Hamlet's role in the play. Hamlet's actions tend towards undoing and negation rather than doing or progress: he breaks off his relationship with Ophelia; he does not return to university; he wants the players to perform an old-fashioned speech 'if it live in your memory' (2.2.450-51); his primary attachments are to the dead not the living. The play's iconic visual moment – Hamlet facing the skull of the jester Yorick – epitomizes a drama, and a psychology, in thrall to the past.

Since at least Sigmund Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), the idea that Hamlet cannot make progress in the play has been understood psychoanalytically. Freud's own view of Hamlet as a repressed and 'hysterical subject' who is able to do anything but take vengeance upon the man who did away with his father and has taken his father's place with his mother – the man who shows him in realization the repressed desires of his own childhood' gives one influential account of why the play's action is impeded: the so-called Oedipus complex. But there are other ways, also, to see this less as an individual or personal property of Hamlet himself, and more as a cultural one, bound up with specific moments of *Hamlet's* own composition.

Part of the charge of this play written around 1600 must have been the issue of succession. Elizabeth I was approaching seventy, and childless. Most people in England could not remember another monarch, but the question of who would succeed her preoccupied late Elizabethan society and theatre, as discussed in the chapter on *Richard II*. It is particularly explored on stage in history plays, and *Hamlet* has some particular affinities with this genre. Shakespeare's history plays interweave patrilineal and fraternal rivalries within the family and state, marginalizing women and rehearsing versions of regime change. Seen in this context, *Hamlet* exists as a belated history play, and a rather apocalyptic one. Mysteriously, Hamlet himself, despite being evidently old enough, does not inherit the throne on his father's death. The play itself does not adequately explain why he is supplanted by his uncle, but in a cultural atmosphere in which succession was such a hot topic, it's hard to imagine that this puzzling element would have gone unnoticed. What unfolds is the self-destruction of royal dynasty, leaving the kingdom to fall into foreign hands: one nightmare scenario for England at the end of Elizabeth's long reign. Fortinbras marches on Denmark and is able, suavely, and without shedding a single drop of his own soldiers' blood, to enter the throne room and take over. He does so on account of a past political claim: 'I have some rights of memory in this kingdom' (5.2.343). We saw in *Richard III* how little creative investment that play put into its eventual victor, Richard's nemesis Richmond: he wins the battle for the kingdom but barely figures in the battle for the play. We might say something similar of Fortinbras, a figure often, and rather easily, cut from *Hamlet*, and one in whom it is hard to take much interest. The future is hardly presented in *Hamlet* as something to look forward to. As an image of late Elizabethan political anxieties, it's a bleak ending.

Like Elizabethan culture more widely, the play prefers to look backwards rather than forwards: to dare to think forwards, to a time post-Elizabeth, was a crime. Connected to this backward-looking is the issue of religion. One big question about *Hamlet* focuses on what a Catholic ghost talking about a Catholic purgatory is doing in an apparently Protestant play. After the religious turmoil of the middle years of the 1550s, Elizabeth's accession marked the establishment of Protestantism as the religion of England: Catholicism was outlawed and driven underground. Two particular doctrinal differences are often used to focus the theological disagreements between Catholicism and Protestantism. The first is the questions of transubstantiation and the physical presence of Christ in Eucharist. The second is more obviously stage-worthy: the presence, provenance and reliability of ghosts. In *Hamlet*, the ghost's description of his imprisonment 'confined to fast in fires / Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature / Are burnt and purged away' (1.5.11-13) describes the outlawed theology of purgatory, just as the ghost's very presence in anathema to Protestant doctrine, which could not allow that anyone returned from the dead. Horatio, alumnus of a distinctly Protestant university in Wittenberg, a place indelibly associated with Martin Luther's radical challenge to the Catholic Church in 1517, expresses more orthodox reformed view. He questions what the ghost intends, warning Hamlet not to follow: it 'might deprive your sovereignty of reason / And draw you into madness' (1.4.54-5). Shakespeare's own religious allegiances have been the source of much inconclusive speculation: we know little about the playwright's own allegiances, but we do know that his father was fined for not attending church (often the sign of Catholic adherence). Perhaps Hamlet, too, is a Protestant son haunted by the ghost of a Catholic father, as the critic Stephen Greenblatt has memorably explored in his book *Hamlet in Purgatory*. Hamlet certainly represents a peculiarly generations predicament for children of the Reformation overshadowed by the Catholic past. The murder of old Hamlet isn't a religious allegory for doctrinal upheaval. That's not really how Shakespeare's imagination works, unlike, say, his contemporary Edmund Spenser, whose epic poem *The Faerie Queene* (1590) begins with the knight Redcrosse encountering the beautiful pure Una, or the true Church, menaced by the monstrous Error, or ignorance or misinformation, and fiendishly impersonated by the scarlet woman Duessa, signifying Catholicism. These ciphers for big ideas are long away from Shakespearean forms of characterization and circumstantial detail. Nevertheless, something of *Hamlet's* nostalgia might be attributed to this specific kind of religious retrospection at the end of the sixteenth century.



