

the iafor

journal of ethics,
religion
& philosophy

Volume 3 – Issue 1 – Spring 2017

Editor: Michael O'Sullivan



ISSN: 2187-0624

iafor

IAFOR Journal of Ethics, Religion & Philosophy
Volume 3 – Issue 1

IAFOR Publications

IAFOR Journal of Ethics, Religion & Philosophy

Editor

Dr Michael O’Sullivan, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Published by The International Academic Forum (IAFOR), Japan

Executive Editor: Dr Joseph Haldane

Editorial assistance: Clare Midgley

IAFOR Publications

Sakae 1-16-26-201, Naka-ward, Aichi, Japan 460-0008

IAFOR Journal of Ethics, Religion & Philosophy

Volume 3 – Issue 1 – Spring 2017

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ISSN: 2187-0624

joerp.iafor.org

Cover image: Unsplash/Fabrizio Verrecchia

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Notes on Contributors

Rajesh Sampath is Associate Professor of the Philosophy of Justice, Rights and Social Change and the Associate Director of the Graduate Program in Sustainable International Development and Lead Investigator at the Center for Global Development and Sustainability, Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University, USA. His research is on the intersection of philosophy, comparative religious studies, theories of justice and sustainable development.

Yu-min Huang is a doctoral student at the Department of English, National Changhua University of Education, Taiwan. Her recent papers include “Musician’s Enigma in Kazuo Ishiguro’s Nocturnes” and “Life in Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go*”.

Peng Yao is a PhD candidate in English Literary Studies in The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong. Her dissertation, “Melancholy, Emotions and Feelings in Flannery O’Connor’s Fiction”, explores the pathological traits of melancholic subjects and one of their most important manifestations, emotional mistranslations in O’Connor’s work. In her dissertation, she attempts to integrate psychoanalysis, the psychology of emotion, and contemporary neurosciences. Her academic interests also include modernism, 19th–20th-century American literature, and Julia Kristeva. She is also a prolific writer of essays and life narratives in both Chinese and English, as well as a psychoanalyst in training.

About the Editor

Michael O’Sullivan is an associate professor in the Department of English at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong. His publications include *Academic Barbarism, Universities and Inequality* (2016), *The Future of English in Asia: Perspectives on Language and Literature* (2016), and *The Incarnation of Language: Joyce, Proust, and a Philosophy of the Flesh* (2008).

Introduction

This is the third issue of the *IAFOR Journal of Ethics, Religion & Philosophy*. Any journal that attempts to account for the rich interplay between these three disciplines is surely laying its net quite wide. However, that is also one of the advantages of being involved with a journal that doesn't follow what might be considered a typical academic format. Articles can be put together that offer unique points of intersection and original parallels.

This is my last issue as editor for the journal. From the beginning I wanted to see what I could do for this new Asian interdisciplinary journal in terms of publishing the work of scholars who might not otherwise find suitable English-language journals for their work. I am very proud therefore to have published articles from scholars working in Myanmar, India, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, the Philippines, Turkey and the United States in the three issues I have edited. These three issues have also covered topics that have become more pressing over the last number of years, such as ethnic cleansing in Myanmar, biodiversity and environmentalism, and the economization of the individual. However, the three issues have also included essays on writers and thinkers of perennial importance, such as Shakespeare, Kant, and Heidegger.

The present issue contains three articles by scholars working in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States. It includes work by PhD candidates and senior academics. The topics covered in this issue again touch on important intersections between the disciplines of ethics, religion and philosophy. Two of the essays choose to approach these intersections by way of readings of works of literature. Yu-min Huang's essay focuses on Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in examining the play in light of both Derridean deconstruction and a historical reading of the religious questions of Shakespeare's day. The author draws out some interesting parallels between deconstruction and the rules of inheritance in Tudor Britain. Rajesh Sampath, who is Associate Professor of the Philosophy of Justice, Rights, and Social Change and Associate Director of the Master's Program in Sustainable International Development at Brandeis University, and who studied for his PhD under Jacques Derrida at the University of California, Irvine, has also been deeply influenced by deconstruction's legacy. He brings together religion, ethics and philosophy in his essay by examining the relationship between Heidegger and Karl Barth on time and timeliness. This issue draws to a close with Peng Yao's essay on the theme of infertility in the work of Flannery O'Connor, which also brings the religious and the ethical together once again by way of a reading of the literary.

Postmodern Shakespeare: Thinking Through Hamlet's Subversive Character

Yu-min Huang

National Changhua University of Education, Taiwan

Abstract

Over the centuries people have always faced the deaths of their beloved ones in their families and suffer from grief over them. William Shakespeare in *Hamlet* offers his ideas of how a son faces his father's death and his mother's remarriage, ideas of whether purgatory exists and ideas of which eschatology is correct in the English Reformation, either Catholic or Protestant. In this essay, I examine two traces and one reversal in the play and ask many what-if questions through the perspective of Jacques Derrida's deconstruction. In my argument, Shakespeare misspeaks to his readers in the atmosphere of Protestant Elizabethan England the meanings of death in Prince Hamlet's perspective in order to reverse his readers' way of seeing and to make them experience Prince Hamlet's Catholicism as the form of the opposite, by which they can become theologians themselves and meet God behind His mask. In employment of Derrida's center-freeplay structurality, I believe that it is through Prince Hamlet's subversive character that Ghost King Hamlet is the first center into which Prince Hamlet comes as freeplay in the structurality of father and son, and Prince Hamlet is the second center into which the other characters come as freeplay in the structurality of the court, intertwined with the structurality of the religion where no existence of purgatory in Lutheranism comes as center into which the existence of purgatory in Catholicism comes as freeplay, by the structurality of authorship where author comes as center into which the play *Hamlet* comes as freeplay.

Keywords: William Shakespeare, Hamlet, death, purgatory, revenge, Postmodernism, Derrida, deconstruction

If one should have a chance to be in power over a country, would he choose to be in or out? If one's father dies, will he choose to let go or to remain remorseful and does he believe that his father is still there in the purgatory? If his mother gets remarried, will he feel jealous or give her his blessings? These are what William Shakespeare intends to explore in his play *Hamlet*, and there are many criticisms on Shakespeare, on the play or on the hero. Firstly, for Carol Zaleski, in the play "Shakespeare dramatized the fateful tensions between Protestant and Catholic interests with as much subtlety as he portrayed the battery of doubts, fears, guilt, piety, love, honor, and self-interest that tortured Hamlet's soul" (2001, p. 45). Besides, in Margreta de Grazia's praise for Prince Hamlet's soliloquies, *Hamlet* is Shakespeare's most modern play and "breaks out of the medieval and into the modern" (qtd. in Thompson & Taylor, 2006, p. 20). Thirdly, Prince Hamlet's soliloquies in the play functions as his state of mind and he is a modern hero (Thompson & Taylor, 2006, p. 20). Moreover, although Freud explains the play by way of his theory of the Oedipus complex, Marx gives us a "subversive reading of the Ghost of Hamlet's father" (Stallybrass qtd. in Thompson & Taylor, 2006, p. 26). Furthermore, Marjorie Garber also proclaims that a decentering force with its center struggles with a centering force; it is "a self-centered de-centering that directs attention, as it should and must, to subject positions, object relations, abjects, race-class-and-gender" as well as "nostalgia for the certainties of truth and beauty" as centering in Shakespeare's plays and criticisms, namely Shakespeare as fetish and humanness; and there is poststructuralism for critics "in the wake of the explosion of new work on Shakespeare in the last two decades" (1999, p. 67). Poststructuralism then plays a significant role in postmodernism, which includes the subversive quality in the play. Thus, I would like to employ Jacques Derrida's center-freeplay structurality to examine the play and to argue that there are two traces which trigger Derrida's center-freeplay structurality, and it is through Prince Hamlet's subversive character that Ghost King Hamlet is the first center into which Prince Hamlet comes as freeplay in the structurality of father and son, and Prince Hamlet is the second center into which the other characters come as freeplay in the structurality of the court, intertwined with the structurality of the religion where no existence of purgatory in Lutheranism comes as center into which the existence of purgatory in Catholicism comes as freeplay, by the structurality of authorship where author comes as center into which the play comes as freeplay, as shown in Figure 1.

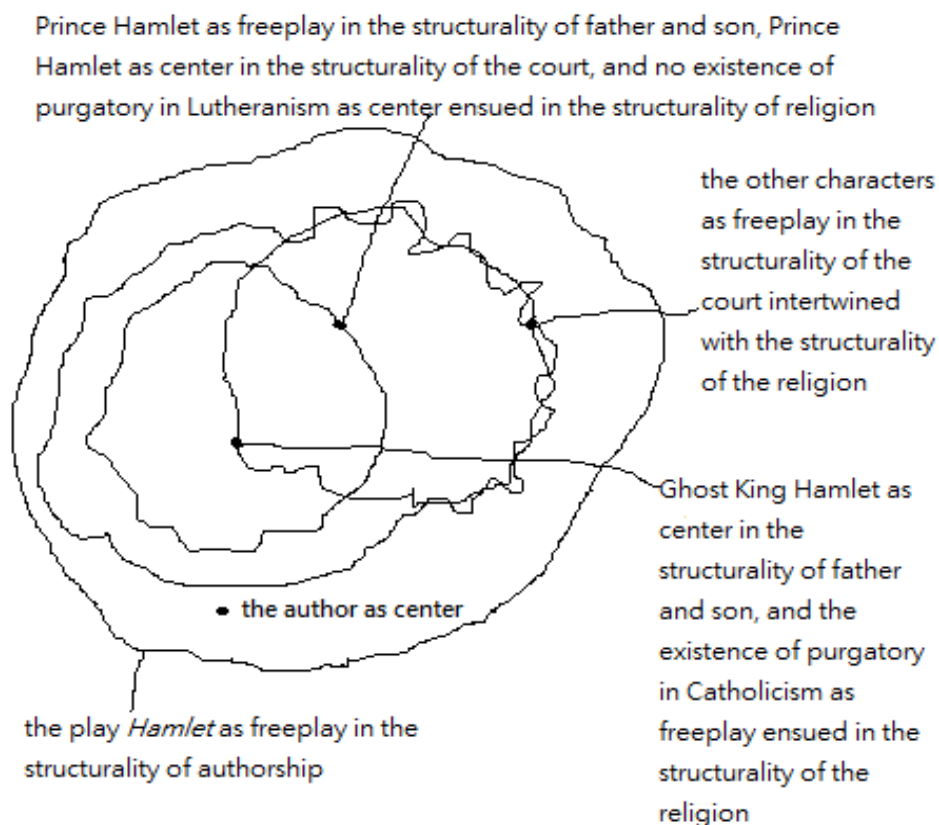


Figure 1

The essay consists of seven sections: Postmodernism and Derrida; Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* in the English Renaissance and the English Reformation; Ghost King Hamlet as Center and Prince Hamlet as Freeplay; Lutheranism as Center and Catholicism as Freeplay; Prince Hamlet as Center and the Other Characters as Freeplay; Author as Center and *Hamlet* as Freeplay; and Conclusion.

Postmodernism and Derrida

Arnold Toynbee coined the term “postmodernism” in 1947 to mean “the extension and development of cultural modernism, the artistic and literary style that had enjoyed a period of massive influence between the wars, and experienced a revival of interest in the 1960s” (Padley, 2006, p. 177). It is due to many disasters, like two world wars, genocide and inhumanity, that postmodernism challenges the intellectual attitudes since the 18th-century Enlightenment such as reason and rationalism, and that it culminates in near-revolutionary events in Paris in 1968 and seeks new values and beliefs in replacement of those in Enlightenment thinking (Padley, 2006, p. 178). Postmodernist thinkers undermine “‘grand narratives’... includ[ing] academic disciplines such as philosophy and history, and cultural products such as literature” but employ “poststructuralist [skepticism] about the reliability of linguistic meaning” (Padley, 2006, pp. 178–79). They argue that “all kinds of intellectual theories and processes of cultural enquiry, consisting of nothing more than discourse, could have no claim to reflect [the] reality or posit objective truths. The consequence of these claims was a crisis of representation in the modern world” (Padley, 2006, p. 179). Derrida declares that there is only representation of truth to a reader’s mind: the mind encounters

the unfolding of the thing's Being ... truth is the projection of a thing's Being to an observer's mind. ...truth is but the mind's determination about the present state of an outside reality. Truth is [simply] one's interpretation or consciousness of a thing or reality. (Sagut, 2009, p. 1)

Eagleton defines postmodernism as subversive to the sole truth and reason and as the idea of instability and indeterminate:

[p]ostmodernity is a style of thought which is suspicious of classical notions of truth, reason, identity and objectivity, of the idea of universal progress or emancipation, of single frameworks, grand narratives or ultimate grounds of explanation. Against these Enlightenment norms, it sees the world as contingent, ungrounded, diverse, unstable, indeterminate, a set of disunified cultures or interpretations which breed a degree of scepticism about the objectivity of truth, history and norms, the givenness of natures and the coherence of identities. (1997: vii)

Synonymous with poststructuralism to the extreme, deconstructionist practices are suggested by Derrida (Padley, 2006, p. 180), and he proposes the notions of what if, *différance*, supplementation and center-freeplay ground structurality.

Firstly, like postmodernist thinkers who seek alternative ways to interpret the world (Padley, 2006, p. 178), Derrida seeks alternative ways to interpret texts and asks the question “What if” (Bressler, 2007, p. 125)? It is the other philosophy of the same text: the task of deconstruction is to explore the possible other face of a philosophy (Derrida qtd. in Selden, 2005, p. 169), and its result “is a questioning... of notions of identity, origin, intention, and the production of meaning” (Selden, 2005, p. 169). Close textual analysis is emphasized by deconstruction in order that a text can expose the inherent contradictions or irreconcilable meanings or inconsistencies in itself, which becomes the reversal of the text: a text in itself contains elements that deconstruct its meant wholeness and unity, and its reader encounters all possible unlimited choices of interpretations, contributing to various divergent and possible interpretations of a text (Padley, 2006, p. 155, 154), which eventually forms a collage with always-changing meaning from postmodernism's perspective (Bressler, 2007, p. 99).

Secondly, for *différance* in Derrida's deconstruction, “meaning is always *deferred*, perhaps to the point of an endless supplementarity, by the play of signification. *Diff[é]rance* not only designates this theme but offers in its own unstable meaning a graphic example of the process at work” (Norris, 1982, p. 32; emphases in original). Derrida further explains that

[s]ubjectivity—like objectivity—is an effect of *différance*, an effect inscribed in a system of *différance*. This is why the *a* of *différance* also recalls that spacing is temporization, the detour and postponement by means of which intuition, perception, consummation—in a word, the relationship to the present, the reference to a present reality, to a *being*—are always *deferred*. [This present reality or this being is] [d]eferred by virtue of the very principle of difference which holds that an element functions and signifies, takes on or conveys meaning, only by referring to another past or future element in an economy of traces. (1982, p. 28–29; emphases in original)

It is impossible to determine textual interpretation as single one or a final determinate meaning, since “the relationship between language and the things it represents is arbitrary and subject to constant slippage of meaning” (Padley, 2006, pp. 181, 153–54), and since Derrida's

deconstruction is “an activity of reading which remains closely tied to the texts it interrogates, and which can never set up independently as a self-enclosed system of operative concepts” (Norris, 1982, p. 31).

Thirdly, Derrida proposes the idea of supplementation, referring to addition and substitution simultaneously, featuring that writing supplements and replaces speech in all human activity and he claims nature-culture opposition that nature is a full presence and it comes before culture, but in the violent hierarchy, nature is not pure but is already in culture’s contagion (Selden, 2005, p. 166). In supplementation, for Derrida, every binary opposition plays roles of center and freeplay; for example, deception plays a supplementary role as freeplay to truth as center (Bressler, 2007, pp. 124–125), and other does to self in Bakhtin’s dialogism, and culture does to nature, by my analogy. Writing and the presence of the other are highlighted in the discussion of morality and its vital elements: “[t]here is no ethics without the presence of *the other* but also, and consequently, without absence, dissimulation, detour, difference, writing” (Derrida, 1997, pp. 139–40; emphases in original). Writing, physically secondary in its system, differs from speech in speech’s immediate and full presence, leaves a trace and requires reinterpretation in the hierarchy of speech as presence and writing as secondary (Selden 164–65); however, Bacon claims that the hierarchy can be reversed and that both writing and speech are signifying processes and they both lack presence (Selden, 2005, p. 165): in fact, “speech is a species of writing” (Selden, 2005, p. 166). Derrida believes that

writing...brings low what was high, and the irruptive emergence of a new “concept”... [It is] a new concept of writing, that *simultaneously* provokes the overturning of the hierarchy speech/writing, and the entire system attached to it, *and* releases the dissonance of a writing within speech, thereby disorganizing the entire inherited order and invading the entire field. (1982, p. 42; emphases in original)

Hence, for Derrida, “writing overrides speech and absence overrides presence” (Huang, 2015, p. 21). Derrida even describes the characteristics of writing in its smallest unit: “a written sign is a mark” (qtd. in Selden, 2005, p. 167), which, involving irresponsibility (Selden, 2005, p. 167) and lacking a subject and a particular addressee in a particular context, repeats itself and which violates its real context and is deciphered in divergent contexts (qtd. in Selden, 2005, p. 167), not even taking authorial intent into account. In brief, a word, under erasure, has no ultimate, absolute meaning but has its meaning, always being deferred, added and supplemented, and always changing in the oscillation of the interpretation, one signifier signifying after another to seek a final end but to no avail; a word achieves its meaning on a journey of self-construction in his relation with other in their difference in this freeplay language; and in this process, what-if questions arise and the author misspeaks in his slips of language and exposes what he dreads to say (Bressler, 2007, pp. 125–128, 132; Norris, 1982, p. 32; Selden, 2005, p. 166; Sagut, 2009, p. 2) in a metaphor:

[m]etaphor[s] must therefore be understood as the process of the idea or meaning (of the signified, if one wishes) before being understood as the play of signifiers. ... this representation of the object, signifying the object and signified by the word or by the linguistic signifier in general, may also indirectly signify an affect or a passion. ... metaphor is the relation between signifier and signified within the order of ideas and things.... The literal or proper meaning will be the relationship of the idea to the affect that it *expresses*. And it is the *inadequation of the designation* (metaphor) which properly *expresses* the passion. (Derrida, 1997, p. 275; emphases and parentheses in original)

The meaning of a metaphor to its passion becomes the final end to achieve.

Lastly, Derrida proposes an idea of the center-freeplay structurality; it is that there is a center both within the structure and outside the structure in the center-freeplay structurality; and the center constitutes itself in a structure and escapes the structurality of the structure in its own governance: it “constitute[s] that very thing within a structure which[,] while governing the structure, escapes structurality” (1978, p. 279). He discusses the belongingness of a center and explains that “[t]he center is at the center of the totality, and yet, since the center does not belong to the totality ([it] is not part of the totality), the totality *has its center elsewhere*. The center is not the center. ... The concept of centered structure is in fact the concept of a play” (1978, p. 279; parenthesis and emphases in original). Derrida further applies the center-freeplay structurality to the nature-culture opposition in the example of incest prohibition for Levi-Strauss. For Derrida, the idea of something cooked comes before that of something raw in their existence even though in nature raw precedes cooked; likewise, the idea of culture comes before that of nature in their existence even though in life “nature precedes culture” (Fry, 2009). Derrida defines nature and culture in Levi-Strauss’s idea:

that which is *universal* and spontaneous, and not dependent on any particular culture or on any determinate norm, belongs to nature. Inversely, that which depends upon a system of *norms* regulating society and therefore is capable of *varying* from one social structure to another, belongs to culture. (1978, p. 283; emphases in original)

The relationship between nature and culture is believed “a declaration of absolute interdependency” (Fry, 2009) and “causative” of each other (Fry, 2009). Levi-Strauss’s nature-culture opposition transforms into Derrida’s idea of center-freeplay structurality; that is, nature is the center into which culture comes as freeplay (1978, pp. 278–83).

Overall, there are two roles in text interpretation and production: the reader’s role and the author’s. Deconstruction critics view “the strategies of Derrida, J. Hillis Miller and Paul de Man and others, as tending to distance literature from its social, historical and political contexts,” but in fact, “deconstruction’s definition of ‘text’ embraces all aspects of human discourse and communication,” inclusive of “[its] relationship to wider contextual issues” (Padley, 2006, p. 154, 155). On one hand, a reader plays a role in the process of text interpretation. Each reader in his own different background and dominant social and cultural group interprets things in his own subjective and perspective; therefore, there are many realities and no absolute center (Bressler, 2007, 99–102). For Derrida and other poststructuralist critics, regardless of his personal experience, the reader is like a point, a perspective “at which the multiplicity of contending, often contradictory and provisional meanings offered by the text congregate” (Padley, 2006, p. 183). A text, designates Roland Barthes, refers to “a collection of arbitrary signifiers whose potential meaning is subject to [a reader’s] continual revision and reassessment” (Padley, 2006, p. 182). For Barthes, “[t]exts do not reflect or mimic reality, but are the product of formal and linguistic conventions that become established by the text’s relationships with other texts and with the larger text...of language itself” from which the reader interprets (Padley, 2006, p. 182), and “a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation,” but the reader is the place which makes multiplicity focused; and that “the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the [a]uthor” (Barthes, 2010, pp. 1325, 1326). On the other hand, an author’s social role is emphasized and he also plays a role not in his writing autonomy but in the present social situation (Benjamin, 1998, pp. 85–86): an author is a producer, who

is working in the service of certain class interests. A progressive type of writer does acknowledge this choice. His decision is made upon the basis of the class struggle: he places himself on the side of the proletariat. And that's the end of his autonomy. He directs his activity towards what will be useful to the proletariat in the class struggle. This is usually called pursuing a tendency, or "commitment". (Benjamin, 1998, pp. 85–86)

The author, all in all, sides with the proletariat and commits to his writing not due to autonomy but from a class interest (Benjamin, 1998, pp. 85–86), where he slips his language (Bressler, 2007, p. 128).

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in the English Renaissance and the English Reformation

The date when Shakespeare's *Hamlet* was written remains unclear (Thompson & Taylor, 2006, pp. 49–53) but it was approximately in 1599 (Platter in Thompson & Taylor, 2006, p. 50) or in 1601 (Jenkins in Thompson & Taylor, 2006, p. 52). For John Lawson, the English Renaissance came together with the English Reformation and was influential in the later fifteenth century and the sixteenth century. It sparked a revival of classical antiquity for art, literature and learning. It argued for humanism, which referred to "a new interest in man and human perfectibility, the rejection of scholasticism, [and] a passion for pure Latinity and the study of Greek" with Erasmus as a powerful representative and his version of the New Testament in Latin as seeds of the English Reformation (2007, p. 66) since "Erasmus'[s] work influenced heresiarchs like Luther and Tyndale" (Elton, 1991, p. 112). This "new learning no more than Lutheran doctrine could work upon the English Reformation until the crown had led the way in the political and jurisdictional break of the 1530s" (Elton, 1991, p. 113).

For the English Reformation, one factor of the theology from Catholicism to Protestantism (Elton, 1991, pp. 114, 134) is that after "marr[ying] his brother's widow," Catherine of Aragon, King Henry VIII, based on readings of Deuteronomy xxv. 5¹ (Ibid., p. 98), feeling afraid of committing a sin as outlined in Leviticus xx. 21² and in his conscience (Ibid., pp. 98, 101) and thus having no descendants nor heirs except Mary (Ibid., p. 98), for the benefits of his nation (Ibid., p. 100), played a political, religious and jurisdictional game (Ibid., pp. 98–107). He did this for "the validity of his marriage" (Ibid., p. 101) and to pursue "a legitimate heir to the throne" (Ibid., p. 101) in the atmosphere of anti-clericalism (Ibid., pp. 102, 104, 110) due to the jurisdiction by the government and due to corruption of the Church (Ibid., pp. 110, 103–05). He declared that "Kings of England" with superior power were second to God solely (Ibid., pp. 107, 120). In his political, diplomatic, religious and jurisdictional game (Ibid., pp. 110, 122–123) and with the assistances of Thomas Cromwell and Archbishop Cranmer, Henry VIII pushed himself onto the royal supremacy over the Church and over the Parliament. He gradually walked toward the break with Rome since his sovereignty preceded any foreign authority, and he gradually achieved his purpose of gaining the divorce with Catherine of Aragon and the remarriage with Anne Boleyn in 1533 (Ibid., pp. 101, 114–120, 129–134). Boleyn was from a family who supported anti-clericalism, "Luther's attack on the Church" and "the seculari[z]ation of Church property" (Ibid., p. 116) despite some aftereffects (Ibid., pp. 137–40). To Henry VIII's belief, his kingly power overrode the Church's power (Ibid., pp. 133–36; Haigh, 1993, p. 118) and thus he became the "Supreme Head of the Church of

¹ Deuteronomy xxv. 5 regulates that one man should "marry his brother's widow if she is childless." (Elton, 1991, p. 98. Note.)

² Leviticus xx. 21 regulates that "a man who marries his brother's widow shall be childless." (Ibid. p. 98.)

England” (Elton, 1991, p. 135, 136; Haigh, 1993, p. 119). During the English Reformation, the time of the 1530s is a watershed for Christendom and Christianity. People’s faith at that time changed from Catholicism to Protestantism in the critical period of approximately thirty years, from their familiar “daily scene[s]” of “the mass, prayers for the dead, the invocation of saints. . . monks, nuns and friars” in Catholicism to non-Catholicism (Lawson, 2007, p. 65). The Church, wealthy and powerful as it was, and having its courts, canon law and the Pope as its spiritual leader, was attacked as an institution and was faced with its reform in many places around Europe in the early sixteenth century “among [both] laymen and churchmen alike” since it hampered the sovereign nation states (Ibid.) and since it was deemed corrupt (Elton, 1991, p. 105). Bishops and those clergies at the higher positions, inherited from their fathers, could be ill-educated and were not morally better but they owned high power since they “were lawyers and administrators appointed for loyal service to the king’s government, [ironically] not for their piety and sanctity” (Lawson, 2007, p. 66). They took the lead for monks and friars. Therefore, Catholicism became impure theology since both superstitions and scholastic theology arose in Catholicism (Ibid.): with these

simple, uneducated people[,] Catholicism had accumulated superstitious and materialist accretions—miracles, shrines, prophecies and relics, which the Church was almost powerless to control; whilst to the learned[,] the primitive faith of the gospels had become obscured by the elaborate superstructure of scholastic theology no less than by these ignorant peasant cults. (Lawson, 2007, p. 66)

In the religious situation of falling Catholicism and rising Protestantism, Henry VIII’s political manipulation for his marriage with Anne Boleyn triggered the twist and turn of the English Reformation and he, as a start, gradually turned his people toward the Protestantism in his reign since he played a double-faced game: Henry VIII must have been deemed to be partial to Protestantism for his marriage with Anne Boleyn although, for Greenblatt et al., he still maintained Catholic practices in his church (I A 45). Surprisingly enough, after Henry VIII, as different political reigns of Henry VIII’s descendants in the royal family, the religious situation swayed between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism; as Greenblatt et al. claim, King Edward was a partial Protestant, Queen Mary a Roman Catholic, and Queen Elizabeth a Protestant, embracing both sides (I A 45). Then, it is reasonable that their people must have felt puzzled about what religious direction they should have faith in and that they must have sought an answer.