One final component of the play's thoroughgoing nostalgia is theatrical. *Hamlet* draws extensively on one of the Elizabethan theatre's great blockbusters, Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*: the name Horatio, the appearance of the ghost, the image of a woman running mad, the murder in a garden, and the device of the play within the play all come wholesale from this popular revenge predecessor. We are used to seeing Shakespeare as a creative alchemist turning his sources into treasure, and to appreciating *Hamlet* as one of the undisputed masterpieces of world literature. But these are later assessments: in 1600, Shakespeare's relationship to his predecessors was less effortlessly superior. Kyd's play was more popular than Shakespeare's. *The Spanish Tragedy* haunts *Hamlet*: even the word 'stalking', used of the ghost in the opening scene, is one strongly associated with the particular state aura of Edward Alleyn. Alleyn was the chief tragedian with the rival company, the Admiral's Men, and played Kyd's central character, Hieronimo. Since Freud it's been hard to ignore the Oedipal theme in considering Hamlet's own relationship with his parents; thinking about the overbearing theatrical 'father' Thomas Kyd pushes that issue onto *Hamlet*'s relationship with its literary parents.

The play's theatrical nostalgia also looks back further, to the pre-history of the London theatres that were newcomers to the Elizabethan entertainment scene. The court drama of the mid-sixteenth century typically separated out a dumb-show of the action from a formal verse presentation. A play such as Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville's *Gorboduc*, performed before Queen Elizabeth in 1561, does exactly that: action is mimed and described in stage directions at the beginning of each act, and then the speeches are declaimed. We can see this influence on the dramaturgy of the inset play 'The Murder of Gonzago.' In *Hamlet* the travelling players come to Elsinore and Hamlet shows himself a connoisseur of their performances. They recall together the lost heroics of Troy and they enact a close parallel to old Hamlet's description of his own murder. An extended stage direction spells out in considerable detail the mimed stage action: '*The dumb show enters. Enter a King and Queen very lovingly, the Queen embracing him. She kneels and makes show or protestation unto him. He takes her up and declines his head upon her neck. He lies him down upon a bank of flower*' (3.2.129). The description continues with the king's poisoning, and the poisoner's wooing of the queen, who '*seems loath and unwilling a while, but in the end accepts his love*'. The play then repeats this mimed action, this time verbally. **This dramaturgical split between saying and doing is rather apt for the whole play of *Hamlet*, in which the relationship between speech and action is so famously fraught.** More immediately relevant to the issue of retrospection is that the players preserve, in theatrical amber, an older form of drama. In Kenneth Branagh's 1996 film of the play, these professional players are cameo roles for older actors: in a kind of backlist homage to the cinematic and theatrical past, John Gielgud, Judi Dench and Charlton Heston are among the recognizable faces. Branagh offers a modern equivalent for the nostalgia in *Hamlet* for older forms of staging, and a particular elevated and stilted language. The past of old Hamlet and Yorick, or of Priam and Hecuba, or of Kyd and Alleyn: *Hamlet* keeps reinforcing the notion that things were better in the past.