Hamlet discusses late King Hamlet’s existence in purgatory (Greenblatt, 1997, p. 1662). In fact, the history of the idea of purgatory dates back to the twelfth century, and there are three systems: Hell, Purgatory and Paradise (Goff, 1986, p. 165). For Peter the Chanter, the places for the good and those for the evil must be clearly differentiated: those people considered good go to Paradise immediately if there is nothing for them to burn, or they go to Purgatory first to burn something sinful with them and go to Paradise afterwards if they carry venial sins; and the evil go to Hell directly (Ibid.). He further designates that merely the predestined or the elect go to Purgatory although opinions vary from people to people (Ibid.). In fact, in the Church’s battle against “heresy” in its view, numerous ecclesiastical writers in the period around the turn of the thirteenth century shared their ideas, and it was the start of Purgatory (Goff, 1986, p. 168). They employed the new doctrine of Purgatory as their weapon; thus, the existence of Purgatory boosted both “progress in philosophy and pressure from the masses” and “the need to do battle against those who would not accommodate themselves to the new belief” (Ibid., p. 169) in Catholicism, as in the case that purgatorial suffering was considered to be “performing the full penance due for sin in this world” (Rex, 1993, p. 75). To the large scale, the Roman

Catholic Church polished the doctrine of Purgatory to battle against “the heretics of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Greeks of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, and the Protestants of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries” (Goff, 1986, p. 169). However, its enemies argued that “a man’s fate in the other world depended only on his merit and God’s will” (Ibid.), and that, in fact, purgatory, together with the cult of the saints and the sacrifice of the mass, was what the Protestant Reformers aimed to attack (Rex, 1993, p. 75). Then, death became the crucial issue, and purgatory became the weapon for the power battle between the Roman Catholic Church and its enemies. Those enemies, or “heretics,” believed that

the soul goes directly either to Heaven or to Hell; there is no redemption between death and resurrection. Hence, there is no Purgatory and it is futile to pray for the dead. No admirers of the Church, heretics denied that the institution has any role in determining the fate of the soul after death and opposed its attempts to extend its power over men by claiming such a role. (Goff, 1986, p. 169)

Interestingly enough, Lutheranism is one among those enemies in Protestantism against Catholicism. In *Explanations of the Ninety-Five Theses*, Martin Luther proposes that Christians, who are for Lutheranism, “militate against the whole idea of purgatory because they do not establish an intermediary state between the dead who have been condemned and those who are saved” (qtd. in Evener, 2015, p. 536) and that purgatory is not people’s common fate (qtd. in ibid, p. 541) even though he leaves whether purgatory exists in God’s power to decide on (Ibid., p. 546). Vincent Evener describes those faithful for Lutheranism as blind and deaf to the wandering ghosts and to their stories of purgatory but they rely on scripture, the Word and Christ:

the faithful who in their lives had plugged their ears before and turned their eyes from the wandering spirits and their tales of purgatory, and who had sought Christ alone in the spoken word (auditory) and printed scripture (visual), were admonished to shut their inward eyes before terrifying images at the moment of death, and to turn their (metaphorical) heads and eyes instead to the image of Christ, made immediately present to physical, outward hearing and seeing in the sacrament.

...

Christians were to cling in faith to scripture, the Word, and Christ alone, plugging their ears to the clamor of the poltergeists and closing their eyes to apparitions of lost loved ones. (p. 543, parentheses in original; p. 547)

Thus, the existence of purgatory remains a struggle and controversial issue between Catholicism and Lutheranism and it is open to the play for the discussion.

Ghost King Hamlet as Center and Prince Hamlet as Freeplay

To deconstruct a text and oppose the single truth, I would like to employ Derrida’s deconstruction to examine the play and to expose that it is through Prince Hamlet’s subversive character to life that Ghost King Hamlet acts as center into which Prince Hamlet acts as freeplay in the structurality of father and son. I would also like to ask the question, what if, in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, the throne comes not to King Claudius but to Prince Hamlet after late King Hamlet dies, or what if Ghost King Hamlet orders not Prince Hamlet but Queen Gertrude to avenge him, or what if Ghost King Hamlet does not die in a murder conceived by Claudius but dies for some other reason. What if Ghost King Hamlet in purgatory does not even exist since purgatory does not exist for Protestant theologians (Greenblatt, 1997, p. 1662)? Sj

Edward T. Oakes also asks the question of “what if [Prince] Hamlet had stumbled upon the love letters of [Queen] Gertrude and Claudius, where he could read of their plot to kill the old king and marry soon after” (2010, p. 64)? Or in the play Tibor Fabiny discusses about a reversal of when Ghost King Hamlet reveals his truth to Prince Hamlet and asks for a revenge (2006, p. 52). If one of these events were so, the play would go into a wholly different direction. Besides, Shakespeare leaves the first trace in Ghost King Hamlet’s disclosure of a murderer to start the whole play:

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, dis-appointed, unaneled,
 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. (Shakespeare 1.5.74–83)

Selden proposes the same view that late King Hamlet as center is there and not there (170) in Prince Hamlet’s reaction to seeing late King Hamlet: “The time is out of joint. O cursed spite/ That ever I was born to set it right” (Shakespeare 1.5.189-90)! Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor articulate that “if the Ghost is absence, invoking him and addressing him produces an effect of unbearable, petrifying presence” (31). In his address, Ghost King Hamlet accuses Claudius of murdering in detailed description and of Claudius’s illegitimacy to be a king, but Prince Hamlet is hesitant in revenge, resulting from “the nature of reality and the source of truth” (Dean, 2002, p. 522); the example is in Ghost King Hamlet’s accusation:

sleeping in mine orchard,
 A serpent stung me. So the whole ear of Denmark
 Is by a forged process of my death
 Rankly abused. But know, thou noble youth,
 The serpent that did sting thy father’s life
 Now wears his crown. (Shakespeare 1.5.35-40)

It is obviously not so simple as Zaleski’s declaration that if the Ghost is honest, “he is one of the holy souls on leave from [p]urgatory, come to warn the living and to beg for intercessory masses, prayers and good works as suffrages on his behalf” (45), but rather his claim of revenge should puzzle Prince Hamlet since being in purgatory is “to ease the debt of punishment” in Prosser’s designation (Dean, 2002, p. 520), although obviously it does not. Meanwhile there come many questions, a question of whether Ghost King Hamlet is real, a question of whether purgatory does exist, and a question of whether the murder is true. Also, in Prince Hamlet’s famous soliloquy lies the second trace:

Who would these fardels bear,
 To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
 But that the dread of something after death,
 The undiscovered country from whose bourn
 No traveler returns, puzzles the will,
 And makes us rather bear those ills we have

Than fly to others that we know not of? (Shakespeare 3.1.78-84)

In fact, it can never be confirmed that purgatory does exist and what Ghost King Hamlet says is true since no dead people return to life from afterlife, an undiscovered country, whether good or bad; however, Prince Hamlet chooses to believe in Ghost King Hamlet and takes the case seriously. Then, the play begins.

Lutheranism as Center and Catholicism as Freeplay

Through Prince Hamlet's subversive to Christianity, in the center-freeplay structurality of the religion in the play, it is no existence of purgatory in Lutheranism that comes as center into which the existence of purgatory in Catholicism comes as freeplay. The play is a misspeaking to "illuminate the issues set in motion by the Protestant Reformation and has even managed to adumbrate some key insights into Martin Luther's dilemma that [arise] only in the twentieth century" (Oakes, 2010, p. 54). Theme of afterlife arouses the heated debate between Roman Catholic Church and Reformation of the sixteenth century; and the existence of purgatory is the ground of all in medieval Catholicism (Ibid., pp. 61, 62) and it is "a doctrine deliberately rejected by Luther[anism]...the English Protestants" (Fabiny, 2006, p. 51; Greenblatt, 1997, p. 1662) and the Church of England (Beauregard, 2007, p. 50; Greenblatt, 2001, p. 235). In the play, Ghost King Hamlet speaks of his serving a term of suffering purgatory, the conception and its practices, coming from Roman Catholicism and Prince Hamlet believes him (Greenblatt, 1997, p. 1662):

I am thy father's spirit,
 Doomed for a certain term to walk the night,
 And for the day confined to fast in fires
 Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
 Are burnt and purged away.
 ...
 But this eternal blazon must not be
 To ears of flesh and blood. List, Hamlet, list, O list!
 If thou didst ever thy dear father love—
 ...
 Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder. (Shakespeare 1.5.9–13, 21–23, 25)

However, in Stephen Greenblatt's idea, "Reformation theologians regard[s] ghosts and supernatural visitations as diabolical" (qtd. in Fabiny, 2006, p. 51) and "Luther even avoided talking about hell, and he saw death (just as Tyndale did) as sleep until the day of doom" (Fabiny, 2006, p. 51; parenthesis in original). As Raymond Waddington proposes, "Shakespeare used Martin Luther as a prototype in constructing the character of the prince." (qtd. in Fabiny, 2006, p. 50). Prince Hamlet is described as "young man Luther" at his education (Oakes, 2010, pp. 54, 61, 69; Raymond Waddington in Fabiny, 2006, p. 50), "a Christian of a peculiar type: one torn between two rival versions of Christian eschatology, Catholic [due to his upbringing] and Lutheran [due to his education]" (Oakes, 2010, pp. 61, 63), and he "embodies lingering doubts about the 'lost world' of traditional Catholicism" (Brigden qtd. in Thompson & Taylor, 2006, p. 38). It is not so much as Prince Hamlet's loss of his own soul as his struggle between Catholic and Luther (Oakes, 2010, p. 61), and as that between Catholic and Protestant interests (Zaleski, 2001, p. 45). In fact, interestingly enough, it is Prince Hamlet, "a young man from Wittenberg, with a distinctly Protestant temperament [who] is haunted by a distinctly Catholic ghost" (Greenblatt, 2001, p. 240; Zaleski, 2001, p.

45; Dean, 2002, p. 522). The same is true in the case of Ophelia's funeral that the interests are most taken into consideration. It is a Christian issue over Ophelia's burial. Whether her drowning to death is suicide decides on whether she deserves a Christian burial since a Christian's suicide is a crime. Finally and ironically, she is buried in a Catholic funeral (Ibid., p. 522) not due to the cause of her death but due to her high social status in gravedigger's claim: "If this had not been/ a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o' Christian/ burial" (Shakespeare 5.1.22–24), evident in her funeral rite with songs, flowers, and prayers as a pre-Reformation ritual (Beauregard, 2007, p. 68), in contrast with Prince Hamlet's refusal to sing, which is subversive to Christianity in Catholicism and which reveals its corruption. It is that Catholicism as freeplay offers a rational explanation for Lutheranism as center: there is "the hidden God, indirect revelation... revelation under the opposite" (Fabiny, 2006, p. 44); namely, "[f]or Luther, God conceals Godself in the form of opposites in order to reveal God's true self" (Ibid., p. 52) just as Polonius's requirement to Reynaldo for investigating his son Laertes: "[b]y indirections find directions out" (Shakespeare 2.1.65).

Prince Hamlet as Center and the Other Characters as Freeplay

Through Prince Hamlet's subversive to Claudius's kingship, it is Prince Hamlet, who comes as center into which the other characters in the play come as freeplay in the structurality of the court, such as Claudius, Queen Gertrude, Polonius, Ophelia, Laertes, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern and *The Mousetrap* performers. Firstly, Claudius is a freeplay character to Prince Hamlet as center in the structurality of the court. With politics, religion and moral laws intertwined, to revenge or not to revenge, it is a dilemma for Prince Hamlet; and the act of revenge has double meanings for Garber (1999, p. 495 qtd. in O'Neill, 2012, p. 124) and it decides his act of faith (Dean, 2002, p. 521). If he does not avenge late King Hamlet, he shows no filial obligation and no respect; however, if he does, his act of revenge, performed in a play as a start, not only undermines church doctrine (Greenblatt, 2001, p. 253) but shakes the political court (O'Neill, 2012, pp. 124–25). Namely, for church doctrine, on the one hand, in Protestant doctrine, ghosts are evil spirits or illusions and a ghost's vengeance is regarded as immoral although some Protestant authorities such as John Calvin, Peter Martyr and Thomas Wilson agree on just vengeance not for hatred but for charity (Beauregard, 2007, pp. 53, 56). In Prince Hamlet's unwillingness to avenge Ghost King Hamlet he utters:

O all you host of heaven! O earth! What else?
 And shall I couple hell? O fie! Hold, hold, my heart,
 And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
 But bear me stiffly up. Remember thee?
 Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
 In this distracted globe. Remember thee?
 Yea, from the table of my memory
 I'll wipe away all trivial fond records.... (Shakespeare 1.5.92-99)

On the other hand, the play's claim to the existence of purgatory "adds an extra twist to the motif of [Prince Hamlet's] hesitation" (Dean, 2002, p. 521). Although Bacon argues that the most tolerable kind of revenge for wrongs is no law to remedy nor to punish (p. 17 qtd. In Kumamoto, 2006, p. 59); although the debt should be left in God's hand to pay off; although Catholicism agree on vengeance merely on tyrannicide from a body political as God's minister with the good intention, in Aquinas's designation, which is not "directed by hatred for the offender but rather by charity intending some good, such as the offender's amendment or the common good" (Beauregard, 2007, pp. 53, 54); and although Claudius employs a tyrannical

rule for certain (Ibid. p. 48), Prince Hamlet cannot ensure his intention to be good but he hesitates to revenge. He is “a reckless and incompetent avenger” despite whether vengeance justified (Ibid., p. 57). In fact, Prince Hamlet, feeling ambivalent and troubled, hesitates toward vengeance in his soliloquies, especially in the scene of Claudius’s prayer as Greenblatt claims where his address “to be, or not to be” (Shakespeare 3.1.58) ends up as “let be” (Greenblatt, 1997, p. 1659); temporarily Prince Hamlet chooses not to kill Claudius while Claudius is praying:

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. (Shakespeare 3.1.58-62)

However, gradually, he chooses the side of believing in Ghost King Hamlet in the existence of purgatory in Catholicism (Beauregard, 2007, p. 50) and the side of taking revenge on Claudius. He justifies his revenge on Claudius in his address to Horatio:

Does it not, think'st thee, stand me now upon—
 He that hath killed my king and whored my mother,
 Popped in between th'election and my hopes,
 Thrown out his angle for my proper life,
 And with such coz'nage—is't not perfect conscience
 To quit him with this arm? And is't not to be damned
 To let this canker of our nature come
 In further evil? (Shakespeare 5.2.64-71)

Prince Hamlet subverts to Claudius’s regime (Greenblatt, 1997, p. 1660) and this act of revenge is in fact “an endorsement of its Catholic world” (Dean, 2002, p. 526) as freeplay into which the Lutheranism comes as center, although in Cam’s idea vengeance is common but not supportable (p. 60 qtd. in Thompson & Taylor, 2006, p. 34) and although, for Robert N. Watson, Michael Neill and Stephen Greenblatt, vengeance is a “problematic substitute” (Thompson & Taylor, 2006, p. 42) and its tragedy is “a displacement of prayers for the dead forbidden by the Reformation” (Watson, p. 75 qtd. in Thompson & Taylor, 2006, p. 42).