Succession politics, religious upheaval and technological change in the theatre, then, add up to a cumulative nostalgia. Reading the play in this way helps us to see *Hamlet* as a symptom of its own historical moment rather than, as is more usual, thinking about it solipsistically as the anticipation of ours. Hamlet's name connects him to the past: it hobbles him from moving forwards and condemns him to a life shaped by verbs prefixed by 're-': membering, revenging, repeating. The echoing name Hamlet activates a wider sequence of echoes from which the play's nominal hero struggles to free himself.

## Hamlet in Purgatory

By: Stephen Greenblatt  
(pages 247-249)

The source of this poisoning in the play is Claudius, who usurps not only the kingship but also the language of Protestant mourning. “Why should you shed tears immoderately for them who have all years wiped from their eyes?” asked a seventeenth-century preacher in a typical funeral sermon; “Why should you be swallowed up of grief for them who are swallowed up of joy?” “God allows us tears; Jacob wept over his dead father; tears give vent to grief,” the preacher concedes, “but there is no reason we should grieve excessively for our pious friends, they receive a Crown, and shall we mourn when they have preferment?” “To preserve / In obstinate condolment,” Claudius tells his nephew in similar accents,

Is a course

Of impious stubbornness, 'tis unmanly grief  
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,  
A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,  
An understanding simple and unschooled.

(1.2.92-97)

In 1601, when Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet*, Protestant preachers had been saying words to this effect for fifty years, trying to wean their flock away from Purgatory and prayers for the dead and obstinate condolment. The argument seemed won: the chantries were all silent. But why should Shakespeare – who sympathetically rehearses the same sentiments in *Twelfth Night*,<sup>(58)</sup> albeit in the mouth of the fool – have given the Protestant position to his arch-villain in *Hamlet*? And why should his Ghost – who might, after all, have simply croaked for revenge, like the Senecan ghosts in Kyd – insist that he has come from a place where his crimes are being burned and purged away?

Footnote:

(58) Shakespeare, in any case, is likely to have encountered *A Supplication for the Beggars*, since it was reprinted in Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* (1563), copies of which were widely distributed in official sites, including, by government order, every cathedral and all the houses of archbishops and bishops in the realm. Shakespeare also may well have read [Sir Thomas] More's *Supplication of Souls*. Like the Ghost of old Hamlet, More's poor souls cry out to be remembered, fear the dull forgetfulness of the living, disrupt the corrupt ease of the world with horrifying tales of their sufferings, lament the remarriage of their wives. But all of this and more Shakespeare could have got from texts other than More's or from his own not inconsiderable imagination. Rather, these works are sources for Shakespeare's play in a different sense: they stage an ontological argument about spectrality and remembrance, a momentous public debate, that unsettled the institutional moorings of a crucial body of imaginative materials and therefore made them available for theatrical appropriation.