Also, Queen Gertrude and the other characters serve as freeplay to Prince Hamlet as center in the structurality of the court. “[M]oral chameleon” (O’Neill, 2012, p. 129) as Queen Gertrude is, her body is the body political, where Claudius and Prince Hamlet war to win the throne. In Karin S. Coddon’s idea of Prince Hamlet’s madness, “the representation of madness in the play [is] relating to the ‘faltering of ideological prescriptions to define, order, and constrain subjectivity’; and “madness [is] ‘an instrument of social and political disorder (pp. 61, 62 in Thompson & Taylor, 2006, p. 41); and for William O’Neill, madness is for “his refusal to take the world of Polonius seriously,” the world of Machiavelli (pp. 124, 123). Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are sent (Shakespeare 2.2.284) to offer Prince Hamlet the idea that “the very substance of the ambition is merely the shadow of a dream” (Shakespeare 2.2.251-52). In Rosencrantz and Guildenstern’s idea, Hamlet suffers from his ambition to the throne and is jealous of Claudius’s marriage with Queen Gertrude (Greenblatt, 1997, p. 1660). It is Prince Hamlet’s madness, or melancholia, or paranoid jealousy of Claudius and Queen Gertrude’s marriage that destroys all values in regard to female sexuality and women become nothing in the play (Eagleton, 1986, pp. 70–71):

O that this too too solid flesh would melt,
 Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew,
 Or that the Everlasting had not fixed
 His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God, O God,
 How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
 Seem to me all the uses of this world! (Shakespeare 1.2.129-34)

In his madness, Prince Hamlet feels living to be meaningless, in which lies a seed to be subversive to the traditional throne, King Claudius's. In politics, Prince Hamlet has no justification to the throne of Denmark and has no proper personal traits for it. Firstly, as “the crackup of a romantic idealist” (O'Neill, 2012, p. 123), he is not ambitious enough but too straightforward in his course of rightful and lawful action on the throne of Denmark so Claudius has his chance to take the throne in the elective monarchy of Denmark in place of Hamlet, the scene absent from the readers, even though it is affirmed that Queen Gertrude's body is “an illegitimate source of political authority” (Greenblatt, 1997, pp. 1665, 1660; Oakes, 2010, p. 64; Tennenhouse qtd. in Thompson & Taylor, 2006, p. 39). In fact, for Prince Hamlet, it is two times of treacheries, “two separate acts of treason, the seizing of the Queen's body and the seizing of political power” (Tennenhouse p. 96 qtd. in Thompson & Taylor, 2006, p. 39), which is unbearable for Prince Hamlet and which contributes to his paranoid jealousy and his unwillingness to occupy his own position either as a prince or as an heir, or as Ophelia's lover (Eagleton, 1986, p. 71). Merely in this way of paranoid jealousy can Prince Hamlet “protect his inner privacy of being against the power and knowledge of the court” and “[t]his inner being...evades the mark of the signifier” in his own claim (Eagleton, 1986, p. 71):

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. (Shakespeare 1.2.83-86)

Prince Hamlet is thus “pure deferral and diffusion, a hollow void which offers nothing determinate to be known” (Eagleton, 1986, p. 72).

To the core, Prince Hamlet is so jealous of Claudius's throne and marriage with Queen Gertrude that he cannot be objective to uncover the truth and that his behavior and performance worsens the political situation and his relationship with King Claudius. For example, although Prince Hamlet subverts to King Claudius's power manipulation, it is a pity that he dare not face the answers of the matters over whether late King Hamlet is murdered by Claudius, and hence, whether late King Hamlet comes from purgatory; and whether he has justification to overthrow Claudius; and furthermore, “which eschatology is correct, Catholic or Protestant” (Oakes, 2010, pp. 63, 65), but all remain mysteries. For Greenblatt, confused about Lutheranism as center and Catholicism as freeplay, Prince Hamlet does not accept that “[p]urgatory is a fiction” but he endeavors to “establish the veracity of the Ghost's tale” (2001, p. 253). In his thinking about his and his play's focus on “[w]hat if” activity of theatrical behavior and performance” (Dean, 2002, p. 525) and in his effort to confirm Claudius's crime of murder, Prince Hamlet resorts not to a rational method to investigate it but to a literary artwork (Dean, 2002, p. 524) and thus, he stages not *The Mousetrap*, the plot in which the player-brother murders his own brother and marries his sister-in-law but *The Murder of Gonzago*, the plot in which the player-nephew Lucianus murders the player-uncle Gonzago (Greenblatt, 1997, pp. 1662–63; Oakes, 2010, p. 63; Dean, 2002, p. 525; Thompson & Taylor, 2006, p. 39). Prince Hamlet plays a

doubling role. On the one hand, he plans to stage *The Murder of Gonzago* with players in his inquiry to them: “Can you play the murder of Gonzago” (Shakespeare 2.2.514-15)? On the other hand, he tells a lie to Ophelia that he will stage *The Mousetrap*, and he and the players even rehearse it in the following plot:

Hautboys play. The dumb show enters. Enter a KING and a QUEEN very lovingly, the QUEEN embracing him. She kneels and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up and declines his head upon her neck. He lays him down upon a bank of flowers. She, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the King’s ears, and exits. The QUEEN returns, finds the KING dead, and makes passionate action. The poisoner, with some two or three mutes, comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The poisoner woos the QUEEN with gifts. She seems loath and unwilling a while, but in the end accepts his love. Exeunt [the PLAYERS] (Shakespeare 3.2.122-23; emphases and capitalizations in original)

Then, in the real performance, Prince Hamlet stages *The Murder of Gonzago* in the public party, especially in front of King Claudius and Queen Gertrude:

Enter [Player] Lucianus
 This is one Lucianus, nephew to the King.
 ...
Player Lucianus Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing,
 Confederate season, else no creature seeing;
 Thou mixture rank of midnight weeds collected,
 With Hecate’s ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,
 Thy natural magic and dire property
 On wholesome life usurp immediately.
[He] pours the poison in [the Player King’s] ears
Hamlet A poisons him i’ th’ garden for ’s estate. His name’s Gonzago. The story is extant, and writ in choice Italian. You shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago’s wife. (Shakespeare 3.2.223, 233-42; parentheses and emphases in original)

By dodging the testing of the truth of murder, Prince Hamlet loses the golden opportunity to prove Claudius as a murderer in his reaction to the performance in front of the entire court; that is, he loses “a much stronger case for his action” (O’Neill, 2012, p. 125) and justification to the throne (Oakes, 2010, p. 64) and has long lost it before the crowning in the elective monarchy. It tests not Claudius’s reaction to the murder but reveals Prince Hamlet’s intention to kill Claudius. Thus, Prince Hamlet seems to know he cannot be a legitimate heir. In fact, he stirs up Claudius’s act of killing him on one hand and on the other he intends to escape death. In the later part of the play, to escape from his own death and invert his disadvantage, Prince Hamlet commits forgery and homicide by forging the letter to kill Claudius’s two messengers in England in his exposition:

I had my father's signet in my purse,
 Which was the model of that Danish seal;
 Folded the writ up in the form of th'other,
 Subscribed it, gave't th'impression, placed it safely,
 The changeling never known. (Shakespeare 5.2.50-54)

On the one hand, Prince Hamlet is not a proper king even though he seeks to avenge late King Hamlet. In his public virtue, Hamlet does not act like a king's heir and neither does he have the proper character as the foundation for the political order (Eagleton, 1986, p. 73). For example, on impulse Prince Hamlet avenges late King Hamlet and fences with Laertes, one losing his father too, which seems unnecessary if he can prove his justification to the throne in what he calls *The Mousetrap* in his claim to Horatio: "But I am very sorry, good Horatio,/ That to Laertes I forgot myself;/ For by the image of my cause I see/ The portraiture of his" (Shakespeare 5.2.76-79), but it leads to many deaths without Prince Hamlet's sincere remorse, his own death included, ironically leaving the regime of Denmark in Fortinbras's hand and in a far worse situation, a Norwegian family in a long feud with Denmark in late King Hamlet's reign (Edward, p. 58 qtd. in Thompson & Taylor, 2006, pp. 34–35; Oakes, 2010, pp. 66–67). In Hamlet's oral will, he utters

O, I die, Horatio!
 The potent poison quite o'ercrows my spirit.
 I cannot live to hear the news from England,
 But I do prophesy th'election lights
 On Fortinbras. He has my dying voice.
 So tell him, with th'occurents, more and less,
 Which have solicited. The rest is silence. (Shakespeare 5.2.294-300)

Prince Hamlet loses Denmark to Fortinbras not because of a war with Norway but because of domestic conflicts in Denmark herself. In Philip Edward's declaration, "he has brought the country into an even worse state, in the hands of a foreigner" (p. 58 qtd. in Thompson & Taylor, 2006, pp. 34–35). And "[t]he act of revenge itself happens in a flash of rage, without planning, without any self-vindicating declaration by Prince Hamlet to Claudius, and without any public confession of guilt by the usurper. At the end, revenge leaves the Prince [Hamlet] not with inner satisfaction but with intense anxiety over his 'wounded name'" (Greenblatt, 1997, p. 1664). Strangely enough, Prince Hamlet himself worries less about the possibility that after killing Polonius and causing many deaths like those of Ophelia, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, Laertes and Claudius, either directly or indirectly, all in his responsibility, he may serve the same prison term in Purgatory as his father late King Hamlet, but cares more about whether the coming generations would remember him (Edward, p. 58 qtd. in Thompson & Taylor, 2006, p. 35; Greenblatt, 2001, p. 4):

O God, Horatio, what a wounded name,
 Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!
 If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
 Absent thee from felicity a while,
 And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain
 To tell my story. (Shakespeare 5.2.286-91)

Ironically enough, Prince Hamlet's story must be "highly embarrassing" or a laughing stock in Fortinbras's impending reign (Eagleton, 1986, p. 74), not in his own expectation.

On the other hand, in his private virtue, Prince Hamlet, taking his honor self but dropping moral self (O'Neill, 2012, pp. 125–26), subverts to filial piety and moral law in the case of Queen Gertrude and Ophelia, since they two are politically complicit for Claudius's kingship, Queen Gertrude as directly complicit and Ophelia as indirectly complicit, obeying her father Polonius, Claudius's minister in Prince Hamlet's misapprehension (O'Neill, 2012, pp. 122–23). Interestingly enough, even though Queen "Gertrude's sexual behaviour and remarriage do not seem out of the ordinary" (Cam, p. 60 qtd. in Thompson & Taylor, 2006, p. 34), Prince Hamlet subverts to matriarchal filial obligation with all his intention in his cynical talk with Queen Gertrude, since for him Queen Gertrude makes at least two errors, revealing her sexual desire *per se* and revealing it not for him but for Claudius, another man (Eagleton, 1986, p. 71):

O heart, lose not thy nature! Let not ever
The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom.
Let me be cruel, not unnatural.
I will speak daggers to her, but use none.
My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites—
How in my words somever she be shent,
To give them seals never my soul consent. (Shakespeare 3.2.363-369)

Prince Hamlet intends to make Queen Gertrude "repent and behave[] as a priest in the biblical and Protestant sense of the word"³ (Fabiny qtd. in Fabiny, 2006, p. 51) in order to dare her. His love for Queen Gertrude is as unbearable as Ophelia's for him. Besides, Prince Hamlet shows no love for Ophelia in his confession: "You should not have believed me, for virtue cannot so/ inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it. I loved you/ not" (Shakespeare 3.1.118-20). He also feels no guilt at the sudden death of Ophelia, his lover, and no guilt at the death of Polonius, Ophelia's father since the play "situates the need for revenge in a context that goes beyond any crime" (Greenblatt, 1997, p. 1664). Prince Hamlet even blames Queen Gertrude's remarriage on all women, Ophelia in particular. He accuses Ophelia and rejects the marriage with her:

I have heard of your paintings, too, well enough. God
hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another. You
jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nickname God's creatures,
and make your wantonness your ignorance. Go to, I'll no
more on't. It hath made me mad. I say we will have no more
marriages. Those that are married already—all but one—shall
live. The rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go. (Shakespeare 3.1.142-48)

Prince Hamlet even commands Ophelia in his scolding, "Get thee to a nunnery" referring to going to a brothel in Elizabethan slang (Greenblatt, 1997, p. 1665; Shakespeare 3.1.122). To my belief, Ophelia commits suicide in her madness, not because of her bodies and her erotic desires in Elaine Showalter's perspective but because of her feeling her love for Prince Hamlet unbearable and meanwhile unbearable for her acknowledge of her father's death in Prince Hamlet's hand (Oakes, 2010, p. 66), which Prince Hamlet again subverts the filial obligation in the family of his father-in-law-to-be-yet. In seeing the other characters as freeplay to Prince Hamlet as center, therefore, we see the march of the tragedy of many deaths.