## The Fifty-Year Effect

Perhaps there is what we might call a fifty-years effect, a time in the wake of the great, charismatic ideological struggle in which the revolutionary generation that made the decisive break with the past is all dying out and the survivors hear only hypocrisy in the sermons and look back with longing at the world they have lost. Perhaps, too, Shakespeare's sensitivity to the status of the dead was intensified by the death in 1596 of his son Hamnet (a name virtually interchangeable with Hamlet in the period's public records) and still more perhaps by the death of his father, John, in 1601, the most likely year for the writing of *Hamlet*. When in April 1757, the owner of Shakespeare's birthplace in Stratford-upon-Avon decided to retiling the roof, one of the workmen, described as of "very honest, sober, and industrious character," found an old document between the rafters and the tiling. The document, six leaves stitched together, was a "spiritual testament" in fourteen articles. The testament was formulary, conspicuously Catholic in content; written by the celebrated Italian priest Carlo Borromeo, it was translated, smuggled into England by Jesuits, and distributed to the faithful. If genuine (for the original has disappeared), the copy discovered in Stratford belonged to John Shakespeare. In it the devout Catholic acknowledges that he is mortal and born to die "without knowing the hour, where, when, or how." Fearing that he may be "surprised upon a sudden," the signer of the testament declares his pious intention to receive at his death the sacraments of confession, Mass and extreme unction. If by some terrible "accident, dis-appointed, unaneled"), then he wishes God to pardon him. His appeal for spiritual assistance is not only to God, the blessed Virgin, and his guardian angel; it is also to his family: "I John Shakespeare," reads article XII, "do in like manner pray, and beseech all my dear friends, Parents, and kinsfolks, by the bowels of our Savior Jesus Christ, that since it is uncertain what lot will befall me, for fear notwithstanding lest by reason of my sins, I be to pass, and stay a long while in Purgatory, they will vouchsafe to assist and succor me with their holy prayers, and satisfactory works, especially with the hold Sacrifice of the Mass, as being the most effectual means to deliver souls from their torments and pains; from the which, if I shall by God's gracious goodness, and by their virtuous works be delivered, I do promise that I will not be ungrateful unto them, for so great a benefit." There is a clear implication to be drawn from this document: the playwright was probably brought up in a Roman Catholic household in a time of official suspicion and persecution of recusancy. And there is, for our purposes, a further implication, particularly if we take seriously the evidence that Shakespeare conformed to the Church of England: in 1601 the Protestant playwright was haunted by the spirit of his Catholic father pleading for suffrages to relieve his soul from the pains of Purgatory.

## A Will To Believe: Shakespeare and Religion

By: David Scott Kastan  
(pages 134-135)

The problem *is* the Ghost, which comes “in such a questionable shape” (1.4.43), which Horatio says “’tis but our fantasy” (1.1.22), which seems “a guilty thing” (1.2.147). Who or what is it? And the answer must be sought – can only be sought – within the field of religion. It is not like the ghosts that appear in *Richard III*, *Julius Caesar*, or *Macbeth*, ghosts that come to appall and judge the present, but whose souls are not at issue. In *Richard III*, there is one moment of theological speculation, when Queen Elizabeth is mourning the death of her young children: “If yet your gentle souls fly in the air, / And be not fixed in doom perpetual, / Hover about me with your airy wings / And hear your mother’s lamentation” (4.4.11-14). But if there is some soteriological doubt here, it is theologically unsophisticated and psychologically straightforward: it is only a bereaved mother’s hope that before the souls of her “tender babes” reach their eternal resting place they may for a bit hover about her, like comforting butterflies, to listen to her sorrow. It is the state of her psyche that is at issue, not the state of their souls.

But in *Hamlet* this is exactly what is at stake, what is necessary to be known if Hamlet is to do more than merely repeat the past and blight the future by accepting the inevitable imitative structure of revenge. He needs to know what the Ghost is, understanding that “the spirit that I have seen / May be a devil . . . and perhaps / Out of my weakness and my melancholy . . . Abuses me to damn me” (3.1.533-8). **But how is one to know the truth?** It was easier when his father lived only in his mind’s eye.