³ See Tibor Fabiny's article in Kürtösi, K., and Pál, J., Eds. (1994). 'The Eye' as a Metaphor in Shakespearean Tragedy: Hamlet, Cordelia and Edgar: Blinded Parents' Seeing Children. *Celebrating Comparativism Essays in Honour of György Mihály Vajda*. Szeged: Attila József University, 461–78.

Author as Center and *Hamlet* as Freeplay

In the center-freeplay structurality of authorship, I believe, it is Shakespeare the author who comes as center into which his play *Hamlet* comes as freeplay. The Protestant Reformation was dated back to 1517, the year when Martin Luther posted “the ninety-five thesis to the door of Castle Church of Wittenberg”. To probe more into Shakespeare’s life for interpreting the play, Thompson and Taylor describe the atmosphere of Protestant England where “Shakespeare’s only son Hamnet or Hamlet died in August 1596, and his father John was to die [a Catholic] in September 1601” (2006, p. 36; Dean, 2002, p. 521) and that this is relevant to the play with the death of a father as the beginning and a death of a son as an ending (Thompson & Taylor, 2006, p. 36): “Hamlet’s guilt-ridden compulsion to help his tormented father may draw on Shakespeare’s own guilt toward his recently deceased and reputedly Catholic father” (Watson, p. 75 qtd. in Thompson & Taylor, 2006, p. 37). Also, in the scene of the gravedigger in his answer “a tanner will/ last you nine year” (Shakespeare 5.1.154-55) to Hamlet’s question “How long will a man lie i’th’ earth ere he rot?” (Shakespeare 5.1.151), Shakespeare assists his father John Shakespeare in having a coat of arms in October 1596; as a glover and whittawer, John had the job to tan the skins of animals (Honan, pp. 8, 21, 38, 228–29 qtd. in Thompson & Taylor, 2006, p. 37). Edward T. Oakes indicates that Shakespeare is “a committed and orthodox Catholic” with evidence too ambiguous to interpret the play (2010, p. 69); nonetheless, indicates Greenblatt, despite still uncertain for Edward T. Oakes, it is likely that Shakespeare is not “a secret Catholic sympathizer” (2001, p. 254) but “the [Protestant] playwright was probably brought up in a Roman Catholic household in a time of official suspicion and persecution of recusancy” and he “was haunted by the spirit of his Catholic father pleading for suffrages to relieve his soul from the pains of Purgatory” (2001, p. 249). Or, as John Keats claims on Shakespeare’s “negative capability,” it is the ability “to submerge his own personality into his characters so that *they* speak on their own terms rather than being mouthpieces for some ideological hobbyhorse of” the author (qtd. in Oakes, 2010, p. 71; emphasis in original). In the play, “Shakespeare fuses Senecan fatalism with Christian hope, and Protestant iconoclasm with the persistence of Catholic devotions” (Zaleski, 2001, p. 46). The play as freeplay describes not Shakespeare’s religious tendency, but his awareness of “the implications of the dangers” in “a highly charged religious setting” (Oakes, 2010, p. 72), the same as Christopher Marlowe’s awareness in *Doctor Faustus* (Huang, 2011, pp. 122–23). The play, declares Marius, is “a mirror held up to [reflect] religious confusion” (qtd. in Fabiny, 2006, p. 51) and echoes “the themes of Luther’s theology of the cross” (Fabiny, 2006, p. 52), which is what Shakespeare fears to say. The play “takes [the audiences] toward the cross by twisting [them] out of [their] wrong orientations, by challenging the direction of [their] gaze, by reversing [their] seeing” (Ibid.). For Luther, merely by experiencing life like living, dying or being damned one can become a theologian. Prince Hamlet dies and in his death, he does meet God, but God behind a mask and he becomes a theologian himself (Fabiny, 2006, p. 53).

Conclusion

As a reader losing my father and having long felt remorse along with Prince Hamlet and with the audience living during the atmosphere of Protestant Elizabethan England that was disapproving of Catholicism (Dean, 2002, p. 519), I interpret Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* with two traces: first, Ghost King Hamlet’s disclosure of a murderer and the existence of purgatory, and thus the significant reversal of whether Ghost King Hamlet in purgatory does exist, and, secondly, I examine the play in light of Derrida’s center-freeplay structurality. In the structurality of father and son, there is Ghost King Hamlet, who comes as the first center into

which Prince Hamlet comes as freeplay; and Prince Hamlet comes as the second center into which the other characters such as Claudius, Queen Gertrude, Polonius, Ophelia, Laertes, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern and *The Mousetrap* performers come as freeplay in the structurality of the court, intertwined with the structurality of religion, where no existence of purgatory in Lutheranism comes as center into which the existence of purgatory in Catholicism comes as freeplay despite a “larger theological position unclear” (Dean, 2002, p. 522). This also relates to the structurality of authorship, where the author Shakespeare, who sides with the proletariat to grieve over the deaths of the two beloved ones, his father, John Shakespeare, and his son Hamlet Shakespeare, comes as center into which the play comes as freeplay. In his commitment to writing for the proletariat, Shakespeare misspeaks that in terms of the religion, there should be a turnaround to Lutheranism from Catholicism in the play, like the turnaround to Lutheranism from Calvinism in Christopher Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus* (Huang, 2011, p. 132). Prince Hamlet, if he is a faithful Christian for Lutheranism, should close his ears and eyes to Ghost King Hamlet’s story of purgatory and leave the issue of purgatory for God to decide on, since for Luther death is in fact life (Fletcher, 2005, p. 198) and since those “Christians who were troubled by ghosts or poltergeists...were instructed by Luther not to hear the supposed wandering dead” (Evener, 2015, p. 534). In terms of the political benefits of England, it is a much better life for Prince Hamlet to “let go of his father and accept the loss of him” like the speaker in Linda Pastan’s poem *Go Gentle* (Huang, 2015, p. 29), to bless Queen Gertrude’s remarriage, to cherish Ophelia’s love and to help Claudius reign over Denmark. Thus, interestingly enough, in terms of the reign and marriage, King Henry VIII is analogized as Claudius in the play and Catherine of Aragon is, as Queen Gertrude, and his throne and their marriage are both valid and not sins, despite the Leviticus curse that “a man who marries his brother’s widow shall be childless” (Elton, 1991, p. 98). And all this is despite there being no male heirs from them (Ibid.), despite his conscience in his marriage with Catherine of Aragon as a sin (Elton, 1991, p. 101), and despite his intention for the divorce with Catherine of Aragon and for his remarriage with Anne Boleyn (Ibid. pp. 99–101, 116–17, 120, 133; Haigh, 1993, pp. 113, 115, 116). Thus, Shakespeare fears to say that King Henry VIII may be right in his marriage with Catherine of Aragon and his succession to the throne and reign over England and he may be right to be a factor in the English Reformation and to make a turn from Roman Catholicism. However, in the meantime, Shakespeare fears to say that King Henry VIII may be wrong in his divorce with Catherine of Aragon for there were no heirs except “Mary, born in 1516” (Elton, 1991, p. 98). King Henry VIII may also be wrong in his remarriage with Anne Boleyn, delivering Elizabeth (Ibid. p. 132), since the selection of a legitimate heir can come from a wider family relation and be of either gender. It need not only be a king’s son but also his daughters and brothers in referring to Greenblatt et al.’s illustration of the House of Tudor (I A 42). The play does not become “a text-book demonstration of the theological irresolution and liturgical failure of the Elizabethan settlement” (Dean, 2002, p. 522), but rather, merely by reversing my seeing and experiencing of Prince Hamlet’s Catholicism as the contrary in Shakespeare’s misspeaking can I become a theologian and meet God behind His masks (Fabiny, 2006, pp. 46, 53), “a loving father, yet with various faces” (Huang, 2011, p. 133) and can I reach communication with Shakespeare since “[t]he most important thing in communication is to hear what isn’t [being] said” (Drucker qtd. in Archer, 2009).

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank her beloved family, particularly Chiu-er Lin and Yu-chien Huang, and her respectable professors, particularly Dr Shui-mu Chang and Dr Hui-zung Perng in the Department of English, National Changhua University of Education, Changhua, Taiwan, R. O. C.

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Author contact email: huangelisha@gmail.com

The Being of God's Time: The Problem of Time in Barth's *Church Dogmatics* and Heidegger's *Being and Time*

Rajesh Sampath
Brandeis University, United States of America

Abstract

This paper aims to compare and contrast Barth and Heidegger on the question of time. Although Barth speaks from the theological standpoint and Heidegger considers theology as a form of an 'ontic science' distinct from his fundamental ontology in *Being and Time*, I pose the following question: To what extent can an appropriation of Barth, ironically, transcend the limits of Heidegger's *Being and Time*, which could not offer its missing division III? We hypothesize that this step beyond *Being and Time* can help frame a research agenda to frame – ontologically – the problem of the very of Being of God's time. And this agenda would go beyond the limits of Barthian theology on the one hand and Heidegger's first two divisions of *Being and Time* on the other.

Keywords: being, God, time, theology, fundamental ontology, Barth, Heidegger

Introduction

I want to compare Barth and Heidegger on the question of time. Specifically, I want to look at section 14 – “The Time of Revelation” – of Chapter II in Part II of *Church Dogmatics*, Vol. 1.2: The Doctrine of the Word of God and section 47 – “Man in His Time” – of Chapter X of *Church Dogmatics*, Vol. 3.2: The Doctrine of Creation. My objective is to compare and contrast what Barth has to say about time in light of his dogmatic theology with Heidegger's attempt to separate fundamental ontology from any kind of theology (which he considers an 'ontic science') while treating the problem of time in *Being and Time*, particularly Division II.¹ But the story does not end there. Heidegger never completed the missing Division III of *Being and Time*, and several historical witnesses have speculated that the missing Division III involved a bizarre reckoning with theology, particularly on matters of eschatology.² As a philosopher (and suspended theologian in the making) my intuition is that a critical reading of Barth (utilizing the resources of modern continental philosophy) can help advance a fundamental critique of Heidegger's one-sided secularism in *Being and Time* while re-opening the question of the missing Division III. Heidegger once confessed that he was a ‘Christian theologian’ in disguise.³ My aim is to reveal (or ‘un-conceal’ to use Heidegger’s iconoclastic appropriation of the Greek word *aletheia* for truth) something quite startling: I postulate the existence of a cryptic theology in *Being and Time*, albeit heterodox and totally unrecognizable from the standpoint of mainline Christian theology and despite Heidegger’s stated intentions on the ontological difference between ontology and theology in the introduction to *Being and Time*.⁴ I do not speak of matters of Trinity or Christology for example; nor do I attempt to understand anything like salvation and redemption through reconciliation. I am concerned solely with the problem of time and death and how to treat them from the perspective of a non-subjective and hence non-human way. To write the missing Division III out of a burning engagement with the traces in Barth’s *Church Dogmatics* and Heidegger’s *Being and Time* is to generate a new content that is irreducible to both magisterial works.⁵

One way to transcend the human embeddedness within time is to recognize the recurring illusion that all human beings entertain about their very being, life and impending death: as a being that flows in time while intuiting *both* external, physical-cosmological time and the

¹ According to Heidegger, although theology thinks it is going for a foundational explanation of man’s primordial relation to a higher Being, i.e. God, as transcendent, it treats its object, namely the relation of man to God through faith, like a thing; and hence it is ontic just like every other science that tries to pin something down and conceptualize it. Fundamental ontology, however, raises the question of the very meaning of Being without ever assuming that Being is a being or thing that is present to the senses or can be conceptualized in a principle, i.e. theological, metaphysical or scientific. See Heidegger (1962, p. 30). Furthermore, the “central problematic of all ontology is rooted in the phenomenon of time, if rightly seen and rightly explained...” (Ibid., p. 40).

² Max Mueller was a student of Heidegger and was among the first to speculate about the architectonic that was planned for the missing Division III. Taminaux and Sheehan have tried to trace the legacy of this missing division.

³ See his famous letter to Löwith. Quoted in “Letter to Karl Löwith on His Philosophical Identity,” in Kisiel & Sheehan (2007, p. 100). For more on the exchange, see Hans-Georg Gadamer’s *Heidegger’s Ways*, trans. John W. Stanley (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994).

⁴ I am not a follower of anything Heidegger says in *Being and Time* regarding the incommensurable difference between his allegedly unique and singular project and the entire history of Western metaphysics, theology and science.