The play, then, isn’t exactly what Stephen Greenblatt sees – that is, a story about how “a young man from Wittenberg, with a distinctly Protestant temperament, is haunted by a distinctly Catholic ghost.” It is true that the university at Wittenberg is a conspicuous anachronism in a play about a ninth-century Danish prince, having been founded only in 1502 by Frederick the Wise. It is a significant addition to the Hamlet story that Shakespeare seemingly found in Belleforest’s *Histoires Tragique* (1559). In 1600, the year that *Hamlet* was probably begun, Samuel Lewkenor wrote about Wittenberg in an accurately if awkwardly named travelogue, *A Discourse not altogether unprofitable nor unpleasant for such as are desirous to know the situation and customes of forraine cities without travelling to see them*. Lewkenor highlights the fact that “Duke Fredericke . . . erected in this citie an University, about the year 1502, which since in this latter age is growen famous, by reason of the controuersies and dispositions of religion, there handled by Martin Luther, and his adherents: the Doctors thereof as at this day the greatest propungnators of the Confession of Ausberge and retaine in vse the mere Lutheran religion” (sig. E3-E4). (“Meere,” of course, here means “absolute,” not “measly.”) Luther had been appointed professor of theology at Wittenberg in 1508, and by 1600, as Lewkenor makes clear, the reputation of the university, and the city itself, was tied to his teachings. The Augsburg Confession, mainly written by Melancthon and agreed to in 1530, though in fact a compromise and reconciliatory document between German and churches, was widely seen, as by Lewkenor, as the statement of the normative principles of “the mere Lutheran religion.” What Luther actually believed became a matter of debate in Germany, but from as far away as England, what the university in Wittenberg taught and sanctioned was confidently identified as Lutheran

And it is of course true that the Ghost's account of his death – “Cut off even in the blossom of my sin/Unhouseled, disappointed, unaneled,/No reckoning made, but sent to my account/ With all my imperfections on my head” (1.5.76-9) – invokes a specifically Catholic sacramental world, in which he has been denied confession, communion, and extreme unction, and is condemned, therefore, to “fasin fires / Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature / Are burnt and purges away” (1.5.11-13). But the play neither confirms Luther's teaching nor the Ghost's account – although it does not explicitly deny either – and neither Hamlet's temperament nor the Ghost's nature can be adequately determined or described confessionally as Greenblatt's elegant formulation would have it. But this should not merely be taken as evidence of the oft-noted theological complexity, even incoherence, of early modern religious belief and practice. It is no doubt right to point to the plays' contradictory or at least ambiguous religious gestures, but the problem seems to rest somewhere deeper. The problem is not that religion demands belief; the problem is that Hamlet desires certainty – and the credal problem gives way to an epistemological crises at the heart of the play and arguably in Protestantism itself.

### 17. Of predestination and election

Predestination of life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour.

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### 22. Of purgatory

The Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardons, worshipping and adoration, as well of images as of reliques, and also invocation of saints, is a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God.

Footnote: 22. 'Purgatory' means place of cleansing'. It refers to a supposed third state in the life to come, a place of suffering in which souls who die in a state of grace and are ultimately destined for heaven still have to payoff the temporal punishment of their mortal sins for a longer or shorter period. 'Pardons' (Latin *indulgentiae*) means the remission of part of the time a soul has to spend in purgatory, which the Roman Catholic Church claimed to be able to dispense. The sale of pardons, or indulgences, for money was one of the precipitating causes of the Reformation.

The Thirty-Nine Articles:  
Their Place and Use Today  
By J.I.Packer and R.T.Beckwith

## PSALM 8

From the **Geneva Bible** 1560

1 O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in  
all the world! Which hast set they glory above the heavens.

2 Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings  
hast thou ordained strength, because of thine  
enemies, that thou mightiest still the enemy  
And the avenger.

3 When I behold thine heavens, even the works of  
Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which  
Thou hast ordained,

4 What is man, say I, that thou art mindful of  
him? And the son of man that thou visitest him?

5 For thou hast made him a little lower than  
God, and crowned him with glory and worship.

6 Thou has made him to have dominion in the works of thine hands,  
thou hast put all things  
under his feet:

7 All sheep and oxen; yea, and the beasts of  
the field:

8 The fowls of the air, and the fish of the sea,  
And that which passeth through the paths of the seas.

9 O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy Name in all the world!