⁵ Some argue that Barth is the greatest theologian of the twentieth century and his *Church Dogmatics* is one of the greatest systematic theological efforts in the history of Christian thought. Similarly, some argue that Heidegger is the greatest continental philosopher of the twentieth century (without comparing him to the great figures of the Anglo-American analytic philosophical tradition), and *Being and Time* is one of the greatest works in the history of philosophy. But appropriating theology to surpass the desiccated limits of philosophy and to think creatively like a philosopher beyond the confining limits of doctrinal faith is something that rarely occurs in the history of (Western) thought. Hegel’s writings would be an example of such an event.

internal timeliness in terms of the ambiguous anxiety one feels about getting older but not exactly according to the relentless march of chronological time, namely seconds, minutes, hours, days, months and even years. The schism between the two types of time is real but the illusion of bridging them persists. One knows that a time has been allotted to them and despite every attempt to live a long life, it can be cut short at any moment for causes and reasons beyond one's control, say an unforeseeable accident. But one does not lead life with such paralyzing anxiety as to cut their own life short due to the general fear or dread that they know they can't live forever; they merely continue on, hoping that that day of termination will not arrive unexpected. Living in time and flowing along with, but fighting it at every instance to grasp the sequence of moments as if one can grasp the whole but always confusing a moment with the whole in relishing the notion of being present, and that past and future can be present with the present; all of this points to the futility of the human reckoning with time. But it is precisely this very strange relation between being (life and death) and time that embeds the human being 'in' time; and this 'within-time-ness' (to use the Heideggerean phrase of *Innerzeitigkeit*) either forces human beings to postpone inauthentically the question of the meaning of their being (after a whole life has been lived) or plunges the human into despair so that a single moment cannot continue as if the illusion of an endless series of moments cannot continue to be maintained. In different ways the sections on time in Barth's *Church Dogmatics*, namely section 14 of Volume 1 called "The Time of Revelation" and section 47 of Volume 3 called "Man in His Time," and all of Heidegger's *Being and Time*, particularly Division II: "Dasein and Temporality," call into question this dominant assumption about human anxiety over linear time. (And linear time is the dominant presupposition, which derives the inauthentic and hence false idea of being 'within-time.')

Heidegger questions the sense of an infinite flowing linear time and beings 'within time' as inauthentic, and to Barth's credit he does not speak of 'man in time' but 'man in *his* time.' These fine distinctions are crucial. Both are concerned with timeliness and the possibility of searching for a deeper ground that derives the commonsense astro-physical-biological notion of linear time as an endless flow. Heidegger searches for an answer to the question of the universal meaning of Being in terms of the phenomenon of time without calling that a theology of God. And Barth turns to his faith's tradition, namely Christianity, to offer a solution to how human beings should be oriented to the mystery of time (and impending death) when all other human forms of knowledge (including science) fail to provide an answer.

By comparing and contrasting how Barth treats the problem of time within the standpoint of a unique vision about the role, content and function of theology with Heidegger's fundamental ontology we can gain some new insights into time.⁶ Physical time is not timeliness, and timeliness has been under-philosophized, including the biblical and systematic theological

⁶ This will be complicated from the outset because Barth opens his section 14 on the "Time of Revelation" with a very brief critique of Heidegger's *Being and Time*. See Bromiley & Torrance (2010, p. 46). I will read his critique very closely as I reconstruct my own problem, but essentially Barth says that Heidegger's philosophical linking of time with human existence misses the entire problem of ascertaining how God 'had time for us' by revealing Himself in the event of Jesus Christ (Ibid., p. 45). Barth makes a fairly clear separation of his theological task and Heidegger's philosophy, which he couples with Augustine. Neither Heidegger nor Augustine can help Barth understand the Time of God's Revelation. However, defending or questioning the validity of Barth's critique and his project for that matter is not the aim of this investigation. If anything, I will need to critique and overcome Barth's critique of Heidegger and return to *Church Dogmatics* to write in the spaces that were actually forbidden by Barth's presuppositions against Heidegger's philosophy. In other words, Barth's critique and dismissal of Heidegger is too simple for the philosopher's demands. For more on Barth's notion of time in *Church Dogmatics* see Adrian E.V. Langdon, *God the Eternal Contemporary: Trinity, Eternity and Time in Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2012) and the PhD dissertation thesis by Mark James Edwards, *The divine moment: Eternity, time, and temporality in Karl Barth's "Church Dogmatics"* (Princeton: Princeton Theological Seminary, 2013).

tradition leading through the Church fathers up to modern theologians like Bultmann and Barth and philosophers such as Hegel and Heidegger. This is a massive claim that requires a fair amount of justification.⁷ And no doubt the reader will come to realize that the entire intention driving my ambition is the attempt to achieve this justification about an original undertaking and win the reader's approval.

But I will say briefly in passing that with the exception of sparse moments where Jesus speaks of his time or the Gospel writers and Paul speak about the fulfillment of time (kairos), like the Prologue to John's Gospel or Galatians 4:4, for the most part the text of the New Testament does not dwell philosophically on the nature of kairos. That is not its purpose. It aims to save by baptism and faith through the revelation that is the 'Word of God' manifest as Jesus Christ who is God (which includes Jesus the man as the 2nd Person of the Triune God). For Christianity, Jesus conquered death and sin by dying for us and was raised; and by believing and confessing that basic fact we can achieve eternal life. That is the mystery of faith: time was fulfilled in the Incarnation, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the waning moments of 'absolute knowing,' or the last section of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel finally penetrates the mystery of 'time as the concept, which is there' but 'as long as Spirit appears in time its Notion cannot appear' and even the 'Notion has its time.'⁸ Section 65 of Heidegger's *Being and Time* tries to develop the core root of Dasein's Being (Care) as time construed as 'primordial, finite, ecstatic, unified and authentic' in contrast to the inauthentic linear sequence of 'nows' simply 'coming to be and passing way,' whereby the past is a 'no longer now' and the future is a 'yet to be now' (Heidegger, 1962, pp. 370, 480). It is not my task to compare the Bible, Hegel and Heidegger on time. My claim is that all of these reflections remain thoroughly and completely underdeveloped in the history of theology leading up to Barth's *Church Dogmatics* and the Gesamtausgaben of both Hegel and Heidegger despite claims of over two hundred years of scholarship on the *Phenomenology* and over 80 years of scholarship on *Being and Time*, not to mention nearly 1900 years of reflection on the aforementioned Event of faith and everlasting life described by the New Testament.

There is no sustained treatise focused strictly on the phenomenon of timeliness, which matches the length (word count) of the Bible (Old and New Testaments), Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* and Heidegger's *Being and Time*.⁹ Pushing the limits of where these texts stop on timeliness is my aim. But that means we need to see how each serves as the blind spot in and

⁷ This is not to say that there are no works on Heidegger's treatment of the time problem, especially in *Being and Time*, in a systematic and focused way. There are immense resources in both the analytic and continental philosophical traditions that can be leveraged in such an undertaking. Blattner's work should be consulted in that regard. See his pioneering *Heidegger's Temporal Idealism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). On the problem of kairos in Heidegger, one should reference the original work of John Van Buren, *The Young Heidegger: Rumors of the Hidden King* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994) and Theodore Kisiel's exhaustive and paradigm-shaping genealogical reconstruction of *Being and Time* in *The Genesis of Being and Time* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). For an analysis of the separation of the idea of eschatological-messianic (New Testament) kairos and phronological kairos (derived from Aristotle's ethics of praxis), see Hakhamenesh Zangeneh, "Phenomenological Problems for the Kairological Reading of Augenblick in *Being and Time*," *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 19:4 (2011): 539-561. Also see Joan Stambaugh's translator's introduction to the 1962 lecture *On Time and Being* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972). Stambaugh provides a nice summary of the evolution of Heidegger's thinking about time from the early works to his last attempt at philosophizing about it in the 1962 lecture.

⁸ See G. W. F. Hegel (1977, pp. 487, 493).

⁹ The same goes for any other major thinker in the Western philosophical tradition prior to Hegel, namely Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Leibniz and Kant and after (Kierkegaard, Nietzsche). As for theology's deficit, this includes great modern figures such as Barth, Tillich, Rahner, von Balthasar, Pannenberg and Moltmann.

of the other: in each other's texts are holes, and each text serves as the hole of the other.¹⁰ These holes have to be filled tracing a certain event of movement and movement of the event. The event of their interrelations disclosed in a new way is a new revelation and the revelation of the new. The movement is not linear or circular. The event is irreducible to a single dimension of time, say the present. Unlike the texts of the history of philosophy and theology, we finally have time for timeliness to reveal it for what it is. This way we do not relapse into the same-old notion of time as an unstoppable flux that human beings cannot control, i.e. the linear sequence of nows 'coming to be and passing away.' But each thinker does not accomplish in their own system of thought what the other criticizes as the limits of the other's field. In other words, for Heidegger, Barthian theology presupposes a linear sense of time even as it tries to overcome it and has to polarize in traditional metaphysical terms a distinction between beings in time (man) and eternity (God). This is totally untenable for Heidegger's project of fundamental ontology beginning with the existential analytic of Dasein. For Barth, theology, in its interrelated biblical-exegetical, dogmatic-systematic and practical forms¹¹, can help us understand truth as revelation by bringing into unison the time of God's revelation – as Jesus Christ – and how man tries to grasp his time or the meaning of his life on the basis of that revelation. In this sense, Heidegger's obscurantism and lapse of faith is both unwarranted and unfortunate. Neither the theologian Barth nor the philosopher of Heidegger can or would turn to the other to deepen their own projects, but this is precisely what I will set out to do.

Tracing *Being and Time* in *Church Dogmatics* and vice-versa indicates a twofold, reciprocal, intertwining movement: suspending traditional assumptions about what we think theology accomplishes through Barth by appropriating philosophy *and* what philosophy dismisses in theology by deracinating the latter's assumptions, namely in Heidegger's fundamental ontology and its avowed repudiation of theology. The unthinkable possibility being staked out here is an uncanny synthesis of Barth and Heidegger in a third project that tries to penetrate the very mystery of God's time without recourse to the linear sense of being-in-time that both Heidegger and Barth find problematic but in different ways. This does not mean I merely repeat what Barth has to say about the time of God's revelation in and as Jesus Christ. Nor do I simply fall short like Heidegger does in Division II of *Being and Time* in not being able to crossover to the missing Division III in his aborted reckoning of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. My origin and goal is the missing Division III period, and this is nowhere to be found in the Bible, Heidegger's pre- and post-*Being and Time* corpus and all of Hegel.¹²

With Heidegger's *Being and Time* we have access to the resources of the entire history of Western philosophy from the Pre-Socratics up to his time, including the Neo-Kantians and Husserlian phenomenology of his day, and several prominent Christian thinkers such as Augustine, Aquinas and Kierkegaard.¹³ With Barth we have access to biblical theology, namely

¹⁰ Our focus is on Barth's *Church Dogmatics* and Heidegger's *Being and Time* but we will never lose sight of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* that lingers like a ghost throughout this investigation.

¹¹ In Volume 1.1 of *Church Dogmatics*, Barth states in his introduction that the three forms are related in how theology is the self-questioning or self-examination of the Church when it 'talks about God': "theology as biblical theology is the question of the basis, as practical theology the question of the goal and as dogmatic theology the question of the content of the distinctive utterance of the Church." See *Church Dogmatics, Vol. 1.1*, pp. 4–5. In other words, biblical theology questions the basis of the Church's talk about God, practical theology examines the goal or action proposed by such talk, and dogmatic theology questions the content of the talk about God.

¹² Recall footnote 5.

¹³ I will not get into whether these figures are philosophers or theologians. The modern canon of both fields can characterize them as both or only one. Some could argue that the terms 'philosophy' and 'theology' have complex genealogies that intertwine at different moments in time, converging and diverging for different reasons. Aquinas says 'philosophy is the handmaiden of theology,' but few would doubt that his contributions to philosophy and

New Testament and Biblical exegesis, the Church fathers from the Orthodox and Roman Catholic traditions, and modern philosophical theology in Protestantism and Catholicism, most notably from the Protestant side in Schleiermacher to the time of Barth's composing of the 13 volumes of the *Church Dogmatics*. The resources for both thinkers is no doubt immense. However, this project cannot offer a vast, exhaustive historical account of how Barth the theologian or Heidegger the philosopher relate to the histories of theology and philosophy, let alone their relations. Rather tracing structural germs of the New Testament within *Being and Time* so that they come to fruition means challenging the conception of time and its assumptions in Barth's *Church Dogmatics*. Inversely, utilizing the philosophical insights in *Being and Time* to write in the margins and spaces that were not articulated in *Church Dogmatics* is an endeavor that would seem foreign to mainstream Christian theology today. I am not setting out to attack or defend the doctrines of the Christian faith as they have descended from the earliest Church Fathers (dating back to the first century CE), the crystallization of the New Testament canon by the fourth century CE and the first Councils (Ephesus, Nicea and Chalcedon) that would lay down the doctrinal foundations of much of Christian faith, i.e. Trinity, Christology, etc. To the reader familiar with biblical, dogmatic and practical Christian theology this project may appear a bit suspicious as to its real intentions to inhabit texts, such as the Bible and Christian theology, typically reserved for matters of authentic faith. To the philosopher interested in pushing the limits of *Being and Time* into areas of philosophical investigation that Heidegger himself could not traverse, the appropriation of the dogmatic contents of biblical and systematic theology via Barth may seem 'heretical' in an opposite sense as it broaches the secular-atheistic divide that many commentators view Heidegger's legacy as having established.¹⁴ But negotiating these issues is not the purpose and aim of this investigation.

My goal is to begin a critical reading of *Church Dogmatics* and *Being and Time* while staying focused strictly on the problem of time in terms of the phenomenon of timeliness. Over the course of the argument the reader can draw their own conclusions as to whether the work defends or attacks either theology or (present-day) philosophy or both or neither. Towards the conclusion I can offer my reflections on what I think an ecumenical relation between philosophy and theology can look like going forward, but only having first traversed the attempt to produce a new vision about time as timeliness in the double appropriation of Barth to critique Heidegger and the use of philosophy to write in the margins that Barth did not conceptualize in his theological works. Again this is not a defense of Christian faith by creating a theology that lays claim to Christian truth as revealed in the history of biblical, systematic or practical theology. The work also does not make any claim to understanding why *Being and Time* failed, which then moves on to the later works (i.e. 'The History of Being') that are not purely based on philosophical ontology. The effort underway here is to write the missing

metaphysics would exclude him from the history of the Western philosophical canon irrespective of his achievements for Christian theology. By the time we get to Kierkegaard, we see self-reflections in which he sees himself neither as a professional theologian nor an academic philosopher. He views himself as merely as a writer critical of the public representations of both theology and philosophy in his day. My point is that in Barth, theology relies on philosophy in complex ways, and in Heidegger's fundamental theology he is by no means not rooted in religious discourses and theological works. The literature on this is quite vast. See Benjamin Crowe's *Heidegger's Religious Origins: Destruction and Authenticity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006) and Bruce McCormack's *Karl Barth's Critical Realistic Dialectical Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

¹⁴ If not atheism, then at least an undecidability with regard to matters of religion and faith is what many would defend in Heidegger's project. Again the literature on this vast. See the works of Caputo, Richardson, Van Buren, Kisiel, Thomson and Sheehan. Discussing Heidegger's philosophy of religion and what that means for theism, atheism or agnosticism is not my project.

Division III without recourse to any missing texts (non-published works of Heidegger). Only what is available in the public domain will be considered.

I will begin by announcing a basic presupposition before engaging in a critical deconstruction of Barth's *Church Dogmatics*. I am going to bracket for a moment the general problem of the resurrection and just focus on the living Jesus and the events that led up to His death. This does not mean I will ignore how Barth thinks about time in terms of the proclamation of the risen Lord. For Barth, the recollection of the resurrected Lord in the New Testament is linked with the futural expectation of the messiah announced by the Old Testament (Bromiley & Torrance, 2010, p. 54). But before I get to the total conception of the 'Time of Revelation' in "the event of the presence of Jesus Christ is God's time for us" (Ibid., p. 45). I must work out philosophically several distinctions between various ways time is talked about in the opening moments of section 14. 'Fulfilled time' is the event of God's revelation as Jesus Christ, and the unity of past –futural expectation of the messiah in the Old Testament and the recollection that returns from the future to the New Testament proclamation of the risen Lord is the "time of witness" (Ibid.). But even before I get to these wondrous distinctions I must raise a whole series of philosophical questions as I probe the opening pages of section 14 in *Church Dogmatics*.

In my endeavor, I will actually use key insights from Heidegger's *Being and Time* and its attempt to destroy the history of ontology and metaphysics. Destruction is that attempt to rethink the very mystery of how time constitutes the meaning of the core Being of that entity, namely Dasein's concern or care for its greatest possibility to be (which will turn out to be its 'possibility of impossibility' called death). And this is how that entity which reveals the universal and necessary answer to the question of the meaning of Being, or fundamental ontology, requires a primordial explication of time as the horizon for understanding Being.¹⁵ Time is the horizon for understanding Being. In other words, nothing can be won by way of any understanding of Being without working things out within the 'horizon' called 'time.' This does not mean any 'thing' is occurring 'in' time. That is not what is meant by horizon. And 'primordial, ecstatic, unified, finite, authentic temporalizing of time' founds the Being of Dasein, namely Care, regarding Dasein's greatest possibility to 'be,' which will be death. For as long as never-present Dasein 'is' in the world and running ahead towards all its myriad possibilities while re-grasping itself and bringing itself along towards itself, it is incomplete.¹⁶ So far, what is revealed in the introduction to *Being and Time* is that the meaning of that Being (or Dasein's concernfulness) that will answer the meaning of Being in general is time; but the transcendence of this Being of absolute concern that will offer the answer is radically unique and singular, and thus irreducible to anything else. It is the Other to everything that is other to it. One can understand this radical uniqueness as non-relationality and incomparable alterity to revelation itself in which Truth is disclosed. But Truth is given and as such transcends the

¹⁵ This is all taken from the introduction to *Being and Time*. In summary fashion in the beginning of section II of the introduction, Heidegger states: "we shall point to temporality (Zeitlichkeit) as the meaning of the Being of that entity which we call "Dasein." (1962, p. 38). Furthermore, "the transcendence of Dasein's Being is distinctive in that it implies the possibility and necessity of the most radical *individuation*." (Ibid., p. 62). As for the definition of death in Division II, Heidegger states, "Death is the possibility of the absolute impossibility of Dasein." (Ibid., p. 294).

¹⁶ I hope the reader excuses this technical jargon from the English translation of Heidegger's original German text. In section 65 of *Being and Time*, Heidegger (1962, p. 380) offers an original take on time by summing up how time is 'primordial, ecstatic and finite.' It is my responsibility to try and explain all these phrases in clear terms while appropriating them for a creative distillation of buried possibilities in Barth's *Church Dogmatics*. I am not concerned with understanding Dasein within the framework of *Being and Time*'s two Divisions. I am interested in writing the missing Division III, which requires passing through Barth's *Church Dogmatics*. That is my intuition, which would be inadmissible to most mainstream, secular Heideggereans.

human imagination's ability to create it for itself. Since human beings cannot understand time while transcending death on their own, they certainly cannot fashion the truth of the totality of their existence because they have no idea what predates the birth of existence and what comes after it. Hence *if* there is an answer to the mystery of life, existence and death, it must come from elsewhere, but this elsewhere does not derive from the dogmatic principles of religion that tries to enforce belief. And this hermeneutic of suspicion is exactly what will be required to re-inhabit Barth's treatise to rethink from the ground up the mystery of God's time, but this *time* beyond the confines of faith.¹⁷

All I can say at this point is that there is this outstanding possibility of a double movement: *Being and Time* can be appropriated to be written into the margins and hidden spaces in *Church Dogmatics* to blow wide open the notion of the revelation of God's *Time* and the time of God's *Revelation*; and inversely, the data and material from *Church Dogmatics* can be transmogrified in an alchemic concoction that will constitute the bridge to the missing Division III of *Being and Time*. Once the bridge is crossed, then a new picture of God's Time will emerge. This picture builds upon what *Church Dogmatics* explicates given the heritage of the New Testament and Old Testament, or the Bible as a whole, and the history of Christian theology. But what appears far exceeds what the foundation can support and hence is wholly Other to Christian doctrine, which is centered primarily upon the historical person of Jesus as the Christ in relation to the Father and Holy Spirit as the Triune God.

¹⁷ This obviously means going against the grain of what Barth himself says about the invalid and irrelevant nature of Heidegger's understanding of time for Barth's theological task of explicating 'the Time of Revelation' or the 'fulfilled time of God's revelation as Jesus Christ when God has time for us.' If appropriating and transforming Barth's text against Barth's presuppositions and intentions serves as a bridge beyond Heidegger, then it should be clear by now that my intention has nothing to do with defending Barth against Heidegger or vice-versa. The double movement of appropriation requires a twofold commitment to transcendence beyond Barth's Christian theology and Heidegger's fundamental ontology.

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Author contact email: rsampath@brandeis.edu

Fertility and Untranslatability in Flannery O'Connor's "Greenleaf"

Peng Yao

Department of English, Chinese University of Hong Kong

Abstract

This paper attempts to explore the female melancholic subject's failed memorization and mourning in relation to the dead person in Flannery O'Connor's story "Greenleaf." Jean Laplanche considers mourning to be the subject's translations, de-translations, and retranslations of the other person's unconscious message, which is deposited in the subject's mind like a foreign body; mourning, then, largely involves the subject's repeated memorizations of the dead person. With reference to Laplanche's theory, this study investigates the paradoxical desire of O'Connor's melancholic mourner, Mrs. May, for unweaving the memories of the dead husband, and her unwillingness to entangle the past for fear of disclosing the less than desirable aspect of the dead. While the melancholic subject vainly wallows in unsuccessful translations of her unstable memories of the dead husband, which have already become fused with her own biographical history, she forms strong defensive mechanisms against a variety of invading agents, such as her hired help and a scrub bull, that are likely to reactivate her full memorization. In this sense, fertility is a symbol of Mrs. May's unwanted yet uncontrollably proliferating memories of the dead husband. Moreover, the irretrievability of any "authentic" memories regarding the lost person determines the perpetuated untranslatability of the foreign body in O'Connor's melancholic mourner.

Keywords: Flannery O'Connor, untranslatability, "Greenleaf," mourning, foreign body

Flannery O'Connor is skillful at simultaneously seducing and persecuting her characters with a foreign body and a covertly expected invader. Along with the foreign body and invader comes the hint of a revelation, which is nonetheless never quite illuminated. Visible illness, disability, stranger, doubling figure, and even intrusive animals are all capable of assuming the role of foreign body or uncanny invader. Freud writes, "We presume that the psychological trauma- or more precisely the memory of the trauma- acts like a foreign body which long after its entry must be continued to be regarded as an agent that is still at work" (SE II, 1893, p. 6). In Freud's succeeding work, the foreign body serves as memories of a traumatic episode of loss in one's life. If the foreign body cannot be scrutinized from within, it will return in the form of an uncanny external force. As illustrated by Freudian aesthetic of mourning, a dead object which is never really dead brings out the full dynamic of the subject's emotional turmoil. Despite its apparent invisibility, the foreign body permeates O'Connor's widowed women's surrealist dramas. Having a life of its own, it can moreover be highlighted by all kinds of mysterious invading agents. Indeed, O'Connor's protagonists have an intimate kinship with the invader: they peep at, listen to, or wait for some forms of revelation from it so as to confront their foreign body. This uncanny confrontation prompts them to embark on an unconscious quest through grappling with past memories, wants and grief. For a host of characters who are unaware of their traumatic psychic reality such as Ruby of "A Stroke of Good Fortune," Mrs. McIntyre of "The Displaced Person," and Mrs. Turpin of "Revelation," encountering the other triggers an attempt at memorization and mourning. Yet there is almost always a dimension of absolute unknowability and animosity to the foreign body awaiting to be resurrected by the invading agent. Like Kafka's characters who are haunted by the feeling that they have already been abandoned by the law and seek an answer in vain, O'Connor's anxious characters covertly search for memories they unconsciously know are irredeemable, and mourn a person toward whom they hold an ambivalent attitude. Exploring the protagonist's failed memorization and mourning in relation to the invading other, this short study attempts to investigate the enigmatic message of the dead in the mourner's unconscious memories and its untranslatability in O'Connor's short story "Greenleaf."

The unconscious memories of the dead in O'Connor's work corresponds to the other-centered metapsychology formulated by psychoanalytic theorist Jean Laplanche. The foreign body or the enigmatic signifier is for Laplanche the traumatic product of the transmission of the other person's unconscious wishes into the unconscious of the vulnerable subject; after the subject's initial failure of translation, it is subject to repression and becomes the residual deposit that will be reactivated at a later stage in the unconscious. Laplanche even attributes the untranslatable message from the other to the genesis of the unconscious: "far from being my kernel, (the unconscious) is the other implanted in me, the metabolized product of the other in me: forever an 'internal foreign body'" (1998, p. 256). The otherness of the unconscious therefore dictates that it exerts the power of seduction, persecution and revelation. Maintaining that "the human being is...a self-translating and self-theorizing being" (Laplanche, 1989, p. 131), Laplanche places emphasis on human beings' continual translations of the other's message, its belated realization, and proneness to revision. Laplanche's explication of the unconscious may be too radical to be realistic; however, if we substitute the unconscious with unconscious memories, this theory is of considerable usefulness to the exploration of the instability of one's traumatic memories regarding a lost person.

Laplanche also relies on the theoretical model of translation, detranslation and retranslation for his elaboration on mourning. Alluding to the story of Penelope in *The Odyssey*, who weaves the cloth in daytime and unweaves it at night so as to block her suitors' advance while Ulysses is rumored to be dead, Laplanche notes that the same word can denote "analyzing,"

“unweaving” and “undoing” in the Greek text. He argues that since Penelope unties her finished work in order to weave a new fabric, her mourning resembles psychoanalysis. Both dissolve old materials to create new knots and novel translations; and analysis is especially “a movement toward the past, a going back over... along the thread of the unconscious of the other” (1998, pp. 251–258). Laplanche remarks that “for the person in mourning, the message has never been adequately understood, never listened to enough. Mourning is hardly without the question: what would he be saying now” (Ibid., p. 254). But Laplanche’s approach neglects the fact that inquiry into the other’s message is inseparable from memorization: only through filling in the gaps of the enigmatic message with her memorization of the lost object, and thus establishing a dependable referent, can the subject reestablish her subjectivity impaired by trauma. Penelope’s work of weaving and unweaving precisely recalls the difficult memorization in mourning. Despite her daytime ritual, she resumes her imaginary dialogue with the supposedly dead at night by annulling the previous healing effort and reopening the wound, thereby perpetuating the disturbing undecidability of the other’s message as well as the self. With Ulysses the crafty object of loss and memorization transforming from seducer, persecutor to enlightener who finally reveals his identity, the melancholic Penelope is trapped in ceaseless attempts at memorization and translations.

One of the most important persons of loss in O’Connor dates back to the husband. The dead patriarch is a paradoxical figure whose powerful presence is more strongly felt by his recreation in the wife’s reminiscence, his genetic influence on the children, and the intimidating landscape permeated with supernatural imagery. Although the husband is oftentimes already dead before the family crisis unfolds, his omnipresent shadows show the persisting impact of traumatic memories, just as the return of the repressed exerts mental control over his wife. Absence therefore provides a more compelling presence infinitely strengthened by the permeability of the living person’s affective mapping. Even though the husband may be unappealing and morally dubious, he inspires a mixture of attachment and resentment, for he represents the lost power once capable of sustaining traditional social order. Ideally, the mourning wife could empower herself by identifying with his delusional potency. Her anxious helplessness is thus perpetuated through continuing to be hypnotized by fragmented memories, and imaginary communication with the ghost as well as the the agent of the deceased.

Unconscious yearning for memorization and mourning is an important character trait in O’Connor’s widowed women characters. Yet, since the completion of mourning requires full reconciliation with past memories and reconstruction of one’s autobiographical self, these women hardly accomplish their goal. Mrs. May in “Greenleaf” is an illustrative example. As the narrator informs us, Mrs. May never quite escapes the shadow of geographical dislocation caused by the early demise of her husband, whose financial situation forces her to relocate from the city to the country, a plot evoking the role of Ulysses for Penelope. As a caricatured version of Penelope, Mrs. May cannot terminate her work on the fabric of excessive unconscious memory fragments of her late husband. But different from Penelope, she refrains from naming her husband, though the “other” is of vital importance to her mental equilibrium. Laplanche argues that the mourner keeps asking herself what the dead person has to say or wants to do with her. Indeed, such a question is uttered repeatedly in various disguises of aggressive, radical, and otherwise inexplicable actions by Mrs. May to an absent addressee who has supposedly left his message and bears the power of paternal law like Ulysses. But, to Mrs. May, her enigmatic message denies linguistic representation as a taboo of the dead, and instead gives rise to surrealistic speculations and fantasies. Therefore nonverbal encounters, solitary activities and recurring dreams hold their sway in her mundane life.

Nonetheless, the message, when fully memorized and interpreted, can be devastating. This is especially so since memorization of the dead can bring about unpleasant and screened aspect of that person. The death of Mrs. May's husband leaves her considerable financial difficulties. Decline among the southern rural social hierarchy after World War II and the prosperity of the formerly poor whites like Mr. Greenleaf's children exacerbate her sense of loss, which both originated from the demise of her husband. Moreover, Mrs. May's rare conscious reminiscence of her husband casts doubt on the state of their relationship when he is alive. As a result, she paradoxically both longs for memorization of her husband and simultaneously fears its consequence. Her defensive mechanisms bear a military quality manifested in such actions as unconscious clinging to weapons and weapon-like tools (knife, gun, stick); even the trees surrounding her pasture with "sharp sawtooth edge" (p. 511) seem to protect her from recognition of past traumas. However again, Mrs. May's ostensibly closed psychic border barely conceals a desire for openness. Her anxiety over the materialistic transgression of the Greenleafs and the symbolic invasion of the sun is overshadowed by her compulsive obsession with exactly such end-of-world scenarios. This incongruity is precisely reflective of her ambiguous attitude toward the memories of her husband as the foreign body and a host of uncanny invaders, who may be an embodiment of her husband, a divine agent, or a demonic force. Her fifteen years of farm work is also paradoxically both incompletable work of memorization and the endeavor of hampering the revelation of the dead's message, so that the ambivalent law ensuring the stupor of her life can remain desired yet safely unapproachable. Such a self-contradictory struggle highlights the wrestling between her fear of self-knowledge, and longing for unknotting, detranslation and reweaving, to map out her unconscious memories and emotions through mourning.

The excess of dislocated messages without a legitimized translation is reflected in the imagery of fertility in the story. Mrs. May's land, herd, family and her own body all exhibit the unbridled growth of existential uncertainties and frantic imaginations in the face of the shrinking justifiability of her ethical superiority. As the only gift from the dead husband, the land incarnates his body merged with hers, and also the tomb that shields his ambiguous intention. As such, the embodied land has to surpass the reach of violation. Strenuously laboring on the fields ensures the order of the land, but also serves as an act of self-protection. Like Joy/Hulgar in "Good Country People" who meticulously cares for her wooden leg, Mrs. May carries a stick with her while inspecting her field in case of snakes. The process of translation, detranslation and repression, however, results in yet more accumulations of freely-associated memories externalized in dramatic forms. Also like Joy/Hulga, Mrs. May does not and is unwilling to understand the messages inscribed on her body. The "green rubber curlers" that "spouted neatly over her forehead" (O'Connor, 1988, p. 501) display a parallel between natural exuberance and mental knots. Yet she ignores these outward exhibitions of emotional memories. All of these imageries assume the features of fecundity of undesired memories.

The difference between mourning and melancholia, according to Freud, is that the subject of the former is able to withdraw her psychic energy from the object of loss and invest it in a new object, while the melancholic is persistently attached to the lost object. Also, mourning is a highly ritualized activity with a beginning and end, whereas melancholia involves instability of forms and compulsive repetitions. Mrs. Greenleaf, an abiding invader of her property in Mrs. May's view, illustrates these differences; and her grotesque "prayer healing," supposedly capable of casting light on Mrs. May's own foreign body, enables her to become an invading agent for Mrs. May. In her ritual, Mrs. Greenleaf buries stories of disasters and gossips she cuts off from newspapers into a hole, lies in the dirt, "swayed back and forth" (p. 506) with face full of dirt and tears, and fervently prays to Christ. Unlike Penelope's weaving work without a

nodal point, the burial ritual marks a thorough metabolization, and her ecstatic “communication” with Christ marks the consummation or transcendence of translations. Mrs. Greenleaf’s irrational healing also echoes the utter indecidability of the dead’s enigmatic message in the mourner’s unconscious memories.

Interestingly, Mrs. Greenleaf also serves as a comical allusion to Our Mother of Sorrows, or *Mater Dolorosa*, who in popular Catholic imagery is sorrowful and anguished with her heart pierced by seven daggers or by thorns. Apart from being Christ’s mother, Virgin Mary is Christ’s wife and daughter as well. Hence, Mrs. Greenleaf’s ritual conjures up the image of Our Mother of Sorrows mourning over Christ’s tomb, which is the container carrying her object of grief, as well as her desire. The tears and dirt on Mrs. Greenleaf’s face recalls Julia Kristeva’s remark that starting from the eleventh century till its peak in the fourteenth century, “milk and tears became the privileged signs of the *Mater Dolorosa*” (1987, p. 249) in the West. Mrs. Greenleaf’s tears remind us of the blood of wounding, the female body’s merging with the son/husband/father’s corpse. The dirt on her face, on the other hand, suggests the milk of fertility, which ironically comes from Mrs. May’s land and body, thereby again reinforcing her role as a messenger of Mrs. May’s dead husband. Contrastingly, although Mrs. May is also implicitly compared to Virgin Mary in the story, her mourning attempt is partly thwarted by her avoidance of authentic emotional release. She refuses to acknowledge the full memories that caused her melancholia and does not desire a definite ending in her contemplation on her foreign body. Hence, she can never quite finish the process of detranslations and retranslation, and her failed mourning takes the form of repeated hearing, watching, worrying and remembering.

But the scrub bull is the most evident invading agent in the story. Critics have noted the deliberateness of Mrs. May’s waiting regarding the scrub bull. As Bruce Gentry notes, “Despite all her protests that she wishes to be rid of the bull, Mrs. May never quite takes the action that would force its removal.” (1986, p. 60) When the bull charges toward her toward the end, Mrs. May merely stares at it “at if she could not decide at once what his intention was” (O’Connor, 1988, p. 523). Such passive “waiting” bears resemblance to pregnancy, which blurs the boundaries between the subject in mourning and her foreign body within. As a matter of fact, both the narrator and Mrs. May’s interior monologues indicate that ever since the beginning of the story, when she hears the sounds of the bull in her dream, she has been expecting her haunting memories of the husband to be ultimately translated with the aid of the animal as a ghostly agent, a seductive invader likely to reveal to her the original unconscious message of her husband, and perhaps of God. Her implicit expectation therefore endows the bull’s digestive noises with deceptive magic of metabolization and revelation. However, the bull’s chewing sound provides scant cues of a revelation- its sound without language can at best reside in the realm of the imaginary capable of evoking a variety of phantasmal illusions appearing and disappearing at will. Thus, Mrs. May’s waiting for “delivery” with the presence of the revealing invader is doomed to end up being a game of abortion.

The bull itself provides multiple opportunities for interpretation. Among other possibilities, ample evidence suggests that the bull is evocative of Mrs. May’s sons, who inherited their father’s violent temperament. This family affinity is in keeping with the often striking resemblance between fathers and sons in O’Connor’s other fictional work. Indeed, the father figure in O’Connor produces his child as an embodiment of his symptoms, and a carrier of his unconscious wishes. Biological determinism is manifested in his child via disease, deformity, and even madness. On the other hand, the child, bearing the peril of family repetition, increasingly imitates his father – even though he resents him – by alienating the mother.

Apparently lacking in the husband's "wise blood," the widowed women are oftentimes excluded from a recovered father-child dyad and have to bear the consequence of the child's emotional denunciation. They constantly face the danger of seeing ruthless abandonment restaged by their beloved child, who may completely shatter the already precarious mother-child relationship.

Therefore it is not surprising that Mrs. May's surly and disdainful sons' nasty fight at home shows an "ugly family resemblance" (O'Connor, 1988, p. 517) in addition to masculine violence. In all probability, the bull reminds Mrs. May of the potential treachery in her sons, which may resemble the "treachery" of her husband, who left her virtually nothing upon death. Moreover, when Mrs. May sees the bull on the first night, she intuitively assumes that it belongs to a "nigger," and Scofield sells insurance to African Americans, a job she considers socially inferior; her other son Wesley's bitter derision of Mrs. May hurts her like a "knife edge", which ironically evokes Our Lady of Sorrows pierced by daggers in the heart. Most dramatically, In Mrs. May's dream, she is killed by the sun racing downward like a bullet. The dream seems to send her the message that the sons will destroy her someday, which underscores her latent fear of being totally betrayed and abandoned by her sons.

Additionally, the negative implications of feeding are remarkable in the story. The bull bears resemblance to an infant drinking milk when it is alone near Mrs. May's house at night, and emits the sounds of "steady rhythmic chewing" (p. 501). Since Mrs. May's land is likened to her shared body with her husband, the bull as the continuum of her sons and husband is undeniably feeding on Mrs. May fecundity of traumatic past memories. "Conscious in her sleep that something was eating one wall of the house" (Ibid.), Mrs. May likens the bull's consumption of her grass to cannibalistic devouring that will finally consume everything including humans, except for the Greenleafs. But as a matter of fact, it is her boys that are "devouring" her at home without gratitude, an act which may recall her late husband's similarly "devouring" of the family's financial foundation. Moreover, Mrs. May and her sons' rancorous conversations all happen at the dinner table; and as the narrator tells us, Mrs. May "never ate breakfast but she sat with them to see that they had what they wanted" (O'Connor, 1988, p. 504). Kristeva's writing on Virgin Mary's "spiritualized" body corresponds to Mrs. May's maternal role: "the Virgin obstructs the desire for murder or devouring by means a strong oral cathexis (the breast), valorization of pain (the sob), and incitement to replace the sexed body with the ear of understanding" (1987, p. 257). As such, Mrs. May the feeder of and listener to aggressive children's desire bears ironic resemblance to Our Mother of Sorrows, who mourns both her son and husband's death.

O'Connor has probably incorporated more than one religious and literary source in the imagery of the bull, but the following lines in Psalm 22 cast light on the complex denotations of the bull:

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest...Many bulls encompass me; strong bulls of Bashan surround me; they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion.

Psalm 22 substantiates my argument that the bull reminds us of the irretrievability of the original source of traumatic memory once it has become an internal foreign body like a "splinter in the skin". Mrs. May, the woman in mourning, asks her uncanny invader a question, but ends up with still more knots than keys. The deceptiveness of the bull lies in its ubiquitous representability. Prior to its attack on Mrs. May, instead of performing the role of a seductive

lover, the bull assumes a childlike joyful and pampered look over the return of the mother; when it pierces Mrs. May through the chest, however, it again becomes “a wild tormented lover” (O’Connor, 1988, p. 523). The supernatural animal uncannily shifts in and out of different scenes. Mrs. May’s fragmented memories of her husband are likewise perpetually disjointed, attracting the attachment of new strings of disturbing memories, for it is “abandoned” by the primal scene of loss deliberately forgotten by her. Therefore the fertile foreign body is capable of evoking all kinds of translations, but all of them are postponed and eventually dismissed in the indeterminacy of recollections. It is like the golden idol that deceives and persecutes the passive worshipper with too many false unraveling moments and invalid answers. Due to this excess of referents, the subject’s memorization and mourning are irreversibly compromised.

Since the original sender of the message is absent, the foreign body left by him is merged with the subject’s own affective disposition. When Mrs. May “seemed...to bend over whispering some last discoveries into the animal’s ear” (O’Connor, 1988, p. 524) after being gored by the bull, the narrator does not specify to whom this “seeming” makes sense. Such ambiguity typical of the ending of O’Connor’s fiction again reminds us that the enigmatic message will meet with its ultimate untranslatability even after transference, and the event of translation itself will risk being rendered untranslatable. However, the other’s unconscious element, because of its transmissibility, gains a life of its own. The “yet-to-be-translated” in the endings is transferred to the readers, and thus reproduces an ever-growing enigma in the readers’ unconscious.

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Author contact email: pengyaosz@sina.com

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ISSN: 2187-0624